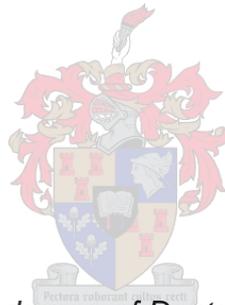


Trans-local habitus: High school students' mediation of their educational success at a Focus School

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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

December 2016

Abstract

Against the backdrop of school reform in South Africa, this dissertation analyses the practices of selected mobile students who accomplished their education ‘on the move’ between their working-class domestic environment and the dissonant terrain of the Focus School situated in a middle-class suburb.

This study describes the navigational practices of the four students in their establishment of a successful educational path. Drawing on Bourdieu’s concepts of practice, habitus and field, augmented by Urry’s theory of mobility, this dissertation discusses the shifts and changes that the four students made as they moved between their domestic environments and the Focus School in order to access quality schooling. This study is based on qualitative data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews which are used to illustrate the navigation practices of the four students as they develop successful educational subjectivities – a trans-local habitus – as they move from their domestic locations to the new terrain of the Focus School.

The study uses the analytical lens of trans-locality to explore how the four students shifted and adapted their educational subjectivities, developed social competency and established subjectivities that enabled them to become successful students at the Focus School. I argue that it is possible for historically disadvantaged, rural and township students to adapt to and meet the academic and behavioural standards of a new school context in the middle-class environment, and that they do this by establishing a trans-local habitus. Acquiring a trans-local habitus enables them to successfully shift and adapt their subjectivity ‘on the move’ across different contexts. A successful trans-local habitus is thus one that allows the individual, via their navigation across different field contexts, to successfully change or adapt their dispositions to the rules and regularities of the new field context. This study illustrates, therefore, the navigational bases upon which the four students transact their school-going experiences, in effect shifting their ‘habitus on the move’, as they figure out ways of achieving school success.

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Dedication

This dissertation is in memory of my late parents Abdul Aziz and Budruniesa (Beatrice) Domingo who were always proud of my achievements.

Contents

Trans-local habitus: High school students' mediation of their educational success at a Focus School	1
Declaration	2
Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Dedication	6
Contents	7
Chapter 1	12
1.1. Introduction	12
1.2. Background and rationale	14
1.3. Research questions	17
1.4. Aim of the study	18
1.5. Research objectives.....	18
1.6. Significance of the study	18
1.7. Structure of the dissertation	19
Chapter 2: Literature review	21
2.1. Introduction	21
2.2. South African schooling in the urban space	22
2.3. The concept of youth	27
2.4. Changing student subjectivities.....	29
2.5. The concept of space.....	34
2.6. Student migration.....	39

2.7. Conclusion	44
Chapter 3: Theoretical framework	46
3.1. Introduction	46
3.2. Who is Bourdieu?.....	47
3.3. Bourdieu's trilogy	49
3.3.1. Habitus.....	49
3.3.2. Field	51
3.3.3. Capital.....	53
3.4. Interaction of habitus, field and capital.....	58
3.5. Habitus and mobility.....	59
3.6. Trans-local habitus.....	65
3.7. Conclusion	66
Chapter 4: Methodological approach.....	68
4.1. Introduction	68
4.2. Qualitative research	71
4.3. Case study	73
4.3.1. Interviews.....	76
4.3.2. Case study sampling.....	78
4.3.3. Respondents in this study.....	78
4.4. Snowball sampling method	79
4.5. Positionality.....	81
4.6. Data collection methods.....	81

4.7.	Interview schedule	83
4.8.	Data analysis	84
4.9.	Validity and trustworthiness	85
4.10.	Triangulation.....	86
4.11.	Ethics statement.....	86
4.12.	Conclusion.....	87
Chapter 5: Data presentation of the educational subjectivities of the four respondents		89
5.1.	Introduction	89
5.2.	The subjectivity of the four selected respondents prior to their entry of the focus school.....	91
5.3.	The working-class environment context.....	91
5.4.	Mona’s domestic habitus: “Something that nobody can take away from me”.....	93
5.4.1.	Mona’s domestic environment	93
5.4.2.	Mona’s socio-economic environment.....	93
5.5.	Luke’s domestic habitus: “My childhood experiences are not washed away”.....	97
5.5.1.	Luke’s domestic environment	97
5.5.2.	Luke’s socio-economic environment.....	98
5.6.	Phumla’s domestic habitus: “Something I carry with me as I move through life”.....	103
5.6.1.	Phumla’s domestic environment	104
5.6.2.	Phumla’s socio- economic environment.....	104

5.7. TK's domestic habitus: "Imprints of early influential experiences are difficult to dislodge"	107
5.7.1. TK's domestic environment.....	108
5.7.2. TK's socio-economic environment	108
5.8. Conclusion	111
Chapter 6: Data presentation and interpretation of the trans-local habitus of the four respondents	114
6.1. Introduction	114
6.2. The Focus School context	117
6.3. Mediation of the students' educational subjectivities via their trans-local habitus at the Focus School.....	123
6.4. Educational socialisation of the students at the Focus School	129
6.5. Attaining social competency	132
6.6. The development of the students' fluid and adaptable subjectivities at the Focus School.....	137
6.7. The students' establishment of a trans-local habitus at the Focus School.....	142
6.8. Conclusion	144
Chapter 7: Conclusion	147
7.1. Introduction	147
7.2. Theoretical considerations: the establishment of a trans-local habitus.....	149
7.3. Conclusion and recommendations for further studies	152
References.....	155

Addendum 1: Interview schedule	170
Addendum 2: Ethical consent Stellenbosch University:	173
Western Cape Education Department consent:.....	174
Respondent consent form:.....	175
School consent letter:	178

Chapter 1

1.1. Introduction

On the 27th April 2014 South Africa celebrated the end of the second decade of democracy. During this period South Africa had undergone significant political, social and economic changes. Included in these changes, are significant changes to the education system in an attempt to ensure increased schooling access, opportunity and participation for all South Africans. However, 20 years into democracy, South Africa is still confronting enormous challenges to provide a quality education system for all its learners. Only one in ten learners, who enrol in South Africa's basic education system, leave with the qualifications necessary to apply for tertiary studies (DoE Country Progress Report, 2014). There remain deep disparities between schooling that takes place in former white (Model C) schools that are well-resourced and provide a decent quality of education and those, which are for the most part poorly resourced with a poor infrastructure, found in working class areas, townships, rural areas and informal settlements (see Maringe & Moletsane, 2015).

This dissertation is a discussion of the lives of four historically disadvantaged black¹ and coloured students from rural and urban working class areas in the Western Cape who attended a Focus School over a period of three years. It investigates their practices as mobile students who moved from their working-class domestic environments to a school situated in a middle-class area which was previously demarcated as a whites-only area during apartheid. Adopting the term 'trans-localism,' this study describes the practices that the four students employed in order to navigate the initially dissonant terrain of the Focus School. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of practice, habitus and field, augmented by Urry's mobility lens, this dissertation discusses the shifts and changes that the four students made as they moved between their domestic environments and the Focus School to access quality schooling.

¹ This study uses the apartheid-created racial categories black, coloured, white and Indian in reference to South Africa's four race groups.

The Focus School, a Mathematics, Science and Technology school for students from Grades 10-12, as a project of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) was an attempt to ameliorate the effects of the apartheid education system. Established in 2004, students who showed potential in Mathematics, Science and Technology and who had been disadvantaged under the apartheid government were invited to apply to attend the school. Based on the four students' attendance at the Focus School between 2004 and 2007, this study focuses on the adaptations and changes that they made as they moved from one locale (their domestic environment) to another (the Focus School) in order to establish a trans-local habitus that would enable them to become successful students in the new school environment.

The term 'trans-localism' is aimed at describing the nature of the spatial practices of individuals who engage in movement between different locales without losing sight of the importance of the localities in which they were originally situated (Oakes & Schein, 2006:1). Trans-localism, according to Brickell and Datta, refers to individuals who, "while located in specific urban territories, transcend them because of criss-crossing movement between spaces." (2005:295) Thus, combining Bourdieu's concept of habitus as "the historical and cultural production of individual practices" (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002:15) with Brickell and Datta's concept of trans-localism, this dissertation, through the narratives of the four students, develops a conceptualisation of the practices involved in the establishment of a trans-local habitus.

Key to this study is an understanding of how the students navigated the complex contours of their 'trans-locality' by drawing on practices of mobility, fluidity, shifts and adaptability, in order to establish an educational subjectivity that enabled them to become successful students at the Focus School. By successful, I refer to the students' ability to complete their schooling and apply and be accepted to study at a tertiary institution. All four students in this study graduated from the school and went on to establish successful career paths which, according to the respondents themselves, they would not have been able to do had they not been granted the opportunity to attend the Focus School. Not all the students at the school were successful, but this study attempts to understand how these four students succeeded in their endeavours to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities to

become successful students in a school environment where they initially felt alienated by the nature of the school culture and expectations which were, by their admission, very different to their schooling experiences in their home environment up until that point. This dissertation is an exploration of how these four students shifted and adapted their educational subjectivities, developed social competency and established fluid and adaptable subjectivities that enabled them to become successful students at the Focus School.

1.2. Background and rationale

My interest in this field of study is based on my personal experience of achievement against the odds. I grew up as a historically disadvantaged, so-called coloured child in a working-class environment with parents who had not matriculated. At the age of 15, I was required by my parents to leave high school with a Grade 10 school certificate to study to become a teacher. At that stage, a Lower Primary Teachers Certificate (LPTC) only required an individual to have reached Grade 10 to be accepted to study teaching. This teaching qualification was a two-year full-time course run by teacher training colleges and enabled one to teach in primary schools from Grade 1 to 7. After qualifying as a primary school teacher at the age of 17, I started my teaching career at a school situated in a historically disadvantaged area teaching Grade 4 learners.

Embarking on a teaching career at such a young age with only a very basic qualification meant that I went from being an under-confident child to an under-confident teacher. I never felt truly prepared for the challenges of teaching and always felt the need to gain more knowledge to improve my position in the field of education. I chose to continue my studies and enrolled to study part-time in order to attain a matric certificate. This took me three years as I also married during this time and started my family. On completion of my Grade 12 certificate I enrolled to complete a diploma in education through a distance learning college for another four years. After completing the diploma, I enrolled part-time for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA), a distance learning university. During my studies, after completing two years of the degree, I was granted recognition by the university for my prior learning (i.e. my previous educational

diplomas) which allowed me to enrol for an Honours degree. I completed my BA Honours at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) while still teaching full time. I then continued with my studies to complete my Masters at UWC and later enrolled for my PhD at Stellenbosch University. After completing my Masters, I left classroom teaching and took up a position at the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), where I am still currently employed.

It was while I was working for the WCED that I came across a Focus School in a suburb that had previously been reserved for a white population. The Focus School, which was housed in a building which had formerly been used as a reformatory for boys, catered for historically disadvantaged high school students from rural and urban working class areas. Post-1994, during the educational reform of the new government, Focus Schools were established by the WCED as an attempt to increase the numbers of students matriculating in Mathematics, Science and Technology. Students attending schools in working-class environments post-1994 were still struggling to achieve educational success due to overcrowding, lack of resources, inadequately qualified teachers, to name but a few of the challenges schools in black and coloured areas experienced due to the legacy of the apartheid era. The Focus School, which was a boarding school facility established in 2004, aimed to support historically disadvantaged learners who showed potential in Mathematics, Science and Technology. The Focus School had achieved an average of a 97% matric pass rate for the previous nine years.

Students attending the Focus School were required to become weekly boarders at the school. For many of these students there was a significant disjuncture between their domestic environment and the new locale of the Focus School. This required that they find ways to embody the requirements of the Focus School in order to become successful students. This research aims to show how these four students navigated across various spatial terrains in order to develop successful educational subjectivities at the Focus School, what I refer to as the mediation of a trans-local habitus.

'Trans-location' as a term, refers to the movement of individuals across different spaces (Fataar, 2015). For the students in this study, I apply the term trans-local habitus to understand the students' mobility between their domestic environment and

the Focus School, and the adaptations they make across these spaces to become successful students. Trans-location provides a lens that allows me to understand how the students established their educational subjectivity on the move. Thus, trans-local habitus refers to the construction of an adapted habitus which, arising in terms of the students' mobilities, enable them to become conceptually mobile, adaptive readers of space, and go on to figure out how to succeed in the education in hitherto 'alien' territory.

In order to provide a lens that enabled me to analyse the navigational practices of the four students that led to the establishment of a trans-local habitus, this dissertation draws on Bourdieu's thinking tools of habitus and field, augmented by Urry's (2012) theorisation of mobility. Bourdieu (1990a) argues that when individuals encounter an unfamiliar field, their habitus shifts and changes to adapt to the new field structure. The four students moving from their working class domestic environments to the Focus School field were required to shift or adapt their habitus in order to become successful in the new field environment. Bourdieu uses the analogy of 'playing the game' to describe how individuals adapt their practices to apply the 'rules and regularities' required by a particular field in order to become competent players of the game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For the respondents in my study, 'playing the game' successfully in the new school environment required them to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities, develop social competency, and a fluid and adaptable habitus in order to meet the requirements of the Focus School.

Urry's (2012) mobility theory provides a supporting lens that enabled me to analyse the mobile aspect of the students' lives. Urry suggests that the most consequential feature of a mobile student is a re-casting of their identity in terms of flexibility, adaptability and transformation. Urry states that moving across different spaces will never leave the 'self' unchanged. It is therefore a combination of these two lenses that enabled me to understand how these four students experienced their education in the initially dissonant terrains found between their domestic environment and the Focus School. As all four students were successful in their educational endeavours at the school, the lenses of Bourdieu and Urry allowed me to describe and discuss the students' practices and the adaptations that they made as they moved across the various fields.

This study aims to contribute to emerging literature on students' access to quality schooling in the post-apartheid urban terrain (Dolby, 2001; Soudien, 2007; Fleisch, 2008; Fataar, 2015). The uniqueness of the study lies in the understanding of how youth navigate their social and educational spaces and develop practices that enable them to establish a trans-local habitus. This dissertation explores the educational subjectivities of four historically disadvantaged students who, as mobile students, moved from their working class domestic environments to attend the Focus School between 2004 and 2007. The research describes the practices that led to the four students developing a successful trans-local habitus that enabled them to pursue tertiary education and successful career paths.

In order to answer the dissertation's main research question, the dissertation considers firstly, how the students navigated between their domestic environments and the initially culturally incongruent environment of the Focus School. Secondly, I consider how the students mediated their educational subjectivities on the move between the different social spaces. Lastly, I discuss how the students established a trans-local habitus that enabled them to become successful students at the Focus School.

1.3. Research questions

Bearing the research problem and the rationale in mind, the following is my main research question:

How do high school students mediate and establish their educational subjectivities at a Focus School in light of their mobility across different social spaces?

The sub-questions are:

1. How do the students navigate between their domestic environment and the Focus School to establish a successful educational path?
2. How do the students mediate their subjectivities on the move between different geographies?

3. How do the students establish their trans-local habitus which enabled them to become successful students at the Focus School?

1.4. Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore and understand the complex ways students mediate and establish educational subjectivities in the light of their mobility between their living environments and their education at the Focus School.

1.5. Research objectives

The study's research objectives were to:

- explain how the students navigated between their domestic environment and the Focus School to establish a successful educational path;
- discuss how the students mediated their educational subjectivities on the move across different social spaces; and
- describe how the students established their trans-local habitus which enabled them to become successful students at the Focus School.

1.6. Significance of the study

Because this study is small-scale, focusing as it does on the stories of selected students in a particular institutional setting in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, the findings are not generalisable. Rather, the purpose of the study was to present and interpret the stories of a specific group of students within a particular educational setting in order to discuss the manner in which they mediated their educational subjectivities at a Focus School in light of their mobility across different social spaces. Very little research has to date been conducted on the ways in which students in South Africa experienced the constantly shifting landscape of educational reform post-1994. I am of the opinion that, students' stories – stories that are seldom heard from their perspective– would add to the already existing body of research that describes students' educational experiences as they navigate across various spatial terrains. It is my view that hearing the stories of South African students, and the manner in which they dealt with moving across what may at times have been dissonant terrain between their domestic environments and the Focus School

environment, might provide a different perspective on the schooling experience of these students. Further, these narratives might provide an understanding of the multiple realities of change experienced by those students who chose to become mobile in order to access quality education.

1.7. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of seven chapters. In Chapter One (this chapter), I present a general introduction and background to the study which is aimed at understanding the context of the study in relation to the four respondents and the Focus School. This chapter includes the study's research questions, the research aim and objectives, and significance of the study. It provides the layout of the dissertation and presents concluding comments.

Chapter Two is the literature review and provides literature on youth in the post-apartheid era, their changing contexts and experiences, and their attempts to secure a good education. The chapter is an attempt to bring the youth, school-going and mobility into view as a prelude to the dissertation's focus on 'trans-locating' students in the ensuing chapters.

In Chapter Three, I develop a theoretical framework to inform and guide data gathering, presentation and analysis. Based on a combination of the theories of Bourdieu and Urry, the theoretical task in this chapter is to develop a set of lenses that allows for a reading and understanding of the shifting subjectivities of the selected students. The chapter develops the concept of a trans-local habitus to analyse the nature of the shifting and adaptive educational subjectivities of the four selected students as they moved from their domestic environments to participate in the Focus School.

Chapter Four focuses on the methodology used to guide the data handling procedures and processes. The chapter situates my research in the qualitative research paradigm and explains why the interpretive theoretical framework was chosen for the research. The chapter also offers a rationale for how my respondents for the study were selected and discusses the use of semi-structured interviews. This

chapter includes a discussion on data collection methods, data analysis, validity and ethical considerations required for the study.

Chapter Five presents the empirical data of the study in narrative form. Four detailed narratives of the selected students, situated in their domestic working-class contexts, are presented. The focus of these narratives is on the students' personal and educational background in the context of their home environment before they enter the environment Focus School. This chapter provides the necessary backdrop in terms of which the selected students later navigate their way from their working class domestic environments to the Focus school in an unfamiliar and middle class terrain. The chapter further lays the basis for understanding their subjective becoming at the Focus school.

Chapter Six is a presentation and interpretation of the students' narratives based on themes which emerged from the data. This chapter discusses the development of the students' educational subjectivities as they learned to 'play the game' in their new school environment. I describe how the four students, through their embodiment of the 'rules of the game' at the Focus School, establish a trans-local habitus that enables them to become successful students.

Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter. Presented in summative form, I set out in this final chapter to answer the main research question of the study. In other words, the chapter provides an analytical account of the ways in which the selected students mediated and established what I will argue is their trans-local habitus on the move. A trans-local habitus, I suggest, is a necessary requirement for individuals who are born and raised in disadvantaged conditions, but who go on to figure out how to succeed in different, often disjunctural terrains, such as the Focus School that was situated in a middle-class locale. It is the development of a trans-local habitus that enables them, in effect, to have a shot at successfully engaging in the educational 'game'.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the international and national literature that explores the complex ways in which disadvantaged students establish their educational subjectivities in the light of their mobility as they move (trans-locate) between their home environments and education institutions. The specific research focus of this dissertation is to develop an understanding of how four high school students mediated and established their educational subjectivities at a Focus School in light of their mobility across different social spaces. The Focus School, which is discussed in the dissertation was established as a boarding school by the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) for talented historically disadvantaged working class students. The purpose of the school was to support these students, particularly in the areas of Mathematics, Science and Technology, and to encourage excellence for students who, otherwise, might not have reached their full potential had they continued at their neighbourhood schools.

The conceptual focus of the study is on understanding the practices that supported the establishment of the students' trans-local habitus as they moved across different social spaces to become successful students at the Focus School. The contextual nature of navigational practices as processes for educational subjectivity establishment in young people 'on the move' between their domestic and institutional environments, is central to this study.

In this chapter I begin by discussing the changing South African urban school landscape post-1994. I then move to literature that discusses the concept of youth and historically disadvantaged youth in the South African context. This section problematises the notion of 'youth', focusing particularly on South African youth and the reality in which they establish their educational subjectivities in the light of poor quality education. Since the focus of my study is on shifting educational subjectivities of trans-locating students, this section provides an understanding of their youthful becoming as they engage in their mobile spaces. The following section considers how youth and their subjectivities are established and how these shift and change as they move across urban spaces to access quality schooling. This section is followed

by a discussion on the concept of space and youth mobilities. The final section looks at the growing body of literature that discusses student migration trends and the phenomenon of trans-local students.

2.2. South African schooling in the urban space

Since the transition to democracy in 1994 in South Africa, young people have been growing up in a different world to that of their parents. In 1996, South Africa's new Constitution required that education be transformed and democratised in accordance with achieving equitable non-racist, non-sexist education. School policies are now dominated by decentralisation, with goals of equity and the democratic principles of the *South African Constitution* (RSA, 1995(a); RSA, 1996(b); DoE, 1997; DoE, 1998; DoE, 2000). Key Acts of parliament in this regard were the *South African Qualifications Authority Act* (1995), the *South African Schools' Act* (Act 84 of 1996), the *National Education Policy Act* (1996), and the *Employment of Educators' Act* (1996).

The period of educational change that I am focusing on in this study is the period post-1994 as education departments attempted to implement the new laws. It was during this period, when South African schools were no longer racially segregated, that students began travelling to different schools in search of a better quality education (Fataar, 2015). Traditionally, the concept of migration focuses on labour and urbanisation trends in response to socio-economic pressures. Little attention has been given to the impact of migration in the educational arena. Recent developments in this area have shown that 'educational migration' patterns are driven either by a lack of local access to educational prospects, or by the motivation to gain access to educational opportunities that are perceived to be better (Paterson & Kruss, 1998:150). This conclusion is confirmed by a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) survey of 79 schools in five South African provinces in 1999 (Sekete, Shilubane & Moila, 2001), which showed black learners moving to schools that they perceived to be better resourced or providing better opportunities for educational success. These are usually former white suburban or former coloured and Indian schools.

A survey conducted by Sekete *et al.* (2001), aimed at examining the reasons for both black students and parents choosing specific schools out of their living areas, revealed the following:

Factors that attract students and their parents to certain schools

FACTORS	PERCENTAGES
Good discipline	87%
Quality of teaching staff	85%
Good matric results	83%
Curriculum or subjects offered	51%
Medium of instruction	50%
Safety in a school	43%
Affordable fees	35%
Parents moving into a new area	35%
Class sizes	33%
Extra-mural or sporting activities	31%
Exposure to multi-cultural environment	22%

These results indicate that good discipline, quality of teaching, and good results are the main considerations of the respondents in their choice to access schools. The

cost of school fees is considered less important. This is an indication that parents often make huge sacrifices to have their children attend schools which they consider to be able to furnish them with a 'better education'. Underlying these findings are questions around the movement of students in search of schools that provide equal opportunities for all in the context of 'resource-rich' and 'resource-poor' environments in South Africa (Sekete *et al.*, 2001).

An added reason why historically disadvantaged parents send their children out of township areas to attend schools elsewhere is their aspirations for class mobility, security and safety, and an environment free of the negative pressures children in these townships often face (Fataar, 2009). Soudien (2007) refers to a boy in a Cape Town school who lived in the township of Bonteheuwel, a historically disadvantaged community about 15 kilometres from the city centre. His parents chose to send him to school in the city to escape the culture of gangsterism and violence at the school located in the township. The boy explained that:

there by that public school there, the high school. I won't go there because it's too – there's a lot of gangsters at that school ... My sister went there – that's why I'm here. I wouldn't go there if they gave me money ... they shoot. About every week they shoot there. (Soudien, 2007:85)

As harsh as the experiences are for the students attending schools within townships, travelling to access schools outside their living environments presents its own challenges to these students. Students moving across dissonant spaces to access schools elsewhere are often compelled to portray a different persona when they enter the gates of a new school. This is due to the fact that they need to adapt to the existing, often alienating culture of the school. Fataar (2009:5) explains that:

The children have to adapt to and fit into pre-existing habits of being, either having to downplay their own cultural backgrounds or express them awkwardly in moments of cultural 'fetishization' in the context of school plays or cultural displays.

An example of an alienating culture is when the students are not proficient in the language of instruction (Vandeyar, 2008). Resultantly, this places them at a

disadvantage because they are required to deal with the processing of abstract concepts through an unfamiliar language. The students feel alienated in the field of the school because they view their ability as lesser than their peers who are fluent in the language of instruction, and therefore see the need to adapt and fit into the culture of the school by adjusting their educational subjectivities.

Soudien (2007:85) suggests that students attending schools outside of their home environments “take what the school offers and, in interesting ways, they normalise it.” What this implies is that the students shift their subjectivities by working with or internalising the cultural meanings present in the school so that they are able to adequately stabilise themselves in this space. An example is when a boy in Soudien’s (2007) study relates how he was exposed to a vicious initiation ritual during which he was kicked in the ribs and had water thrown over him, in full view of a teacher at the school. The teacher responded by stating that it was the normal state of affairs. In other words, it formed part of the school’s institutional culture. The boy commented that he learnt to ‘toughen up’. This represents an acquiescence or adaptation to how things are done at the school and an adoption of the subjectivity of the institution.

Fataar (2007) states that, the trans-local cultural citizenship displayed by young people in search of educationally-based mobility, is one of the more acute and fascinating examples of their refusal to be trapped by geography. Trans-local cultural citizenship refers to a phenomenon in terms of which students commute from their townships to attend schools in other areas in search of material and symbolic advantage. These students are determined to escape from a space or environment that appears to be cut off from the rest of the world in terms of modernisation and connectivity to the global world. They very often consider these spaces as mediocre when juxtaposed to the ‘glamour’ of more urban environments.

Fataar discusses a young girl, Layla, and describes her experiences of spatial mobility in her quest for good schooling, commenting that she felt “invigorated to see people on the move, making their way to their places of work or education” as she travelled from her historically disadvantaged home environment in the township to schools in more affluent areas (Fataar, 2015:107). Fataar also mentions how Layla developed an “acute understanding of the schools’ cultural functioning and

expectations, and mediated the schools' 'hegemonic ways of being' with active dispositional cultivations decisively determined by her desire for educational success" (2015:109). My study is interested in understanding similar or different types of experiences of students who choose to 'trans-locate' from their domestic environments to attend a school elsewhere.

Motala, Dieltiens and Sayed (2012) identify the primary patterns of access to education by marginalised students. They consider why, 20 years after the first democratic elections, good-quality basic education is still out of reach of so many South African learners. Based on data collected via social surveys, classroom observation, learners' assessments and parent interviews, Motala *et al.* (2012) consider whether vulnerable learners from socially marginal South African communities who are enrolled in school remain in school and learn successfully. By analysing the macro- and micro-contexts of 14 schools across two districts of the provinces, their study describes learners' exclusion from school, as well as what the researchers suggest is these learners' exclusion from meaningful learning. Motala *et al.* (2012) use the construct 'zones of vulnerability' to describe the various spaces where children are included, excluded or at risk of exclusion. The model delineates the different phases of basic education and identifies the points at which learners drop out of schooling.

Motala *et al.* (2012) focus on children who return to school day after day, and year after year, despite their limited acquisition of skills, who persist to the end of Grade 9 in the face of overwhelming social and economic pressures, including paucity of facilities, indifferent teaching and poor-quality outcomes. They found that learners come to school partly because it is expected of them, and partly because they, their parents and their teachers have an expectation that education can give them a better life (Motala *et al.*, 2012). Motala *et al.* (2012) seek to identify ways of ensuring that all children complete a full cycle of basic education successfully, despite the limiting, alienating environment of South African schools. Their work throws the spotlight on the limited options and limited choices resulting in the students becoming agents of their own worlds.

2.3. The concept of youth

It is imperative to understand the concept of 'youth', as the main research focus of this study is on selected youths who were between the ages of 16 and 18 when they attended the Focus School. The concept 'youth' is generally defined in terms of age, as well as in terms of them reaching specific milestones in their lifespan. 'Youth', is regarded as the period of transition from childhood to adulthood during which young people become increasingly independent and aware of their inter-dependence as members of a community (Avis, 2015). The South African National Youth Commission defines youth as persons between the ages of 14 and 35 (National Youth Commission, 1996).

The term 'youth' is interchangeably used for an adolescent, a teenager or a young person, with similar denotations. In the developmental stage of adolescence Erikson's (1968) theory regards identity-formation as the most critical maturation task. This concept of identity-formation provides a useful entry point into understanding the notion of youth as an adolescent. High school students are regarded as adolescents negotiating their way through this formative period. Adolescence is by definition a period of transition. It is a time of self-discovery, expanding horizons, emerging independence, physical and emotional growth. This is the stage where it may be the last major opportunity for young people to develop socially (Davies & Gibson, 1967:15). Erikson (1968) regards identity as the most critical maturation task in the developmental stage of adolescence and states that in forming an identity, youth attempt to create a self-identity that is consistent with how they are viewed by others. The formation of this self-identity, according to Erikson (1968), is less challenging when there is consistency and stability among the different social spaces youth encounter, including the home, school and neighbourhood.

Sociologists face a challenge to develop a conceptual framework for understanding both the transitions young people pass through as they become adults, and the differential experiences of young people from different social groups (Jones, 1999). While Konopka (1973) identifies youth as consisting of a particular mind-set or attitude, Curtain (2002), cited in the United Nations World Youth Report (2003),

provides a contrasting definition of youth as a phase during which a person moves from a time of dependence (childhood) to independence. Curtain (2002) identifies leaving the parental home and establishing new living arrangements, completing full-time education, forming close personal relationships outside of the family, as aspects of such a move. Young people tend to draw on those social, educational, cultural and political resources which are available to them in order that they might negotiate their changing lives (United Nations World Youth Report, 2003). Young people who move outside of their community to access quality schooling live different lifestyles to those lived by young people who attend schools in their home environments (United Nations World Youth Report, 2003). How the former read the social spaces they move through and interact within their school spaces beyond their domestic environments affects their emerging educational subjectivities.

As has previously been indicated, this study focuses on the subjectivity of young historically disadvantaged youth in relation to their different spaces of interaction. In cases where youth from milieu-deprived contexts attend schools in more affluent areas, spatial engineering has kept students' residential and educational lives in very separate spheres, requiring them to travel great distances to access schooling (Lancaster, 2008). To facilitate safe travelling to their schools, the students are required to adopt a more matured or responsible subjectivity as they engage in their mobility to their schools in more remote locations. They are required to negotiate difficult terrain when they travel long distances in risky transport arrangements (Fataar, 2009).

This section addressed broad issues relating to the theme of historically disadvantaged youth trans-locating between milieu-deprived home environments and schools in more affluent neighbourhoods. The section introduced notions of youth subjectivity and the schooling context in South Africa. Challenges trans-locating youth experience during the trans-location were touched upon. The next section explores these issues more deeply by exploring the concepts of shifts in youth subject positions and subjectivity development in different spaces.

2.4. Changing student subjectivities

The previous section introduced, in broad terms, the concept of youth in motion, trans-locating across different terrains in the quest for a quality education. This section provides a discussion on youth subjectivity as a way of understanding how educational subjects are 'subjectivised', i.e. how they come into being in their interaction with their social worlds and their schooling.

Identity is very similar to subjectivity, and I will use the terms interchangeably throughout this study. This idea is supported by Woodward (1997), who argues that the terms 'identity' and 'subjectivity' are occasionally used in ways that suggest that the terms are interchangeable. Subjectivity, however, is more closely related to social context than identity. An approach to subjectivity, as described by Hall (2004), explains it as something that is produced – created from the ingredients of a personal past but always in the process of transformation. Subjectivity focuses on 'becoming' rather than 'being' and is formed according to how one is positioned by and positions oneself with respect to the past. Hall (2004) argues that subjectivity is always influenced by culture, history and power. The concept of educational subjectivity allows for an understanding of the ways young people encounter the worlds of their schooling, and how their subjectivities are established in light of their educational and broader social practices (Fataar, 2009).

Subjectivity could be described as what people become or how they develop their senses of self as they interact with the dynamics present in a specific context. For Woodward (1997:39), subjectivity relates to the unconscious and conscious emotions and thoughts in a social context. She claims that we experience our subjectivity in a social context, where language and culture give meaning to our experience of ourselves and where we adopt an identity. Like the meaning of a literary text, the meaning of the subject always exists within a cultural context. The things that make us who we are can be found in the context of where we live, where we've come from, and where we're headed.

Fataar's (2009) case study of one student, Fuzile Ali, reveals an embodiment of larger social processes of how this young person's subjectivities emerged as he navigated his 'socialities'. The case study reveals how Fuzile Ali performed his

subjective transactions spatially. Since his impoverished life circumstances were not congruent with his desire to become educated, he had to transact his life under difficult circumstances. Fataar (2009) focused on aspects of Fuzile Ali's self-formation and self-discipline that played a role in the cultivation of his schooled career. Key to Fuzile Ali's aspirant navigations was the fact that he learnt to negotiate vastly different environments, each with its different expectations of acceptable behaviour. He developed the skill of reading the new expectations in each space, as well as knowing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This case provides an example of the ways young people encounter the social worlds of their schooling, and subjective becoming and socialisation practices as they exercise their capacity to aspire in the light of their educational and broader social practices (Fataar, 2009).

Elkin and Handel (1989:4) define socialisation as the process by which we learn the ways of a given society or social group so that we can function within it. The students in my study are required to develop social competency in order to create viable existences as they move between their domestic environments and the social space of the Focus School. These competencies include the shifts and adaptations they make as they move between different social situations. Elkin and Handel (1989:4) argue that the process of socialisation calls for many kinds of learning. They aver that a portion of what is learned is overt and visible, such as being appropriately attired for different occasions, but that even these overt behaviours can be understood only if we recognise that they come to be guided by more generalised learning. The effects of this generalised learning, according to Elkin and Handel (1989), are not directly visible, but must be inferred. In other words, children learn to be concerned with appropriateness as a general guide to their conduct. They develop a sense of propriety, which govern their behaviour not solely in situations they have already experienced, but which also guides them in dealing with new situations they encounter for the first time (Elkin & Handel, 1989:4). A person would therefore need to be exposed to an unfamiliar context over a sustained period of time in order to learn, acquire and establish the kinds of behaviour he or she needs to exhibit in order to develop a 'sense of propriety' within that specific context. This implies that establishing one's subjectivity and social competency is not something that occurs automatically but is learnt, and requires a degree of individual agency.

Within sociology, “the term agency is usually juxtaposed to structure, and is often no more than a synonym for action, emphasising implicitly the undermined nature of human action” (Biesta & Tedder, 2006). This resonates with a general definition of agency as “(t)he capacity for autonomous social action” (Calhoun, 2002) and, more specifically (but here the definition becomes almost tautological) as, “the ability of actors to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structure” (ibid). A more ‘situated’ definition is given by Emirbayer and Mische (1998:971) who see agency as the “capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematize situations”.

An interesting contribution to the discussion about agency has been made by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) in their paper titled ‘What is agency?’, in which they suggest a conceptualisation of human agency as:

a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment) (Emirbayer & Mische 1998:963).

Emirbayer and Mische suggest that the key to grasping the dynamic possibilities of human agency is to view it as composed of variable and changing orientations within the flow of time (1998). Only then will it be clear how structural environments of action are both dynamically sustained by and also altered through human agency- by actors capable of formulating projects for the future and realising them, even if only in small part, and with unforeseen outcomes, in the present (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

There is a growing body of literature that discusses individual agency in society (Barbarin & Richter, 2001; Levine, 2005; Ramphele, 2002). Agency is regarded as the creative unstructured aspects of social life (MacLeod, 1987; Swidler, 1986; Willis, 1977) and individual choice (Wendt, 1987). Others extend agency to aspects that include human actions in general (Giddens & Dalmayer, 1982; Mahan, 1982). My study employs Sen’s (1985:203) definition of agency as the free choice of a person to do and achieve what he believes to be important for himself. Goffmann (1967)

concur that all people display agency that they practice in their everyday lives. For youth, for example, this agency requires tiny transforming actions for navigation of the most ordinary transactions in their daily lives (Goffmann, 1967). Youth often display 'the ability to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structure' (Calhoun, 2002) and the "capacity to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998:971).

Youth are aware of their circumstances and know how to work with the resources available to them. They apply the knowledge within their specific contexts. They have the ability to reflect on their circumstances and to re-interpret or to mobilise or adapt to the variety of resources in terms of their circumstances. Their knowledge of their circumstances (navigation practices with regard to the establishment of their educational subjectivity) presents the basis and capacity for creativity. Furthermore, the realisation of their agency depends on their positioning within their community (Goffmann, 1967).

The scenario below illustrates how young people will respond to space and opportunities as they forge their individual agency. Fataar (2009) provides an example of the ways in which young people encounter the worlds of their schooling, and what they become as they exercise their capacity to aspire in the light of their educational and broader social practices. Fataar (2009) argues that historically disadvantaged students' schooled careers can be understood on the basis of their consideration of their self-representation, which is cultivated in the light of adaptations they make in their living spaces. Borrowing from Lefebvre's (1991/1997) and Massey's (1994) conceptualization of space Fataar (2010:4) states that there is a productive relationship between space and human agency. He points to the fact that 'lived space' is produced by human agency. Human action is therefore constructed out of the dynamic interactions with the physical attributes of the environment (Fataar, 2010:4). Fataar's (2007) study draws on ethnographic research in a township on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa. The author argues that students such as Layla display active agency that enable them to master the assimilative expectations of the school environment. They establish a form of trans-local cultural citizenship in changing topographical environments.

His study focuses on young people's identification in their interaction with schooling in the city. He uses the case of one high school student to tell the story of a young South African girl, Layla, as a means to provide qualitative substantiation for his argument, pointing towards one way of understanding the subjectivities of young people when they engage in trans-local mediations of their school environs. The data provided in Fataar's (2007) study help to provide a perspective of the performance of 'subjectivity on the move'.

Layla enters a school of her choice about 45 kilometres from her home, embraces its habitus and intellectual capital, and learns how to play the educational game. This involved immense effort and sacrifice for both her and her family. Fataar (2012) claims that Layla submits herself to the regulation of the school, becoming almost chameleon-like in her mimetic ability to assimilate what the school asks, and then performing with excellence according to its demands. The author claims that Layla "developed a thin connectedness to her living space and firmer attachments to becoming spatially mobile, wherein her attendance of the two city schools played a formative role" (Fataar, 2012:29). What the study shows is, despite life circumstances, marginalised students reject the influences of the community, adopting, instead, a positive approach to their future.

In contrast, Willis (1977), presenting the second scenario, focuses on the agency of a group of working-class youth in Britain in the 1970s whose identity is in opposition to the dominant middle-class identity thus failing to establish educational subjectivities. Willis followed a group of 12 white, non-academic, working-class, counter-cultural 'lads' in both their school and work settings in the 1970s. These 'lads' rejected school and all its values and instead focused on leaving school as soon as they could. In the meantime, while they attended school, they spent most of their time trying to disrupt or avoid lessons or just generally resisting authority in order to shake themselves free of any control the school could impose on them. Willis (1977) argues that these lads consciously developed an anti-school or counter-school subculture. By being in a subculture, these non-academic pupils raised their self-esteem by gaining status in front of their peers. Disrupting lessons, playing up to teachers and breaking as many rules as they could was their way of resisting the system that had labelled them failures.

In *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, he provides a rich ethnographic study of why British working-class children get working-class jobs (1977). This demonstrates how theory, ethnographic method and the deployment of a sociological imagination can crack open a social conundrum. Specifically, the approach explores the mechanisms through which inequalities are reproduced at the nexus of structural conditions and creative human agency (Willis, 1977). Willis was not content with the theoretical architectures emerging from the analysis of official statistics or institutional documents. He wanted to look at mechanisms of reproduction through agency, stressing the active collaboration of working-class youths in their subjectification.

Roy Nash's (2000) longitudinal study was based on focus group interviews with secondary school students and examined the consequences for disadvantaged students who rejected the education offered by the school. He attributed the lack of establishment of an educational subjectivity to the fact that the students were unable to develop an appropriate set of behaviours necessary to succeed at their schooling.

2.5. The concept of space

Spatial analysis helps to explain the relationship between students and their shifting school identity. Spatiality thus involves the relational or human dimensions of space, i.e. lived space or, as Lefebvre (1971; 1991) suggests, that a relational appreciation of space is actively produced in, and through everyday human practices. How students position themselves within their social spaces, and through their interactions, practices and daily adaptations, helps them to nurture their sense of self. Keith and Pile (2004) argue that space can be understood as lived relationships of students between their physical environment in the disadvantaged environment and their practices in it, and their mobility to schools in middle class environments. This is in contrast to the view that space is fixed, dead and un-dialectical (Sawalha, 2010). Space is not a given neutral container (Gulson & Symes, 2007). Instead, it is continuously produced by way of socio-spatial relations. Space is a product of cultural, social, political, and economical interactions, as well as of desires and relations (Gulson & Symes, 2007). Space is, therefore, not merely an objective structure, but a social experience. Space should thus be understood as the active

interaction of the physical environments and the students' use of, and practice in it (Gulson & Symes, 2007:127).

Massey describes space in social relations as “constituted by the interlocking of ‘stretched-out’ social relations.” (1994: 4, 22). Thomas Faist’s (2000:45-46) understanding of space in a Swedish school links space and place and describes space as including physical features as well as referring to “larger opportunity structures, the social life and the subjective images, values and meanings” that are represented by a particular place (see Kivisto, 2001). Breaking free from the ‘container concept of space’, he describes space as encompassing or spanning ‘various territorial locations’ (Faist, 2000). Thus for Faist, “[s]pace has a social meaning that extends beyond simple territoriality” and states that “only with concrete social or symbolic ties does it [space] gain meaning” (Faist, 2000:45-46).

Although Bourdieu does not use the notion of space he does refer to social spaces as being constituted of social groups and relates the concept of space to a field which he describes as “a network, a configuration of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:97). Thus for Bourdieu a field is a structured social space within which interactions, transactions and events occur (Grenfell, 2008). For individuals who move across various spaces and between different fields, such as the respondents in this study, who move from their domestic environments to the school environment, I use the concept of space (as the students move across different spaces) and field (as they move between different fields) to explain how the four respondents develop a ‘trans-local’ habitus. This concept is developed more fully in my theoretical chapter, my aim here is to simply show the link between space as it is used in the literature pertaining to youth and mobility and Bourdieu’s concept of field as it is used within this dissertation to develop the notion of a trans-local habitus.

Fataar’s (2007:2) view of space as a social construction supports the notion that space is decisive in determining the subjectivities the students take on. In his view, space is not simply an empty landscape filled with buildings, but refers to the relational or human dimensions of spatiality. Space describes the combination of the physical environment, social practices, social interaction and adaptive and fluid

subjectivities. He refers to these spaces as 'lived spaces', which, implies a buzz of human relations and practices. Similarly, Lefebvre (1971/1991) defines space as the relational appreciation of space as actively produced in and through every day human practices. He argues that 'lived spaces' are neither a conceptual structure (idealist) nor an emptiness awaiting objects (materialist). Rather, space is materially produced and simultaneously inseparable from the process of production. Smith (2010) describes space as the interaction between the physical environment and people's uses of it and practices in it. Hart and Moore (1973) take the idea further by stating that production of space is inseparably tied to its physical production in specific sites such as cities, rural villages or urban towns, in and through situated practices. These situated practices are simultaneously material, symbolic and mediated through power relations in specific sites.

The three spaces the students in the current study are required to traverse are their lived spaces at home, their mobile spaces and their aspirational spaces at Focus Schools. These spaces are inherently different and require unique responses and adaptations from these young people. Because these spaces are often immensely diverse, they are considered to be culturally disjunctural. It is therefore required of the children to develop adequate social transactions for each of these spaces to facilitate its successful navigation. As Fataar (2009:3) puts it, "Children now develop the cultural literacy to navigate disjunctural spaces, i.e. in the space of school and the space of home, and a third, if one considers the space traversed when travelling across the city." He explains that, "trans-local transactions are fundamental to their cultural navigations" (Fataar, 2015:67). In layman's terms, these students would need to become 'streetwise' so that they are able to safely negotiate their ways to their school. The schooling subjectivity of young people, therefore, is shaped by negotiating and navigating those practices and processes which can be found in environmental terrains and institutions which may be alienating and traumatic. My research shows how these students are positioned 'in' and 'by' their lived spaces (whether environmental or institutional) in specific ways, and they, based on their own resources, networks and interactions, and by exercising their agency, actively construct their own spaces of learning. Next I address a study where the space experienced by the students is a daunting one.

Bland (2004) conducted research among disadvantaged students in Queensland, Australia, for whom the cultures of secondary schools were alienating and traumatic. His aim was to shed light on the coping strategies used by the students, and how they dealt with their school environments. Their experiences add insight into ways disadvantaged students establish educational subjectivities upon entering unfamiliar middle-class contexts. Bland (2004) shows that the imposition of middle-class standards and values, that permeate their school, provides a challenging environment with which the students have to cope. Some students accept their fate, and the constraints of their circumstances, while others are able to improvise through developing a 'feel for the game'. The students in Bland's (2004) study not only learnt and valued their own culture, but also learned the language of power (e.g. formal English) as one would a second language. For all Bland's (2004) students, education was seen as the most accessible means of upward mobility or deliverance from their domestic and social difficulties. Bland (2004) also refers to turning points experienced by the students in his study. For example, the efforts of teachers, and the role they played in supporting the students, provided the turning points for many of the students in directly motivating the group. A second key turning point for some students involved them breaking away from their families.

Similarly, Reay, Crozier and Clayton's (2009:1103) work provides a nuanced understanding in which the challenge of being in an unfamiliar education institution results in a range of creative adaptations and multifaceted responses. The study focuses on a group of nine disadvantaged students in an elite English university. They suggestively refer to these students as 'strangers in paradise' in reference to their struggles for recognition and inclusion at this university. Reay *et al.* (2009) conducted their research against the backdrop of a decline in the proportion of disadvantaged students in universities in the United Kingdom. Based on surveys, individual and group interviews with students from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, their findings reveal a mismatch between high-status university and low-status social backgrounds. Although opportunities were presented at the university, self-affirmation created tension and unease in the students. This is in contrast with middle-class students who did not confront social dilemmas, such as the ability to maintain connections to one's social background, which includes family, friends and the wider community. The study finds that the students display a range of

creative adaptations and multi-faceted responses in surviving their university study. The authors show that, despite their criticism of the university as a limiting and unwelcoming social space, the students nonetheless remained focused on their educational attainment (Reay *et al.*, 2009). The authors draw the conclusion that the influence of their prior learning experiences and dispositions, as well as the dynamics between these and the students' current academic contexts, positioned them to be productive learners.

Focusing on the social and cultural dimension of students' educational experiences, Cross and Atinde (2015) challenge the assumption in the current literature that all disadvantaged students are doomed to failure. They provide insight into the 'black box' of students' education experiences by exploring their social and cultural dimensions. The focus of their study is on how the students negotiate their access to an unfamiliar university environment. Their findings, based on in-depth life history interviews with eight respondents at one South African university, highlight the view that the key to the students' success rests on their strong individual agency and positive dispositions towards their education. The study illustrates how students from disadvantaged backgrounds negotiate their success at the university differently from others, and that their background plays an important role in the way they deal with the academic challenges they confront in an unfamiliar environment.

Cross and Atinde (2015) argue that the students carry with them learning resources of a different kind, which are not always a liability but rather an asset. They come to the university with their own mechanisms and strategies that may enable them to cope with the challenges they face. The authors attribute the primary factors for the success of these students to their educational resilience, motivation and self-determination. The study further argues that personal characteristics reflect the patterns of behaviour and the outcome of cognitive processes acquired from the students' day-to-day life in poor rural communities. Cross and Atinde (2015) claim that there is 'success in disadvantage', i.e. the students make the most of opportunities with which they are presented, devising strategies that lead to positive outcomes. The key to success rests on the students' strong individual agency and the positive predispositions and attributes that characterise them. These traits enable the students to make the most of the opportunities with which they are presented,

and to devise strategies that lead to positive educational subjectivities (Cross & Atinde, 2015). This argument links to the concept of human agency which I address below.

2.6. Student migration

In this section I concentrate on the growing body of existing literature that discusses the ways in which students adapt to, and find ways of working with, their dissonant environments in order to cultivate their school learning processes and subjectivities that they put to use in the quest for an education. Here I focus on how the students' educational experiences and subjectivities are influenced through their 'mobilities' or movements across geographic space.

Sociologists and cultural theorists have described new or changing forms of movement, as cultural 'flows' (Appadurai, 1996), 'liquid life' (Baumann, 2005), or a 'networked society' (Castells, 1996). The change in such movements or mobilities of people, media, material goods, and other social phenomena, includes the reach or extension of such movements, and connections between 'global' and 'local' life. It further includes the creation of new spaces and places, and new speeds and rhythms of everyday social practice. This is argued by Leander, Phillips and Taylor (2010:329) to be the most important contrast between contemporary social life and that of just a decade or two ago. Despite these changes and longer conversations about their meaning in a range of disciplines, mobilities and their relation to learning within education are still understudied and under-theorised. This section reviews current and relevant literature that discusses the manner in which mobile students establish their subjectivities between their home and school environments in a quest to access quality schooling. These students have to combine mobile bodies with a number of affective processes to substantiate the adjustments they make in order to fit into and mediate the hegemonic cultures of the schools that they enter. In describing the ways in which these youth make the adjustments they are reported to "cultivate or build cultural repertoires" (Fataar, 2007:10) that enable them to navigate the social spatial shifts involved in living in between racially and culturally dissonant spaces.

The phenomenon of students attending schools far removed from their homes, often on the other side of the city or the township, is labelled by Fataar (2015) as 'schools choice displacement'. The advent of children attending schools away from their neighbourhoods, argues Fataar, has created an affective incoherence resulting from a disconnection between their places of living and their spaces of schooling. Soudien (2007:85) supports this view when he states that there is often a striking difference between the formal and informal arenas in the lives of these students.

Fataar (2007:10) suggests that the identifications of the trans-locating students are made up by a number of hybrid processes based on 'putting together' (Simone, 2002) cultural material that draws on elements of race, religion, ethnicity, class aspiration and strategic embodiment. Fataar (2007) believes that it is the active and mediated readings of those cultural materials that constitute their versatile and flexible identifications. His conceptual approach is an attempt to accord constitutive power and agency to young people as they move across space to maximize their life chances in spite of, or because of, the ephemeral circumstances of their places of living. Fataar (2007:11) locates the story of mobile youth in the analytical gap which lies in understanding how geography and 'social space' are articulated in young people's interaction with their schools. In attempting to provide conceptual insight into some of the identification bases upon which young people in the middle-class schools substantiate their navigations, Fataar (2007:10) argues that it is the contingencies of social space in changing urban contexts, combined with the considered cultivation of deportment, that can explain the youthful adaptations of the mobile students.

Similarly, Bland (2004), Cross and Atinde (2015) and Reay *et al.* (2009) attribute the key to the emergence of productive educational subjectivities resting on the students' strong individual agency and the positive pre-dispositions and attributes that characterise them. They consider the primary factors to the success of mobile students to be resilience, motivation and self-determination. They further argue that personal characteristics reflect the patterns of behaviour and the outcomes of cognitive processes acquired from their day-to-day life in rural communities (Cross & Atinde, 2015). These authors illustrate how the backgrounds of disadvantaged, mobile students enable them to carry with them learning resources that are an asset,

in contrast to viewing them as liabilities. Bland (2004) refers to a 'turning point' experienced by mobile students which involves them breaking away from their families in order to establish their educational subjectivity.

Educational migration in South Africa has a spatial and demographic character that is determined by the logics of apartheid spatial planning. In a study of student migration at 120 selected urban schools in five provinces, Sekete, Shilubane and Moila (2001) found that 49% of students are from other residential areas than those in which schools are located. These results reflect a significant migratory school attendance trend. Studies conducted have produced interesting results around the complexities that surround the specific demographic mixes at schools (Soudien, 2004). While the national evidence of the nature and extent of movement and flux of South African students across the apartheid divide is not available, anecdotal evidence suggests that the strongest movement involves black students who move to previously white, coloured and Indian schools. Schools in African townships saw little or no access by white, coloured or Indian students (Christie, 2006). South Africa's historically black schools have not experienced any racial mixing and they remain segregated. Former 'white only' Afrikaans medium schools recorded a steady increase in enrolment from students whose home language was Afrikaans, but also from African students, although in less significant numbers than former 'white only' English medium schools. Many former white school communities were concerned with the speed of the transformation and the number of black students now seeking to gain access into their schools (Johnson, 2007). Some were better able to adapt to the changing patterns than others, and there are numerous studies which conclude that the criteria such as language proficiency or admissions tests were used unfairly to stem the tide of access from black communities (Naidoo, 2004). In the Cape Town area, former Indian and coloured schools located on bus and train routes from the townships have been the recipients of considerable numbers of black students. It is clear then that educational migration or trans-location is a national phenomenon that needs to be understood in specific contexts (Sekete *et al.*, 2001).

Different authors use different terms to describe student migration. For example, in their study of school catchment and pupil movement and flux Parsons, Chalkley and Jones (2000) use the terms '*movements*' or '*flows*' when they examine the extent to

which students move to schools outside their home catchment areas while others, who see migration in a negative way, describe it as '*pupil flight*'. This connotation brings in the issue of the reasons why these students move from schools in their communities to schools that are more distant. In South Africa these flights have generally been reported in the media, with limited empirical research to explain the phenomenon. Gang wars on the Cape Flats, for example, are associated with this type of movement, where students leave township schools for suburban areas. For the sake of safety, many black parents remove their children from nearby historically black schools and send them to schools which they consider to be safer and better able to equip their children with quality education.

The limited academic work on learner migration in South Africa (Paterson & Kruss, 1998; Samuel & Sayed 2003) indicates the following trends:

- Student migration knows no age limits: from pre-school to tertiary education, children and young people are seen in buses and taxis that leave as early as 04:30 a.m., travelling to schools outside their home areas;
- Movement from township to suburban schools: Many township residents perceive suburban schools to be better resourced in terms of teacher commitment, curriculum choice, the availability of resources and the provision of extra-curricular activities;
- Movement from township schools to other township schools: Students leave former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools in the townships (previously designated for African children) for other township schools that formerly served Coloured and Indian children;
- Movement between public and private schools: The flow from public to private schools is prevalent mainly among White learners and to a lesser extent among Black middle-class students. At the same time high fees in private schools reverse the trend, generating a detectable flow back to ex-Model C schools;
- Movement from informal settlements to township schools: Most of the informal settlements that have developed near towns or cities have no plans for the development of social infrastructure, such as schools. Students from these

settlements seem to fill the spaces in township schools left by those who have left for suburban, inner-city or other township schools;

- Movement from rural to urban schools: Rural schools include those on farms, in villages and in small towns. Many domestic workers and other parents seeking employment feel that urban areas are better-resourced, offering better opportunities for employment and schooling;
- Movement from township schools to inner city schools: The geographic location of schools in the inner city attracts learners, especially those located near major train and bus stations and taxi ranks. These schools draw learners desperate to find alternatives to dysfunctional schools in their home areas.; and
- Movement from township and rural schools to attend Focus Schools that have been established in urban areas to improve quality of education of historically disadvantaged youth: This migration pattern describes the mobility of the students in my study exactly. Considerable sacrifices are made by these parents in terms of geographical convenience as their children trans-locate over long distances in search of what is perceived to be a 'better education'.

The role of education in the analysis of migration and unemployment is explained by Hallak's (1976:15) study which focuses on migration from rural areas. Literature reviewed in his paper reveals that there exists a powerful relationship between formal schooling and an escalated propensity to migrate. The reasons for this phenomenon are explained as follows:

- The educational qualifications utilised as selection devices for urban employment and consideration for the high level of income that such employment offers relative to rural income initiates migration.
- The reason why rural to urban migration persists in spite of the high level of unemployment in urban areas, rests in the dissatisfaction with the education imparted in rural schools (Hallak, 1976:15). Steyn and Van Wyk (1999) discovered that working conditions in township schools are poor, that the culture of learning and teaching is non-existent, that the teacher workload is high and that environmental factors are generally discouraging. In another study, it was

found that the preconditions for quality education simply do not exist in many black schools (Wise, 2000). Furthermore, most of these schools remain congested, are deprived of books and basic facilities, teachers are not adequately qualified, and missed lessons and rote learning are common. The absence of cultures of teaching and learning was evident in many schools and many teachers were unable to maintain discipline, especially since the abolition of corporal punishment. In the light of this, it is not surprising that many black parents opt for urban schools (Wolhuter, 2014).

- Based on this argument, educational planners have proposed to 'ruralise education' in order to create improved coherence between school children and the conditions of rural life, thereby discouraging the attraction of the cities. Hallak (1976) argues that, unless radical changes occur that reduce disparities between rural and urban areas, changes that reject the 'dualisation' of the economy, etc., ruralising education will either fail to stop the influx of migration to urban centres or succeed partially and legitimize inequality of opportunity between groups in various areas of the country.

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter I provided an overview of relevant literature that relates to my research question. Firstly, I located this study contextually within the broader reform context of South Africa by offering a historical overview and location of this study. Secondly, I discussed the concept of youth in order to provide an understanding of how youth draw on social, educational, cultural and political resources in order to negotiate their changing lives. This was followed by a discussion on changing student subjectivities and their interaction with their social worlds. The next section considered the concept of space in relation to students' mobility across different spatial terrains to access quality schooling. The final section provided an overview of student migration, both students who successfully integrated into new environments, and those who struggled to integrate, and discussed the practices that the students drew on in this process.

This literature review provides my study with a foundation on which the theoretical perspective can be advanced. The next chapter will provide the theoretical lenses

that will focus on the trans-local navigation practices of students who were able to establish viable educational subjectivities within their mobile spaces.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework and analytical lenses to examine my research question, namely: *How do high school students mediate and establish their educational subjectivities at a Focus School in the light of their mobility across different social spaces?*

The study focuses on the complex ways in which four working-class students established their educational subjectivities as they navigated their educational path from their working-class home environment to a school in a middle-class context. In this chapter, I combine Bourdieu's thinking tools of habitus, field and capital, with Urry's theory of mobility in order to develop a theoretical framework to understand the students' mobile habitus mediations and their adapting and shifting subjectivities. This framework serves to link the micro processes that involve the students' school going experiences to the macro dimensions of the social structural arrangement in terms of where their school-going took place.

My study is localised in the analytical gap that exists in understanding the trans-locating practices of working-class students across their various living spaces. The aim is to explore an understanding of the complex ways in which the students establish their educational subjectivities, especially in the light of their mobilities between their living environments and the Focus School.

Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, field and capital and Urry's mobility theory are used as useful tools to explain the students' shifting educational subjectivities. The key contribution of Bourdieu in his theory of practice, is to bridge the divide between objectivist and subjectivist understandings of what social actors do (Webb *et al.*, 2002) by showing that objective social surroundings condition subjective dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu's theory of practice, augmented by Urry's theorisation on mobility, enables me to develop a framework to discuss the students' ability to mediate their educational subjectivities to establish their trans-local habitus as they moved between their working-class domestic environment and the middle-class school environment.

In the following section I provide a summary of Pierre Bourdieu's biography and a discussion of his theory of social practice.

3.2. Who is Bourdieu?

In this section I offer an outline of Bourdieu's biography as this sets a framework for what follows in the rest of the chapter. I provide a brief sketch of the events which surrounded Bourdieu's life and impacted his thinking; which includes social, cultural, historical, political and economic events. A French sociologist, Bourdieu was active professionally for almost 50 years of the second half of the twentieth century. Richard Shusterman (1999:1) regards Bourdieu as "France's leading living social theorist." Calhoun suggests that Bourdieu, along with Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, were the most influential French thinkers "whose work based their work in the light of a critique of structuralism" (Calhoun, LiPuma, & Postone, 1993:7). Structuralism has an objective view on people as agents in society. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital constitute a significant and successful attempt "to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies) and everyday practice (what people do, and why they do it)" (Webb *et al.*, 2002:1).

Born in Béarn, a region of the French Pyrénées-Atlantiques, on 1 August 1930, Bourdieu's early life had been that of a traditional rural peasant. His family were evidently of modest economic means — his father had never completed his own schooling, while his mother continued her education to the age of 16. The language spoken in his home was Gascon, a now dead regional language. Bourdieu went to the local elementary school before attending the *lycée* in Pau, the town which was sufficiently far from Denguin to warrant Bourdieu attending as a boarder. Bourdieu obviously showed academic talent as he passed an entrance examination to attend the *lycée Louis Le Grand* in Paris, which was celebrated as one of the principal preparatory schools for students aspiring to attend the elite Parisian training schools — the so-called *Grandes Écoles*. In due course, Bourdieu passed the *concours* for the *École Normale Supérieure* (ENS) which he entered in 1951, graduating in 1955 with a degree in philosophy. The ENS has long been reputed as an incubator of the French intelligentsia.

After completing his military service in Algeria where a bloody war raged between Algerians and French colonialists, Bourdieu taught in the *faculté de lettres* at the University of Algiers. The post-World War II period being Bourdieu's formative years, in a very real sense, was the experience in Algeria that precipitated his move from philosophy to sociology (Grenfell, 2008:16). In Algeria, he observed the manner in which traditional society operated in opposition to the modern world, and the consequences it then had for the individuals involved (see Bourdieu, 1962; in Grenfell, 2008:17). He also noticed a similar juxtaposition, albeit it in a vastly different context, in his home region of the Béarn, where modern living invaded and shaped local practices (see Bourdieu, 1962; in Grenfell, 2008:17).

His experience of schooling had very much brought home his own social position: as a rural boarder in the lyceè he was forced to wear a grey smock whilst the day pupils arrived in the latest attire (Grenfell, 2008:17). The latter also made fun of his Gascon accent (see Bourdieu, 2002 in Grenfell, 2008:17). Education was a double-edged sword that highlighted one's idiosyncrasies while at the same time offering the means to escape one's immediate surroundings. It is therefore unsurprising that Bourdieu chose education and culture as the principal themes for his first studies in the 1960s (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990 in Grenfell, 2008:17).

Very little is known about Bourdieu's personal life except that in November 1962 he married Marie-Claire Brizzard, with whom he subsequently had three sons (Grenfell, 2008:14). Bourdieu started out as a philosopher, influenced by the work of Martin Heidegger and phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, but his interest in Algeria saw him forego philosophy for anthropology, which was then very much under the influence of structuralists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss. His dissatisfaction with the inability of structuralist anthropology to take into account or make sense of the practical (and strategic) dimensions of everyday life led to his critique of anthropology contained in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (1990) (Webb *et al.*, 2002:2). These two studies are relevant to my research since its focus is on education and culture. His work on education, found in *Reproduction of Education in Education, Society and Culture* (1977) and *Homo Academicus* (1988) focused on the role that secondary and tertiary education play in reproducing social and cultural classification and stratification. However, probably

one of his best known books which was translated into English, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) is an empirically based critique of Kantian aesthetics (Webb *et al.*, 2002:3). He retired from his academic job at the *College de France* in 2001. Bourdieu died of cancer in January the following year (Grenfell, 2008:15).

Bourdieu's theoretical tools; habitus, field and capital offer an apt way of thinking about students' experiences in relational terms. I see the field intersecting the school and the home environment as a structural map, as a set of interlocking sites and consequent influences. Habitus, with its incorporation of both structure and agency, seems to provide a way of understanding my respondents' activities in support of their education processes. Bourdieu's work, *Sociology in Question* (1993), describes habitus as a 'power of adaptation' which constantly performs an adaptation to the outside world. This theorisation of how habitus operates enables us to understand the school-going student as a complex amalgam who is always in the process of becoming complete, i.e. there is no finality or finished identity. In this study, one of my aims in using Bourdieu's concept of habitus as an analytical framework, is to develop a more nuanced understanding of the navigation practices of mobile students, resulting in a change in their subjectivities.

Bourdieu insisted that the value of his concepts lies in their explanatory power in concrete empirical analyses. But before that, it is necessary to provide a description of Bourdieu's trilogy of concepts – habitus, field, and capital.

3.3. Bourdieu's trilogy

3.3.1. Habitus

Habitus is central to Bourdieu's sociological approach and key to his contribution to social science (Maton, 2008:49). Aristotle, Ockham, Aquinas, Merleau-Ponty, Husserl and Elias, as well as Durkheim and Weber described something similar to 'habitus'. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:121). In this section the concept of habitus is explored in order to develop an understanding of how the students established a trans-local habitus that enabled them to become successful at the Focus School.

Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* "emphasises the underlying structures of practices; i.e. acts are underpinned by a *generative principle*" (Grenfell, 2008). The *habitus*, as something which one acquires over time, is durably incorporated within the body in the form of permanent dispositions. The term *habitus*, therefore, is a constant reminder that who we are is linked to our individual history. Bourdieu argues that in order to understand his conceptualisation of *habitus* it is important to focus on the principles underlying and generating those practices. What may be "invisible relationships" to the untrained gaze "because they are obscured by the realities of ordinary sense-experience" (Bourdieu, 1984:22) are, to Bourdieu, crucial to understanding the social world. The 'genetic' or 'relational' mode of thinking, therefore, excavates beneath the surface of the phenomena to hypothesise the existence of a generative principle, the *habitus*, with its own properties and tendencies.

Habitus is formally defined in Bourdieu's works of *Reproduction* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (1990). Over time, his concept of *habitus* expanded from a cognitive focus to embrace a more corporeal dimension which is found in his concept of *hexis*. Through this development, *habitus* provides us with a tool that enables us to analyse a wide variety of social arenas. Bourdieu insisted that the value of his concepts lie in their ability to be used as an explanatory tool in concrete empirical analyses. It is therefore necessary to understand the ways in which Bourdieu puts *habitus* to work by first defining the concept of *habitus*.

Maton in Grenfell (2008:50) defines *habitus* as arising "from both an experiential and sociological conundrum". Bourdieu notes that while we might feel that we are free agents, we still base our everyday decisions on assumptions about predictable character, behaviour and attitudes of others. Sociologically, social practices are characterised by particular regularities, for example working-class kids tend to get working class jobs. As Willis (1977) puts it, middle-class youth consider university as a natural step, and so forth – yet there are no explicit rules dictating such practices (Maton, 2008:50). This made Bourdieu question how behaviour "could be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules" (Bourdieu, 1994:65). In other words,

Bourdieu asks “how social structure and individual agency can be reconciled ... how the ‘outer’ social, and the ‘inner’ self, help to shape each other” (Maton, 2008:50).

Bourdieu defines habitus as the property of social agents (individuals, groups or institutions) that comprises of a “structured and structuring structure” (Bourdieu, 1994:170). Habitus is ‘structured’ by one’s past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences; it is ‘structuring’ in that one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices; and it is a ‘structure’ in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or un-patterned (Maton, 2008:51). Habitus comprises “a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices” (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). The term disposition for Bourdieu is crucial, bringing together the ideas of structure and tendency since:

It expresses first the result of an organising action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates the way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) in particular, a predisposition, a tendency, propensity or inclination (Bourdieu, 1977:214).

These dispositions or tendencies are both durable in that they last over time, and transposable, in that they are capable of adapting to a wide variety of social situations and action (Bourdieu, 1993:87). The habitus is both structured by “conditions of existence and generates practices, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and so forth in accordance with its own structure” (Maton, 2008:51). Habitus will be defined further in relation to Bourdieu’s other concepts. Central to understanding how *habitus* works in relation to practice, is an understanding of the relationship between *habitus* and *field*.

3.3.2. Field

While habitus brings into focus the subjective aspect of practice, *field* focuses on the objective. Bourdieu explains:

I define field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determination they impose upon their occupants, agents or

institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of powers (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:72-3).

'Field' is one of Bourdieu's core concepts as it provides the setting in which agents and their social positions are located. According to Bourdieu, the position of an individual within a specific field context is the result of the individual's interaction between the specific rules of the field, their habitus and the capital (social, economic and cultural) which they bring to the field. Fields interact with each other, and are hierarchical in that sub-fields may be subordinate to a larger field of power and/or class relations (Grenfell, 2008). Bourdieu shared Weber's view that society cannot be analysed or understood simply in terms of economic classes and ideologies. As a result, instead of analysing societies in terms of classes, Bourdieu uses the concept of *field* which he considers to be a social arena in which people manoeuvre and struggle in the pursuit of desirable resources. Bourdieu argued that "in order to understand interactions between people, or to explain an event or social phenomenon, it is insufficient to look at what was said, or what happened" (Bourdieu, 2005:148), instead, it is necessary to examine the social space (or field) in which the interactions, transactions and events occurred (Grenfell, 2008:67).

Bourdieu uses the analogy of a competitive game that occurs in social spaces or fields, "with various social agents using differing strategies to maintain or improve their position" (Grenfell, 2008:69). What is at stake in the social 'game' that is played out in a specific 'field' is the accumulation of *capitals*: which are both part of, and the product of, a field. Bourdieu suggested that there are four forms of capital: economic; cultural; social and symbolic, which will be discussed later in this chapter. According to Bourdieu there is no level playing ground in a social field, players who begin with particular forms of capital are at an advantage at the outset because the field depends on and produces more capital building on the capital that an individual already has. In this way successful players use their capital advantage to accumulate more, and to advance further and become more successful than others

in that 'field' environment (Grenfell, 2008:69). Each field has their own histories, rules, and expectations. Social agents who occupy particular social positions in a field context, and who are successful at 'playing the game', understand how to behave in the field, and this 'knowledge' is considered 'natural' and understood as a 'truth', or *doxa* of that particular field (Grenfell, 2008:70). *Doxa* refers to the practice of accepting a set of core values and discourses in a field as inherently true and necessary. For Bourdieu, "the 'doxic attitude' means bodily and unconscious submission to conditions that are in fact quite arbitrary and contingent" (Webb *et al.*, 2002:xi). The *doxa* misrecognises the logics of practice that are at work in a field, so that even when confronted with the field's social (re)productive purposes, individuals are able to explain it away as simply the way in which things are done (Grenfell, 2008:70). In this section I briefly described *field*, and in the next section I look at how Bourdieu arrives at the notion of *capital*.

3.3.3. Capital

A third key concept that plays an important role in the relationship between habitus and field is capital. Capital according to Grenfell (2008) is basically a synonym for status or position and refers to the resources that one brings to the field or that one has access to in the field. Capital is the currency with which we buy social recognition. Bourdieu states that "capital is a social relation, which only exists and only produces its effects in the field in which it is produced and reproduced" (1998:133).

Bourdieu distinguishes between four different types of capital. *Economic capital* refers to an objectified form such as money, property, and other assets. *Social capital* refers to social relationships, interactions, networks of influence or support based on group membership (such as family), friends, or other contacts. *Cultural capital* is based on the accumulation of forms of knowledge, educational credentials, and skills that sets an individual apart from another. *Symbolic capital* refers to socially recognised legitimisation such as prestige or honour.

Bourdieu uses the word *capital* to describe the social products of a field or system of relations where individuals carry out social interactions. Social products in this sense include "the material and the ideational: thoughts, actions, objects, and products of

human activity” (Grenfell & James, 1998:18). Capital can be seen as another concept used to give “material base to an ideational reading of social action” (Bourdieu, 1980:2-3). It is a useful concept because it allows us to think about social action in terms of varying degrees of capital and, to this extent, it is sometimes quantifiable. Moreover, capital is not readily available to everyone, on the same basis; scarcity of social resources is the “lubricant of social systems” (Grenfell & James, 1998:19). In order to understand the concept of capital let us look at how it is defined.

The definition of capital is very wide for Bourdieu and includes material things as well as cultural attributes such as prestige, status and authority, which he refers to as symbolic capital. Cultural capital refers to the accumulation of knowledge, skills and learning, the know-how that advantages an individual and gives them a higher status in society (Bourdieu 1990:138). For Bourdieu, capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange, and the term is extended “to all the goods, material and symbolic without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation” (Harker, Mahar & Wilkes, 1990).

A ‘field of power’ operates as a configuration of capital (economic, cultural and symbolic) that shapes the relations and practices that take place within these fields. A ‘field of power’ is Bourdieu’s metaphor for the ways in which cultural fields conduct themselves. The amount of power a person has within a field depends on the person’s position within the field, and the amount of capital that they possess.

Bourdieu explains that:

To account for the structure and functioning of the social world one has to reintroduce capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognised by economic theory (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2006:105-6).

What is important is that other forms of capital, such as cultural and social, can be seen as ‘transubstantiated’ forms of capital. Bourdieu’s theory of capital and how it is used in various areas of his work possesses distinctive characteristics. As a consequence, there is an important, though subtle, point at issue in terms of how forms of symbolic capital should be understood (Grenfell, 2008:102).

There are, in effect, two different ways in which this is done in Bourdieu's work using the values, tastes and lifestyles of some social groups are, in an arbitrary manner, elevated above those of others in a way that confers social advantage, for example, in education. In the second way, forms of capital such as cultural capital can be understood in terms of qualitative differences in *forms* of consciousness *within* different social groups (class fractions rather than classes in themselves); that is, in terms of *habitus* as a specialisation or cultivation of consciousness and a recognised mastery of some technique(s). In other words, social membership *in itself* (membership of a particular status group *per se*) does not automatically translate into *habitus* that confers symbolic capital in a uniform way for all members (such that, for instance, middle-class and working-class parents are automatically engaged in a zero-sum conflict of interests regarding their children in education simply by virtue of differing degrees of cultural capital associated with class *habitus*) (Grenfell, 2008:102).

A broad distinction developed by Bourdieu is between economic capital (or 'mercantile exchange') on the one hand, and symbolic capital on the other. Symbolic capital includes sub-types such as cultural capital, linguistic capital, scientific and literary capital. The fundamental difference between economic and symbolic capital is that in economic capital the instrumental and self-interested nature of the exchange is transparent. Economic capital refers to financial substance, which explains why someone of a higher 'social' class will have more economic capital. Mercantile exchange is not of intrinsic value, but is always only a means to an end (profit, interest, a wage, etc.). Bourdieu contends that this is also true for other forms of symbolic capital, but that they, in their distinctive ways, deny and suppress their instrumentalism by proclaiming themselves to be disinterested and of intrinsic worth. In the field of the arts, for example, cultural capital is presented as reflecting the intrinsic value of art works in themselves, and the capacity of certain gifted individuals, those with 'distinction' to recognise and appreciate those essential qualities (Grenfell, 2008:103-104).

In all fields of social practice there will be graduations between those who exhibit what Bourdieu terms the 'well-formed habitus' and those who do not. The symbolic forms of capital are associated with the well-formed *habitus* and in any group,

however defined, those with the well-formed *habitus* are higher in cultural capital; although not all *habitus* and their instances of cultural capital are accorded equal value in society; for example, that of the artist versus that of the craftsman. In this second usage, symbolic capital is therefore significant not just for exegetical reasons, but because it points to the possibility of opening new avenues of analysis by examining the effects (for example, in education) of *intra*-group variance and complementarities *between* class fractions, rather than simply intergroup differences and the associated tendency to class essentialism and reductionism. Capital can be understood as the ‘energy’ that drives the development of a field through time. The manner a person uses his capital is through the *habitus*.

Symbolic capital refers to the resources available to a person on the basis of prestige or recognition. In South Africa a political activist, for example, may have the symbolic capital in the context of running for political office. Theorists have argued that symbolic capital accumulates primarily from the fulfilment of social obligations that are themselves embedded with potential for prestige. Much as is the case with the accumulation of financial capital, symbolic capital is ‘rational’ in that it can be freely converted into leveraging advantage within social and political spheres. Yet, unlike financial capital, symbolic capital is not boundless, and its value may be limited or magnified by the historical context in which it was accumulated. Symbolic capital must be identified within the cultural and historical frames through which it originated in order to fully explain its influence across cultures.

Objects, as abstract representations of their environments, may also possess symbolic capital. Symbolic capital may be embedded in the built environment or urban form of a city as a symbolic representation of that land’s cultural value. For example, landmarks usually have symbolic value and utility. They become landmarks because they have symbolic value. This reciprocal relationship provides the landmark with cultural or environmental meaning while, at the same time, lending its environment a layer of prestige.

Capital can be understood as the ‘energy’ that drives the development of a field through time. Capital can be seen as the enactment of the principle of the field. To understand how this is so, it can be noted that the different types of capital are able

to each exist in different forms (see Bourdieu, 1977). In one form, capital is *objectified* in that it can be materially represented in things such as art works, museums, laboratories, books, etc. In another form, capital is *embodied*. Where capital is embodied, it is incorporated within the corporality of the person as predispositions and propensities, as well as in physical features such as body language, stances, intonation and lifestyle choices. Moore states that

between these two is a third expression of capital in the form of *habitus*. Unlike objectified and embodied capital, *habitus* does not have a material existence in itself in the world since it includes attitudes and dispositions. It is insubstantial in the sense that the rules of chess or of grammar cannot be found anywhere in the world in a material form, but are known only through their *realisations* in practice – in the actual games of chess or speech acts that they enable and make possible (see Moore, 2004:168–170).

The formation of *habitus* takes place initially within the family, which Bourdieu refers to as the domestic *habitus*. However, for Bourdieu, the most important agency is education where capital assumes an institutionalised form. However, these forms of capital should be seen as being, in an important sense, continuous with each other, as ‘moments’ of one thing rather than three different varieties of the thing (Grenfell, 2008:105).

The institutionalised form of capital (formal education), to varying degrees and for different groups, attempts to inculcate (to make embodied) a *habitus*, the principle of which is congruent with the dominant principles of the various fields in which capital exists in its objectified forms: to acquire, for example, a predisposition to the ‘rules of the game’ for viewing paintings in a gallery and, furthermore, doing so in a way that appears entirely natural and effortless (Bourdieu, 1984:71; Grenfell, 2008:106).

This definition of capital opens up the possibility that, because of particularities of *habitus*, lower-class groups might acquire types of cultural capital that advantage them in some areas (e.g. education). High levels of learning can be acquired within a domestic *habitus* by virtue of, say, political activism or the inheritance of a skilled craft, tradition or religious commitment (Grenfell, 2008:116). Below I link the trio of Bourdieu’s concepts and explain how they interact.

3.4. Interaction of habitus, field and capital

Since habitus does not stand alone, practices are the result of what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:126) call “an obscure and double relation” or “an unconscious relationship” (Bourdieu, 1993:76) between habitus and field. Bourdieu (1990:101) summarised this relation using the following equation:

$$[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$$

This equation provides an explanation of how practice results from relationships between one’s disposition (habitus) and one’s position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of the social arena (field). This formulation is significant for understanding Bourdieu’s approach; the interlocking nature of his three main ‘thinking tools’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:50): *habitus*, *field* and *capital*. Grenfell (2008) posits that practices are thus not simply the result of one’s habitus but, rather, of relations between one’s habitus and one’s current circumstances.

Grenfell (2008) argues that the physical and social spaces that we occupy are (like the habitus) structured, and it is the relation between these two structures that gives rise to practice. ‘Logic of practice’, simply put, is when

habitus focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking, and being. It captures how we carry within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances, and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others (Maton, 2008:520).

This is an on-going and active process where individuals are engaged in a continuous process of making history, “but not under conditions entirely of our own making” (Maton, 2008:520). Holland and Leander (2004:137) posit that Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’, a component of ‘structuring structures’, is among the best known efforts of practicing theorists to provide vocabulary for understanding hybrid social/ cultural/ psychological forms.

The observation above is true in the context of the current study, in the sense that the four students’ habitus that had been structured within a particular field structure - a working-class domestic environment, now interacted within a different field structure – the middle-class field structure of the Focus School. In moving between

these two field structures the students were faced with a variety of possible choices. These choices would be impacted by their past journey, as their 'history', i.e. that that structured their habitus, will be an integral part in shaping their future choices. Which choices they chose to make, therefore, depended on the range of options available at that *moment*, and on their *disposition* (habitus), the embodied experiences of their journey (Grenfell, 2008). Their choices would then in turn shape their future possibilities, for any choice involves foregoing alternatives while choosing others, and would set them on a particular path that further shaped their understanding of themselves and of the world.

Grenfell (2008) argues that the structures of the habitus are not fixed, but durable and transposable. As the students in this study are mobile students, I now turn to a discussion on habitus and mobility.

3.5. Habitus and mobility

In this section I focus on how Bourdieu and Urry's theories can be employed in the course of analysing and discussing my research data. I tackle habitus, capital, field, mobility, and relate them to my study. I further focus the discussion on Bourdieu's characteristics of habitus that make it useful as a 'thinking tool'.

Central to how *habitus* works is the relationship between habitus and field. Both habitus and field are relational structures, and it is the *relation between* these structures that provides the key for understanding practice. The two structures represent objective and subjective realisations of the same underlying social logic – and mutually constituting, in that each helps shape the other (Grenfell, 2008). That they are also both evolving, is crucial to the relationship between habitus and field, in that they are on-going, dynamic and partial and do not match perfectly, for each has its own internal logic and history. This allows for the relationship between the structure of a field and the habitus of its members to be one of varying degrees of fit or mismatch.

Nash's (2000) and Willis's (1977) studies show that their students felt or anticipated feeling awkward, out of their element, like a 'fish out of water'. They decided that school was 'not for the likes of me', or (if there already), made their excuses and left. In this case the structuring of their habitus did not match that of the social field.

Conversely, there are institutions (where students feel comfortable, at ease, like a 'fish in water') such as the case of Reay *et al's* (2009) middle-class students. Here the students' habitus matched the logic of the field and they were attuned to the *doxa*, the unwritten 'rules of the game' or underlying practices within that field. This relationship between habitus and field, conveyed here, is central to Bourdieu's accounts of social fields of practice and, in particular, their role in social reproduction and change. In *The Inheritors* (1979) and *Reproduction* (1977), for example, Bourdieu and Passeron address why social agents from middle-class backgrounds are more likely, and those from working-class backgrounds less likely, to attend university. They describe how different stimuli during one's childhood shapes one's outlooks, beliefs and practices in ways that impact on their future educational careers. Rather than the educational system excluding access to individuals from non-traditional backgrounds, these individuals withdraw themselves out of the system, stating that university is 'not for the likes of me'.

Conversely, members of the middle-class are more likely to consider university education as a 'natural' part of their inheritance. When at university they are also more likely to feel 'at home', for the underlying principles generating practices of the university field, i.e. its unwritten 'rules of the game', are homologous to their own habitus. Bourdieu states that individuals, through protracted processes of conditioning in particular social environments, come to internalise what objective chances they have, and thus they make their choices accordingly. Bourdieu thus argues that an individual's practices within a given field are conditioned by the individual's expected outcome of a course of action, which, thanks to habitus, is based on the experiences of past outcomes. In this manner, Bourdieu shows how the shaping of our habitus in new or different field contexts allows us a practical mastery or 'feel for the game', but not for all games equally. One's past and on-going conditions of existence enable more of a 'feel' for some games than others, as well as providing one with a particular way of playing different 'games'. How one 'plays the game', i.e. one's aspirations, expectations, and beliefs about what actions to take and the natural way of doing them, are all for Bourdieu neither essential nor natural but, rather, conditioned by one's habitus, and are thereby a mediated form of arbitrary social structure (see Bourdieu, 2000).

It is therefore the physical conditions in which the habitus was constituted that generate our many experiences of possibilities and impossibilities, probable and improbable outcomes, that in turn shape our unconscious sense of the possible, probable and, crucially, desirable for us. In this way it is the habitus that provides us with our sense of place in the social world, where we do our best given our dispositions and resources (see Bourdieu, 1984:471). In this way, we achieve “subjective expectations of objective probabilities” (Bourdieu, 1990: 59), and what is ‘likely’ becomes what we actively choose. Individuals thereby gravitate towards those social fields, and positions within those fields, that best match their dispositions, and avoid fields that involve a field–habitus clash. In other major studies of education (see Bourdieu, 1988), cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984), language (Bourdieu, 1991), Bourdieu repeatedly responds to questions of how and why people think and act as they do, and how these actions and beliefs impact upon social reproduction and change.

Bourdieu notes that “when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a ‘fish in water’: it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127). Here, one’s habitus matches the logic of the field and one feels at ease and is able to determine the limits of what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, the unwritten rules of the game. Moreover, by virtue of field–habitus match, social agents share the *doxa* of the field: the assumptions that ‘go without saying’ and that determine the limits of the doable and the thinkable. The habitus “continuously transforms necessity into virtue by instituting ‘choices’ which correspond to the condition of which it is the product” (Bourdieu 1984:170). Revealing the hidden workings of habitus is thus, for Bourdieu, a kind of ‘socio-analysis’ form of therapy enabling social agents to understand more fully their place in the social world. The relation between habitus and the social world is, however, not always simply one of degrees of match or class – they can become ‘out of synch’.

Because its dispositions are embodied, the habitus develops a momentum that can generate practices for some time after the original conditions which shaped it have changed. Moreover, primary socialisation in the family is, for Bourdieu, deeply formative and, though the habitus is shaped by on-going contexts, this is slow and

unconscious. Our dispositions are durable and do not easily shift or adapt, even when there are changes in the social worlds we inhabit. One can thus have situations where the field changes more rapidly than, or in different directions to, the habitus of individuals. The practices of social agents can then seem anachronistic, stubbornly resistant or ill-informed and Bourdieu describes this as the “hysteresis effect” (Bourdieu, 1977:78–9). An example of this is found in Bourdieu’s analyses of the economic practices of peasants in Algeria (Bourdieu, 2000). Bourdieu argues that the fact that the peasants maintained for some time their traditional modes of social behaviours, was not because they were irrational, stubborn or conservative, but due to the fact that their dispositions were forged in a different world. When this world changed due to colonisation, the peasants’ durable dispositions struggled to change at the same rate, and this led to a state of *hysteresis* before these practices slowly adapted and changed in a process not of “purely mechanical and passive forced accommodation” but of “creative re-invention” (Bourdieu, 1979:4).

That habitus and field (our dispositions and material conditions of existence) have a relative autonomy from one another enables Bourdieu to transcend the structure-agency (individual-social) dichotomy and provides us with an explanatory tool for analysing individuals in their social worlds. In developing habitus to encompass cultural capital, layers of knowledge and experience provide the individual with the tools for adaptation or change. Habitus is durable, but not eternal, therefore it is open to *possibilities* and *potentials*, rather than to fixed certainties. Although individuals’ behaviours may be seen as patterned, to say that they follow a pre-programmed destiny overlooks that habitus includes the “permanent capacity for invention” (Bourdieu, 2004:63). This possibility becomes clearer when looking at individuals encountering new fields. Bourdieu explains that:

[T]he product of social conditionings, and thus of a history (unlike character) is endlessly transferred, either in a direction that reinforces it, when embodied structures of expectation encounter structures of objective chances in harmony with these expectations, or in a direction that transforms it and, for instance, raises or lowers the levels of expectation and aspirations (Bourdieu, 2004:116).

Entry to a new field can be seen as providing the opportunity for habitus to change, as individuals are confronted by the unfamiliar. Habitus is a never-ending process of construction, with individuals' biographies and capital in constant tension or alignment with the field. Whilst this captures the dynamic and relational nature of habitus, individual practices are generated through differential holdings of capital. For Bourdieu, individuals are always positioned relative to others, but rather than these positions being fixed forever, they may vary at different times and in different places.

My study is concerned primarily with the movements of people, which include various forms of internal migration, as well as commuting and everyday movements within cities and between rural and urban areas (Hedberg & do Carmo, 2012; Fataar, 2007; Rizvi, 2004). In other words, at the physical level of students' mobility, they move from their working-class domestic locales (field) to the putatively middle-class locale of the Focus School (new field). I question how they mediate their subjectivities across the different field environments and the role that mobility (material and conceptual) plays in this. The key of my study is mapping the complex contours of this 'trans-locating, trans-locality trans-localising' by factoring into it how the mobility, fluidity, shifts, turns, u-turns, conceptual, material and so on, work.

John Urry's (2012) mobility theory helps to analyse the mobile lives of these students. The intersections between mobile worlds and mobile lives serves as the conceptual backdrop to new ways of thinking about how the students' mobile lives are assembled, by suggesting that the most consequential features of accelerated mobilities for their lives are the recasting of identity in terms of flexibility, adaptability and transformation. Mobilities can never leave the self fundamentally unchanged (Urry, 2012). Travel is itself an ambivalent category in the students' lives. On the one hand, travel could be exhilarating, liberating and a source of new opportunities, both for networking and, as is the case for the students in this study, for quality education. On the other hand, travel brings new burdens, for example time spent away from family and friends, the anxiety of new environments which are incongruent with one's current environment, and so forth.

John Urry, a British sociologist, draws on a range of new research to develop what he calls the 'new mobilities paradigm' for the social sciences. The 'new mobilities paradigm' breaks with the foundational assumption of twentieth-century social science that 'the social' is constituted by a set of intense relations between individuals in close physical proximity. The 'new mobilities paradigm' argues that travel and communication technologies have enabled the proliferation of connections at a distance, and that these distant and intermittent connections are crucial in holding social life together (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Sheller and Urry (2006) show how this paradigm makes visible and comprehensible social phenomena which were previously opaque. Urry provides a lens to examine how 'mobilities' presuppose a 'system' that permits predictable and relatively risk-free repetition. This lens can be employed to outline various systems and then analyse their intersecting implications for social inequality, for social networks and meetings, for the nature of places and for alternative mobility futures.

Lois McNay (2001:146) asserts that, "there has been an increasing emphasis in Bourdieu's more recent work on moments of dis-alignment and tension between habitus and field, which may give rise to social change". In particular, in *The Weight of the World*, Bourdieu (1999) describes the striving, resistance and action of many of the poor and dispossessed as they attempted to change and transform their lives. It is thus that Bourdieu states that when habitus moves across a new, unfamiliar field it often results in, "a habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and its ambivalences, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of the self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities" (1999:437).

Bourdieu often uses the analogy of a game and the notion of 'strategy' to emphasise the active, creative nature of practices. Each social field of practice (including society as a whole) can be understood as a competitive game or 'field of struggles' in which social agents strategically improvise in their quest to maximise their positions. Social agents, such as the students in the study, do not arrive in a field fully armed with knowledge of the state of play, the positions, beliefs and aptitudes of social field, or an understanding of the full consequences of their actions. Rather, they have a particular point of view on proceedings based on their positions, and they learn the tempo, rhythms and unwritten rules of the game through time and experience.

Against accounts such as rational choice theory that suggest conscious choice or rational calculation as the basis of actions, Bourdieu posits the notion of a ‘feel for the game’, one that is never perfect and that takes prolonged immersion to develop.

The analogy of ‘playing the game’ is a particularly *practical* understanding of practice as seen by Bourdieu’s use of terms such as ‘practical mastery’, ‘sense of practice’ and ‘practical knowledge’. Bourdieu contrasts the abstract logic of such approaches, with the notion of practice as ‘rule-following’, with the practical logic of social agents. He uses the analogy of the ‘game’ in order to show how individuals take part in a rule-bound activity within a particular social field, an activity which, without necessarily being the product of obedience to rules, *obeys certain regularities*. Bourdieu suggests that there is a difference between *rules* and *regularities* and states that social games are regulated (Bourdieu, 1990). To understand practice, then, one must relate the *regularities* of social fields to the *practical logic* of social agents. Their ‘feel for the game’ is a feel for these regularities, and the source of this practical logic, is the habitus. “The habitus as the feel for the game”, Bourdieu argues, “is the social game embodied and turned into a second nature” (1994:63). Thus Bourdieu provides an objective account of social regularities and a subjective focus on the meaning-making of social agents (Grenfell, 2008:54). In this study I introduce a range of new concepts (trans-local habitus, which I explain below, being one of them) to capture specific ways in which mobility systems intersect with mobile lives.

3.6. Trans-local habitus

The concept of trans-localism builds on insights from transnationalism. Transnationalism generally refers to belonging to or organising daily life between and among different social fields that span borders (see Brickell & Datta, 2011). Trans-locality or trans-localism as a concept, is built out of transnationalism and refers to spatial practices that involve mobility, migration and spatial interconnectedness that individuals engage in. Oakes and Schein (2006a:xiii) define trans-locality as “being identified with more than one location”. Hedberg and do Carmo (2012) use trans-locality to facilitate an understanding of the relational dimensions of space created through mobility. Brickell and Datta use the trans-localism to show how individuals

are able to develop “simultaneous situatedness across different locales” (2011:4). Thus, trans-locality in this study, as it connects to the concept of ‘spatialisation’, refers to the social and cultural practices that the student engaged in in their mobility between their domestic environments and the Focus School field.

For the students in this study, I employ the notion of a trans-local habitus to show how the movement across different spaces (locales) impacts on the habitus and how the habitus consequently shifts and adapts in its exposure to new experiences and new environments. The students adapted and shifted their subjectivities in order to navigate the spatial ‘disjunctures’ found between their working-class domestic environments and the imperatives of the new school field. They had to work with their environments, feel the alienation on their bodies at the Focus School, and mediate their becoming ‘other’ in their old neighbourhoods, to which they had to return and which they had to confront at weekends. They had to deal with the negatives and positives that each space provided.

I further use the concept of ‘trans-local habitus’ to describe how historically disadvantaged, working-class students’ subjectivities are formed by their mobility practices. The central idea of trans-locality is aptly synthesised by Brickell and Datta (2011:3) as “situated-ness during mobility”. Authors who engage in the development of a trans-local perspective seek to integrate the notions of fluidity and discontinuity associated with mobilities, movements and flows on the one hand; with notions of fixity, grounded-ness and situated-ness in particular settings on the other. Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and field provide us with an understanding of the four students’ habitus, their dispositions and experience of the world, and subsequent actions, which are altered by attendance of a Focus School.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the complex ways in which four working-class students established their educational subjectivities as they navigated their educational path from their working-class home environment to the Focus School in a middle-class context. In this chapter I combined Bourdieu’s thinking tools of habitus, field and capital with Urry’s theory of mobility in order to develop a theoretical framework to understand the students’ mobile habitus mediations and their adapting and shifting

subjectivities. Drawing on transnationalism, this chapter has developed the notion of a trans-local habitus.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology and the different steps taken to collect and analyse data. Ethical concerns and data validity issues will also be unpacked and explained.

Chapter 4: Methodological approach

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological orientations of the dissertation and research processes undertaken in this study, the research approach used and the research design adopted. The study draws on phenomenological strategies in order to gain an understanding of the trans-locating practices of selected students as they moved from their domestic home environments to a new environment of a Focus School. As noted by van Manen (1997:5), “lived experiences are the starting point and end point of phenomenological research”. From a phenomenological point of view, therefore, the study captures “rich descriptions of the phenomena in their settings” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998:104). This means basically capturing the story and its reality. Realities are ‘pure phenomena’ and the absolute truth from where they originate (Groenewald, 2004).

The motivation for deciding on a phenomenology-based interpretive approach was in order to explore the adapting and shifting educational subjectivities from the students’ point of view. The phenomenological approach therefore enabled me to focus on the phenomenon of understanding the complex ways in which the four historically disadvantaged students mediated and established their educational subjectivities in the light of their mobility between their living environment and their education at the Focus School.

This study utilised the interpretive research paradigm. A paradigm is described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:4) as a “set of overarching and interconnected assumptions about the nature of reality”. A paradigm reinforces the actions of the researcher and the approaches used in the research project. Conducting research within a specific paradigm provides the framework within which such research takes place and also provides the basis on which variable knowledge can be built. The three orientations of research paradigms that Merriam (1998) distinguishes are: positivist forms of research, interpretive research and critical research. Merriam holds that, “there is no one single reality, but multiple socially constructed realities” (1998:6). According to him, interpretative research aims at “understanding the meaning of the experience from the perspective of the respondents” (Merriam

1998:4). Similarly, Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) claim that interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. The interpretative paradigm, therefore, maintains that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world. As an interpretive researcher I attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings respondents assign to them.

The epistemological focus of this study is based on an interpretive framework, which involves the study of theory and the practice of interpretation (Maree, 2007:58). Interpretative studies generally try to explain phenomena in terms of the meaning that people assign to them. In relation to this study, the adoption of such an approach is useful for capturing elements of the lives of the respondents/students concerned, in order to decode meaning in relation to understanding the interactive linkages of their schooling subjectivity.

The path which researchers follow when compiling a theoretical framework is outlined by Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004). They suggest that the verbs that are used in the research questions help direct which theoretical framework is most suitable for the study. Verbs such as 'predict' and 'test', point to a positivist framework. While verbs such as 'understand' or 'construct' assume the interpretative/constructivist theoretical framework, and verbs such as 'improve' and 'change' indicate a critical theoretical framework.

Understanding the emergence of an interpretative or constructivist framework is discussed by Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004), and Lincoln and Guba (2000). They explain how, by the mid-20th century, positivism had been rejected as a viable approach by those researchers whose main aim was to capture aspects of the lives of respondents in order to understand and interpret aspects of their everyday life. The shift to the interpretative framework came about as researchers realised that a scientific approach to respondents' daily lives could not bring about a social understanding and interpretation of how they live life.

Lincoln and Guba (2000) note that, over the last decade, choices of paradigms and methods have 'interbred'. Maree (2007:57) argues that, although the different epistemologies and philosophies are distinct, in practice such distinctions are not

always clear-cut, and may sometimes even overlap. They suggest that distinguishing between the different approaches is problematic in practice, as most of the approaches have evolved into hybrid forms which overlap and/or complement each other. However, Lincoln and Guba (2000) maintain that interpretative theory is associated with the fact that reality is not absolute, and that multiple realities exist, which are time and context dependent. Such a notion affirms the fact that students from diverse domestic backgrounds might experience their mediation and navigation of their pathways to education differently. In order to show this in this study I include an explanation of their domestic circumstances prior to their attending the Focus School, as well as the dynamics at the Focus School and their mobility practices between both environments.

Since the objective of this study is to gain insight into how students mediate their trans-local habitus in an educational institution such as a Focus School to achieve academic success, the use of qualitative research methodology is the most suitable one. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:2) are of the view that this methodology generally examines “people, words and actions in a narrative or descriptive way more closely representing the situation experienced by the respondents”. As Merriam states, in qualitative research the researcher is the “primary instrument for data collection and analysis and primarily employs an inductive research strategy” (1998:7). For this reason qualitative interview schedules are loosely structured and address general themes as this allows the researcher to shift and change the questions asked depending on the respondents’ responses.

A qualitative² research methodological orientation would thus set out to uncover and explicate the ways the students mediate their educational subjectivities at a Focus School in light of their mobility from a working class context. In this research I employ a case study as a research strategy. The term case study is strongly associated with qualitative research – in fact, the two are sometimes used synonymously, partly because case studies allow for the generation of multiple perspectives either through

² A key difference between quantitative and qualitative research is described by Ragin (1987) as follows: Quantitative researchers work with a few variables and many cases, whereas qualitative researchers rely on a few cases and many variables. In a qualitative study, the research question often starts with *how* or *what* so that the initial forays into the topic describes what is going on. Quantitative questions ask *why* and look for comparison of groups.

multiple data collection methods or through the creation of multiple accounts from a single method (Richie & Lewis, 2003). A case study is distinct from other types of qualitative research design as it serves the purpose of gaining in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation, as well as the meaning the study attaches to the object of study (Merriam, 1998). The integration of different perspectives can, therefore, build up a rich and detailed understanding of the respondents' experiences within a particular context or contexts.

4.2. Qualitative research

In view of my research focus which is the mediation of four students' educational subjectivities as they move from their domestic environments to a Focus School, I decided to conduct the research in a qualitative rather than a quantitative paradigm. Qualitative research is interpretive, naturalistic and inductive in approach (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell, 1996). It allows for the collection and generation of rich, thick descriptions of experience and is flexible yet rigorous in terms of the procedures to be followed in the collection and analysis of research data. In terms of my research focus, a qualitative approach gave me the opportunity to investigate people's "lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings" as well as "organizational functioning" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:10). This enabled me to obtain and present rich verbal descriptions that showed the complexity (Creswell, 1998:15) of the social phenomenon of the students in their natural settings, which for my respondents were their domestic (working-class) environments and the Focus School (middle-class environment). The most important feature of qualitative research involves "penetrating the frames of meaning with which they operate" (Bryman, 1998:61). This view is also shared by Babbie and Mouton (2001:53) who describe qualitative research as the generic approach to educational research, which takes the insiders' perspectives on phenomenon as its point of departure. This research approach was thus chosen because I wanted to answer the main research question, as Bryman (1998:61) puts it, through the "eyes of the people" being studied.

A relevant strategy is required by qualitative research in order to answer the questions posed. Punch (2000:53) describes the research design of a study as the

basic plan to be followed in empirical inquiry. It includes the four main components namely: strategy, conceptual framework, who or what will be studied, and the tools and procedure to be used for collecting and analysing empirical data. These four components raise questions about the specific procedures the study adopts in collecting and analysing data based on the conceptual framework and specify how and from whom data was collected.

Merriam (1998:10) observes that there are a variety of qualitative strategies of inquiry. Although there appears to be no consensus on the major types of strategies of inquiry, Merriam (1998) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) agree that there are certain common major types: case study, ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory. Merriam (1998), states that these four strategies share some common features with qualitative research. Patten, cited in Merriam (1998:10), is of the opinion that the various types of research designs are dictated by “the kinds of questions a particular research will ask”. The research question in my study, that enquires into the students’ mediation and establishment of their educational subjectivities as they moved between their home environments and the Focus School, requires a research strategy which maximises the gathering of highly descriptive information on the phenomenon regarding how the students, over time, established a trans-local habitus. In qualitative research the outcomes are less predictable as the data is gathered from open-ended questions and therefore is dependent on how much or how little information the respondents are willing to divulge. In contrast, quantitative research asks precise and structured questions, which usually takes place through surveys, questionnaires or structured interviews. Qualitative research makes use of mostly semi-structured or unstructured interviews, or focus group discussions, where the onus is on the respondents being researched to partly set the agenda. For this reason, the researcher does not always have control over the structure of the interview or the questions asked since depending on the respondents’ responses means the interviewer might deviate from the interview schedule to explore information raised by the respondent. In this manner the questions, the sequencing of questions and the themes raised are directed by the respondents themselves.

Interviewers can depart significantly from any schedule or guide during qualitative interviewing. They can ask new questions that follow up interviewees' responses and can vary the order of questions and even the wording of the questions. As a result, qualitative interviewing tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview and, perhaps, adjusting the emphasis in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge in the course of the interviews. By contrast, structured interviews are typically inflexible, because of the need to standardise the way in which each interviewee is dealt with. My research required rich, detailed answers, hence the adoption of a semi-structured approach.

4.3. Case study

A case study involves an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a subject (the case), as well as the related contextual conditions. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) describe a case study as a particular, descriptive, inductive and, ultimately, a heuristic which seeks to 'illuminate' the readers' understanding of an issue.

Mouton defines a case study as an "intensive investigation of a single unit" (1996:281). A case study can consist of an individual person, a group of people forming a single unit (such as a family), learners of a particular school, or a teaching programme. Merriam explains that a "case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a programme, an event, a person, a process, an institution or a social group" (1998:27). Merriam (1998) views a case study as distinct from other types of qualitative research design. She asserts that a case study serves the purpose of gaining in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation, as well as the meaning the study attaches to the object of study. What is important to note is that a qualitative case study is an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit" (Merriam 1998:27). She claims that descriptive case studies are helpful in producing basic information about areas of education where there has not been much research (Merriam, 1998:38). The case study here focuses on the complex ways in which four working-class students established their educational subjectivities as they navigated their educational path from their working-class home environment to a Focus School that was situated in a

middle-class context. It is a case study of four students 'on the move' between dissonant environments.

Merriam also refers to descriptive, interpretive and evaluative case studies. In her view, a descriptive case study offers a detailed account of the research problem. Such case studies are descriptive, giving basic information on the phenomenon being studied. I use a descriptive case study to explore and describe the students' practices over the three year period, from Grade 10 to 12, when they attended the Focus School. The case study approach suits this research because it is exploratory in that it aims to explore and understand the students' mediation of their educational subjectivities over a three year period, as opposed to a study that is guided by an established generalised hypothesis.

Using the case study method required decisions to be taken about which case or cases to select for the study, as well as how and where boundaries were to be drawn. In other words, the decisions that I made regarded what to include and what to exclude, and hence what the claim to knowledge is, that was being made – what is it a case of? The approach further required decisions regarding how much time should be spent with each respondent, and what methods of investigation to employ. A key issue in gathering data for case studies is the consideration of 'depth' versus 'coverage'. Within the logic of a case study approach, the recommended choice is always to gather as much information as possible, i.e. to choose depth over coverage, as this provides the rich descriptive data of qualitative studies.

First and most important, the choices among different research methods, including the case study method, can be determined by the kind of research question that a study is trying to address (see Shavelson & Towne, 2002:99–106). Accordingly, case studies are pertinent when your research addresses either a *descriptive* question - 'What is happening or has happened?' - or an *explanatory* question - 'How or why did something happen?'

Second, by emphasizing the study of a phenomenon within its real-world context, the case study method favours the collection of data in natural settings, compared with relying on "derived" data (Bromley, 1986:23). By this I refer to the obtaining of data from the respondents themselves through interviews as opposed to recording

respondent responses from surveys or questionnaires. For example, in relation to my study, I provide descriptive information on the context of each respondent's working-class domestic environments, the Focus School in a middle-class area, as well as the manner in which the respondents' experienced each of these environments. This provides the reader with a rich descriptive narrative that shows how the students shifted and adapted their educational subjectivities in light of their mobility across the different social spaces.

The technique used to collect and analyse data in case studies is not to merely describe what is being observed, but to search for recurring patterns and consistent regularities (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2008:193). Each case is selected because it is similar to another case one is investigating. Since this study involved only four cases, the reason for my choice of the case study approach was to intensely examine each case and look for similarities and differences in order to draw out themes for the research study.

Amongst the concerns regarding the use of the case study method is the fact that there is sometimes a lack of trust in the researchers' procedures, namely bias, inability to generalize, use of systematic procedures, and findings being generalised through analytic generalisation. There are also validity and reliability concerns. Yin (1994) refutes this criticism by presenting a well-constructed explanation as to the difference between analytic generalisation and statistical generalisation. Yin (1994:18) states that, "...in analytic generalization, previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the case study". In this way the appropriate manner of generalising assumes that some samples of cases drawn from a larger group of cases can be beneficial to the defining of terminology such as "small sample", as though a single-case study was a single respondent (Tellis, 1997:2).

The development of a formal case study protocol provided the reliability that was required for my research, as well as to serve as a frame of operation which included all the necessary elements for the proper conduct of the research. Of the six sources of data collection that Yin (1994) listed in his case study protocol, I used interviews (Tellis, 1997). Respondent observation at the school site was not an option as the

students had already completed Grade 12 at the Focus School. I did, however, utilise respondent observation during my interviews. I met with the respondents in their home environments and in some cases visited the domestic environments in which they grew up to gain an understanding of how, based on their narratives, this context had influenced their lives. I also visited the school site and met with the principal of the school. This enabled me to gain an understanding of their time spent at the school. This qualitative research entailed semi-structured interviewing which offered an insight into respondents' memories and explanations of why things came to be what they were, as well as descriptions of the problems they experienced, and how they shifted and adapted their subjectivities to meet the requirements of their mobile lives.

4.3.1. Interviews

Taking note of Merriam's (1998) and Tutty *et.al.*'s (1996) observation that interviewing is probably the form of data collection most commonly used in qualitative studies in education, I decided to use in-depth, semi-structured interviews as my data collection instrument.

Given my research purpose, namely to gather information on how South African High School students shifted and adapted their educational subjectivities between their working-class domestic home environments and the Focus School in a middle-class context, it seemed appropriate to use semi-structured interviews that would generate rich descriptive verbal data, in the form of first-hand accounts, as my data collection instrument.

Further, I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews in order to allow room for revealing the feelings and beliefs of individuals for which a structured interview schedule would not be suitable. This qualitative approach provides a greater wealth of information than other data-collecting methods (Fontana & Frey, 1994 in Welman *et al.*, 2008:1983). The approach attempted to understand how the students experienced their life-world and how they made sense of what was happening to them. The questions were directed at the students' first hand experiences, beliefs, and convictions about how they mediated and navigated the initially dissonant terrain of the Focus School. The initial in-depth, semi-structured interviews focused on the

students' domestic environments prior to them moving to the Focus School. Here I sought to understand their childhood and family life, environmental transactions within their community, reflections on their own youth constructions and an understanding of their schooling experiences up until the end of Grade 9, i.e. prior to them attending the Focus School. These initial semi-structured interviews would provide me with key background information before they moved to the Focus School context. The second set of semi-structured interviews involved an in-depth understanding of their time spent at the Focus School. This included their movement between the Focus School and their domestic environments as the students were weekly boarders at the school, returning home each weekend and in the holidays. These interviews probed the manner in which the four students adjusted to the requirements of the Focus School which were, initially, by the respondents' own admission, very different to their previous school's expectations. These interviews, although guided by my interview schedule, allowed the respondents to provide their own descriptions and information about their time spent at the Focus School and highlighted their own difficulties and successes in adapting to the new school environment.

My research is based on constructivist perspectives that build meanings of the social, historical and individual experiences of people. Constructivism sees people as active agents in their own development. Constructivism is considered to be a teaching philosophy that is based on the idea that student understanding is formed via reflection on their personal experiences and by relating new knowledge to the knowledge that they already possess. Generally, constructivist research focuses on a phenomenon within a particular context and considers how or in what way the phenomenon has impacted on an individual and how the individual has responded, changed or adapted their lives accordingly.

In this study I used the constructivist perspective when conducting my interviews and conducting my data analysis. I listened to the respondents' narratives with an open mind and carefully considered how their feelings and experiences (Charmaz, 2000:525) had constructed their reality based on their shifting subjectivities as they moved between their home environments and the Focus School. My field notes and interviews attempted to develop a thick descriptive approach (Geertz, 1973 in

Ponterotto, 2006) that would allow me to conduct an analysis of the data that was free of 'my' subjectivity. In this way the data presentation and analysis in my study could construct the four students' narratives as a unique example of how real people respond, shift and adapt in real situations.

4.3.2. Case study sampling

Henry (1990:11) and Trochim and Donnelly (2001) describe a sample as a subset of the population that is used to gain information about the entire population. It is in a sense a model or representation of the population, and a tool to find out about the population. In order to find the respondents for my study I used purposive snowball sampling, which I discuss in more depth below. In selecting a sample on the basis of some knowledge of the population, I used my knowledge judiciously to judge and identify candidates (Mouton, 1996). I chose a group of four students which was small enough to study, but large enough to be representative (Shipman, 2014). In using my judgement, as an expert in selecting cases with a specific purpose in mind (Neuman, 2002), I used purposive sampling as an example of non-probability sampling. The criteria for selecting my respondent sample required that the students must have successfully completed three years from Grade 10 to 12 at the Focus School. Further criteria included:

- Willingness to participate;
- Historically disadvantaged persons;
- Being willing to openly and honestly articulate their thoughts and feelings regarding their experiences; and
- Having reliable means of communication for purposes of interviewing (if the respondent resides out of town or country).

4.3.3. Respondents in this study

The focus of this study was on students who were historically disadvantaged and from a working-class domestic environment who attended the Focus School over a period of three years completing Grades 10 to 12 at the school. The following table provides a brief outline of the four respondents in the study.

NAME (PSEUDONYM)	GENDER	RAISED BY: BOTH PARENTS/ SINGLE PARENT/ OTHER	STUDENTS' OCCUPATION ON LEAVING SCHOOL	PLACE OF ORIGIN (PSEUDONYM)
TK	Male	Both parents	Dentist	Wolmarans
Phumla	Female	Both parents	B.Com Student	Bovey East
Luke	Male	Single parent (Mom)	Mechanical Engineer	Pula
Mona	Female	Grandparents	Mechanical Engineer	Grasslands

A small sample was specifically selected as it allowed me to explore the experiences of the selected students in-depth. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013), sample size is also determined to some extent by the style of the research. In qualitative research it is more likely that the sample size will be small to allow for an in-depth study which includes multiple semi-structured interviews to construct rich narratives as opposed to a wider range of coverage (i.e. more respondents) which may not allow for the richness of the narratives to emerge.

4.4. Snowball sampling method

A snowball sample is a non-probability sampling technique that is appropriate to use in research when members of a population may be difficult to locate. A snowball sample is one in which the researcher collects data on the few members of the target population he or she can locate, then asks those individuals to provide information needed to locate other members of that population whom they know (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Because snowball sampling is hardly representative of the larger study population, it is primarily used for exploratory purposes. That is, the researcher is 'feeling out' a topic or population to study further in-depth at a later time. Exploratory studies are typically done to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for a better understanding, to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, and to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent studies. I used purposive

snowball sampling to select a sample on the basis of some knowledge of the Focus School population which I utilised to judiciously judge and identify candidates.

Snowball sampling is a useful choice of sampling strategy when the population in which one is interested is hidden or hard-to-reach. Snowball sampling is suitable in such scenarios because it can be difficult to identify units to include in your sample, perhaps because there is no obvious list of the population you are interested in. The sensitivity of coming forward to take part in research is more acute in such research contexts. Whilst it is typical to define the characteristics of the sample you want to examine at the start of the research process, the snowball sample may also be helpful in exploring potentially unknown characteristics that are of interest before settling on your sampling criteria. Since there was no other way of accessing my sample, snowball sampling was the only viable choice of sampling strategy (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Snowball sampling may also be viewed as an effective strategy from a perspective of research design and the choice of research methods.

For instance, the respondents in my study had all completed Grade 12 and were either now working or still in the process of studying. Since I wanted to interview four students from the Focus School, I interviewed a student whose contact details were provided by the school and then relied on those subjects to help locate more individuals. This process continued until I had all the respondents required or until all contacts had been exhausted (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

In order to locate respondents for my study, I contacted the principal of the Focus School who sent an email to past students inviting them to participate in the study. Of the three responses, two of the students were out of the country. However, as per the snowball method, the students who did respond were able to put me in contact with other students. For example, when I contacted the one student, TK who was in South Africa, he had fortunately just returned to the Western Province after being away for one year. TK then provided contact details of another two students, one, Luke who was in Cape Town agreed to be a respondent. Luke provided me with Mona's contact details. As I was unable to locate any more students in the Western Cape, I was compelled to involve Phumla who was then residing in Gauteng, in the study. The three sets of one-hour interviews were conducted face-to-face with all the

respondents. Because conducting face-to-face interviews was important to me I travelled to Gauteng for the initial interview with Phumla and completed the follow-up interviews via Skype and telephonically.

4.5. Positionality

According to St Louis and Barton (2002), positionality refers to a relational place one occupies in different contexts. The term positionality is often used interchangeably with identity. When used in fieldwork accounts, identity generally captures a researcher's notion of self as well as how he or she is recognised by the respondents during research. The researcher is a primary instrument in qualitative research. He/she is the key person in facilitating conversations during fieldwork and in making sense of the data. Methodological literature underscore the fact that assuming insider positions or identities during field work aids qualitative researchers in achieving genuine collaboration, which is necessary for collecting trustworthy data.

As the researcher, and as someone who has a similar background to the students, I was careful to monitor my position in the research process in order to maintain a professional focus on the research agenda. This included making every attempt to ensure that I, to the best of my ability, remained an objective observer and listener during the process in order that my own historical background did not affect the interpretation of the data.

4.6. Data collection methods

Data is described by Merriam (1998:69) as an ordinary piece of information found in the environment. Information can be concrete or abstract, measurable or difficult to measure, for example feelings or perceptions. The importance of a piece of information for research purposes is determined by the area of interest, and the researcher's perspective. Based on the focus of the study, the domestic background information and childhood and schooling experiences of the respondents in their working-class environments, combined with an understanding of how they mediated their educational subjectivities at the Focus School, were the study's investigation area of interest.

Data can be collected in several ways, for example interviews, observations and analysis of documents, among others. Walcott (in Merriam, 1998:69) describes the process of data collection as 'asking', 'watching', and 'reviewing'. The method of data collection in this study was interviews: three one-hour interview sessions were conducted with each student. It should be noted that the study was limited to historically disadvantaged students who had matriculated at the Focus School. In gathering this data there are sensitive areas which were not immediately apparent, such as feelings, thoughts and intentions. Interviewing the students enabled me to "enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton in Merriam, 1998:72). The interview method was semi-structured with open-ended questions. It needs to be noted that this study is exploratory; therefore, I gave the respondents the opportunity to explore and gain insight into the factors which motivated them to keep on going. Interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration and understanding of the research problem. An audio-recorder was used to record the conversations between the respondents and myself.

Kvale (2000) states that, respondents in interviews should be given the opportunity to explore and describe their own life-worlds, their opinions and their actions using their own particular words. In order for this to take place successfully, Kvale and Brinkman (2009) suggests a range of qualifications required in order to be an effective interviewer. He explains that an interviewer should:

- Have a sound knowledge of the subject so that an informed conversation can take place;
- Clearly state the purpose of the interview, and how it will be conducted and concluded;
- Be clear in expressing the subject matter;
- Allow the respondents the freedom to verbalise their thoughts and feelings in their own way, and in their own time; and
- Keep track of what has been said earlier in the interview and use these as links in the conversation for further questions.

4.7. Interview schedule

Following a written protocol, the interviews were divided into three sections. The first section explored the practical relevance of Bourdieu's notion of a domestic habitus. I opened the interview with a broad question about the respondents' home life and personal childhood and schooling history. These questions invited the respondents to 'chat' about their childhood lives and proved to be a very useful and non-threatening way to get the interview moving along smoothly. The second section of the interview focused on their experience at the Focus School and their mobility between their homes and the school, and the third section enquired into their practices at the Focus School.

The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis, with each respondent choosing a location where they felt the most comfortable. While conducting the interviews, I aimed at a conversational level and concentrated on maintaining a high level of interaction. While Clandinin and Connelly feel that the respondent should be given the opportunity to tell his/her story, they also maintain a "process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and re-storing as the researcher proceeds" (1994:4).

The collaboration between the respondents and me as the researcher allowed the respondents to talk freely. When the respondents strayed from the topic I gently redirected them back to what they had been saying so that their stories did not diverge from the research focus. I also used probing questions as a way of eliciting more information. Bishop (1997) explains that interviews should focus on depth, details and probes which go further beneath the surface of the conversation to uncover more information. Questions such as, 'tell me more about' and 'could you give some more examples to explain...?' as well as requesting the respondent to explain their responses in detail by asking why they offered a particular response, assist the researcher to gain clarity and an in-depth understanding of how the respondent experienced a particular event or incident. (see Cresswell, 1998). In addition, I used parroting (mirroring) and minimal encouragers suggested by Burns (1997) to keep the respondent talking; for instance by saying, "So you are saying that ...", "Mm", and "Uh huh..." (246). This form of response tends to reassure the respondent that

the interviewer is following and understanding what they are saying. In this manner the interviewer becomes a co-constructor of the data through prompts, encouragement and by showing interest in what the respondents are saying (Henning *et.al.*, 2004:57).

4.8. Data analysis

According to Tellis (1997:12), “[d]ata analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study”. Tellis (1997) regards the analysis of case studies as one of the least developed aspects of methodology as the researcher has to rely on their own experience and literature to present the evidence in various ways, and using various interpretations. Miles and Huberman (1984) therefore suggest that in this instance the researcher must choose the most reliable way of presenting the information, always ensuring that researcher bias does not affect the analytical focus of the data presentation.

Yin (1994) suggests that every investigation should have a general analytic strategy that guides the way in which the researcher chooses to analyse the data. Possible analytical techniques could include pattern-matching, explanation-building or a thematic presentation of the data. For the purposes of this study I chose to build analytical themes that emerged from the data. I then used these themes in the data presentation section to describe and interpret the respondents’ narratives. This enabled me to provide an analytical understanding of how the students, via their mediation and navigational practices between their domestic environments and the Focus School context, established their trans-local habitus.

All of the interview audiotapes were transcribed and coded, resulting in 128 pages of data. While analysing the data, I used an interpretational approach. Thematic codes were used in order to capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon (Neuman, 2002). My coding scheme focused on building themes that related to the specific areas of interest to my study; such as the domestic environments of the students, their schooling in a working class context, their move to the Focus School, and the establishment of their educational subjectivities between their domestic environments and the Focus School. By building these themes I was able to respond

to my main and sub research questions to describe the students' establishment of a trans-local habitus that enabled them to become successful at the Focus School. This is discussed in depth in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

4.9. Validity and trustworthiness

Data collection instruments have to comply with the standard criteria of reliability and validity (Treece & Treece, 1986). According to Botes (2003), reliability of a measuring instrument (which for this study is the interview schedule that guided my questions) must be used consistently for each respondent. Brown and Keep (2000) describe the validity of a measuring instrument as the extent to which such an instrument serves the purpose for which it is intended, or the extent to which it measures, or elicits information, required by the research. Validity and reliability are essential for effective research. Validity and reliability means that the research is credible and trustworthy (Meree, 2007). The term 'validity' is more applicable in qualitative research and refers to the honesty, richness and depth of the data generated (Cohen *et al.*, 2013).

Although reliability and validity are treated separately in quantitative studies, these terms are not viewed separately in qualitative research. Instead, terminology that encompasses both, such as credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness is used in qualitative studies. For my study, in order to ensure that my questions met the necessary criteria mentioned above, I formulated the questions based on the relevant literature and theoretical framework employed by the study. The questions further formed part of my ethical application process and thus the reliability and validity of the questions were ensured through the ethics committee at the university, which is discussed in more depth below.

The use of two or more methods in studying human behaviour is called methodological triangulation which elicits a richer description of the phenomenon under study. Greater researcher confidence in the results is possible when several methods produce similar data (Cohen *et al.*, 2013).

4.10. Triangulation

Triangulation is typically perceived to be a strategy for improving the validity of the research or for evaluation of findings: "...triangulation is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, don't contradict it" (Miles & Huberman, 1984:235). Triangulation is essentially a strategy that will aid in the elimination of bias and allow the dismissal of plausible rival explanations so that a truthful proposition about some social phenomenon can be made (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

In this research study I triangulated the data by providing the interviewees with transcripts of the interviews to check whether they felt that the information I had gathered through the interview process provided a reliable representation of their narrative. Respondents were encouraged to add or delete parts of their narratives if they felt uncomfortable with information discussed or felt they wanted to add additional explanations once they read the transcription based on our interviews. The respondents were also provided with a copy of the final research findings.

4.11. Ethics statement

In planning any research involving a human subject, it is important to consider ethical guidelines which have been designed to protect the subjects involved in the research. Consent was obtained in the form of written permission from the Western Cape Education Department to conduct this study as this allowed me to visit the school and meet with the school principal. Permission was obtained from the students and the school to access their institutional files. All the students participating in the research were provided with detailed information about the research aims and objectives and the focus of the research study. They were also informed as to the research methodology involved in the process before agreeing to participate. In this way, the researcher ensured that the respondents' consent was informed. The respondents' right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity was respected. The identity of the respondents was protected by the use of pseudonyms. Audio tape recordings were used during interviews, after written permission had been obtained to do so. The respondents in this research were informed that copies

of the dissertation would be made available to them upon request, after it had been assessed. The research was conducted to the highest standards.

The respondents were treated with dignity, fairness, openness of intent, disclosure of methods and respect for their integrity (Cruz, Torre, Javier & Papa, 2016). The respondents were assured that the data would only be used for study purposes and that all recordings would be safely kept and disposed of after five years. They were informed that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any stage in the event that they did not feel comfortable in continuing the interview process. They were informed verbally and in writing that they were not obliged to take part in the research study. All the respondents agreed to be interviewed and signed the letters of consent after reading and understanding them, before the commencement of the research process. I further ensured that they felt at ease sharing their narratives after a detailed discussion of the ethical issues surrounding the study. According to Merriam (1998) a good qualitative study is one that is ethically conducted. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education.

4.12. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the different steps undertaken in the research methodology. It has explained that the methods used were adequate and relevant to the research focus in order that the research question could be answered. The use of interpretive research paradigm approach proved to be relevant to the research study. This approach enabled me to gather the necessary data through the respondents' life narratives that described the students' navigational practices between their domestic environment and the Focus School and their establishment of their trans-local habitus which enabled them to become successful students at the Focus School. The selected students appeared enthusiastic and sincere in their narratives, an aspect that has added value to the study.

The next chapter provides a detailed profile of each historically disadvantaged respondent in order to understand how their educational subjectivities were framed in their domestic environment. This chapter provides an understanding of their

educational subjectivities as they were established in respect of their school going in their working-class environments.

Chapter 5: Data presentation of the educational subjectivities of the four respondents

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data of my four historically, disadvantaged trans-local respondents, in order to understand how their educational subjectivities framed, informed and enabled them to navigate the terrain of a Focus School in a middle-class environment. In Chapter 3 trans-local students are categorised as those who live dual lives, have living arrangements in two diverse areas, and do their education by moving through different spaces or across different field contexts (Man & Cohen, 2015).

In my interviews with the students, they shared stories of their domestic environments, and the reasons for their mobility resulting in them being placed in the middle-class environment of the Focus School. The following two chapters unpack the students' experiences along three central themes that emerged during the conversations with them: domestic environmental influences; how students asserted their identities and strategically drew on them in ways that helped them navigate the Focus School, and shape their educational subjectivities; the resulting disjuncture (conflicts, costs and contradictions) that arose for them as a result.

Whereas Chapter 5 focuses on the first theme, the respondents' domestic environment, and their Grade 1 to 9 educational environment, prior to their attendance of the Focus School in Grade 10, Chapter 6 will focus on the two themes regarding their navigation practices and the resulting disjunctures that arose during the period at the Focus School and how the students ultimately emerged from the Focus School.

Chapter 5 highlights domestic and institutional issues which constitute the students' interactions and practices in terms of establishing their subjectivity. This chapter therefore focuses on their environmental transactions in their working-class environments and their working-class schools, which is crucial to understanding the nature of their educational subjectivity formation within the environmental space. The

chapter aims to identify what the educational subjectivities of these students are and how they acquired these educational subjectivities in the way they did.

The chapter covers the following: firstly, I draw on the work done by Soudien (2007) to offer a description of the life-worlds of the children in working-class areas, whether they are spaces of lack or advantage, that fundamentally condition what kind of people they become. Also spatial engineering has separated students' residential lives and educational lives, requiring many of them to travel great distances to access these schools. I offer a description of working-class areas in which this study occurs to illustrate the socio-spatial dynamics of working-class environments drawing on the work of Fataar (2007). This serves as a basis to understand how the domestic environment enabled the respondents to develop an educational identity that could navigate the Focus School located in a middle-class environment.

The aim of this chapter is to provide empirical perspectives on how environmental and institutional factors shape the subjectivities of those who were selected for interviewing. The focus of the current section is on their lives, as well as their experiences in their working-class schools. Emphasis is placed on the domestic circumstances in relation to their educational subjective becoming and the factors that influence their educational subjectivity. I provide a brief description of the home environment followed by the respondents' narratives of their life experiences in the domestic field. I present data that helps me consider that, despite these students residing in working-class environments, they are able to cultivate identities that are able to mediate and navigate a school in a middle-class area.

The importance of the backgrounds of these students displayed itself in different ways. Firstly, they are historically disadvantaged (coloured) students who grew up in 'working-class' environments. A detailed definition of how I use the term 'working-class' was provided in Chapter 1. Secondly, in many cases, race-based social organisation during apartheid was achieved through geographic separation. In some instances, townships were adjacent to formerly white residential areas but separated by major highways, rivers or railway tracks that made it difficult to move from one area to another (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). I regard the respondents in my study as working-class as they were people in a society of social standings based on income, occupation, education, family background, community participation, social skills,

physical appearance and, less obviously, moral standards (Elkin & Handel, 1989:82). The use of terms such as ‘middle-class’ and ‘working-class’, is necessary for the context of this study.

As mentioned before, the respondents’ narratives are divided into two chapters. The intention of this chapter is to illustrate how domestic, environmental and institutional factors shape the educational subjectivities of respondents before they enter the Focus School.

A rich narrative of each student’s ‘lived experience’ within the environmental field follows the description of their working-class environment. At the end of each narrative I pull together the various strands emanating from each student’s story with the aim of linking them to the research sub-question, which is: *What factors supported the students’ ability to adapt from their domestic environment to the Focus School.*

5.2. The subjectivity of the four selected respondents prior to their entry of the focus school

Findings on how the four respondents’ educational subjectivities developed prior to their attendance of the Focus School, is explored in this chapter. The themes selected from each narration were based on the common issues which emerged during the interview sessions. The thematic presentations allowed for an in-depth exploration of how the respondents’ educational subjectivities informed and shaped their subjective approach to study at the Focus School.

I firstly provide an overview of the home environment and its schooling context to prepare the way for a discussion of the subjective becoming of respondents who were interviewed for the current study. Then I present data-based narratives of how aspects of their upbringing shaped their outlooks, beliefs and practices that impacted on their educational subjectivities, prior to them entering the Focus School.

5.3. The working-class environment context

The victory of the National Party in 1948 heralded the advent of the apartheid era and the promulgation of an array of Acts that would come to define the daily

existence of all South Africans based on racial classification (Dolby, 2001). *The Race Classification Act of 1950* facilitated the division of South Africans into racialised groupings. *The Group Areas Act of 1950* reinforced this state of affairs by guaranteeing that South Africans would live in racially delineated and divided areas. Furthermore, the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, No. 49*, promulgated in 1953, secured the reservation of public premises for the use of one race only. These acts were implemented by force and it resulted in millions of individuals, particularly blacks, having to relocate to barren, racially demarcated homelands. Horwitz (1967), Wolpe (1972), Bundy (1979) and Hartshorne (1992) describe the history of South African political economy as one of disinheritance and isolation.

The relocation of the families of my respondents to rural and urban towns as per the *Group Areas Act* (described in Chapter 1), consisted of both formal and informal housing where the people were predominantly coloured. One of my respondents was born (and lived for a short while) in a rural town which was predominantly black. Both these areas had the reputation of being far from public amenities, work, commercial and leisure activity. Although conditions in these areas are generally harsh with small, cramped housing, unemployment at 55% and single-parent families at 45% (Statistics South Africa, 2001), the sections of the towns in which my respondents lived are considered to be more stable. This, however, did not shelter them from the informal and desperate livelihoods of the people in the area, which often resulted in criminal activities.

Schooling in South Africa continues to be largely geographically defined because of the legacy of apartheid's group areas legislation, as 'better schools' are limited to middle-class, formerly white suburbs followed by a few former Indian areas, and to a lesser extent former coloured areas (Sekete *et.al.*, 2001). Guidance is provided on how to manage the access policy to schools provided by the *National Education Policy Act of 1996* (NEPA), which binds the State to: "enabling the education system to contribute to the full personal development of each student, and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large". Yet, choice of schooling in South Africa remains compounded by issues which include, amongst others, the persistence of geographic racial demarcation, which in turn represents inequality of opportunities for students such as my respondents before

they attended the Focus School. In other words, these coloured students lived in still predominantly coloured working class areas and attended schools in the same area.

5.4. Mona's domestic habitus: "Something that nobody can take away from me"

In this subsection of the dissertation, the development of Mona's educational subjectivity is traced in terms of her broader socio-economic context. Her domestic context is discussed in relation to the economic, cultural and social capital which shaped her habitus. This includes her relationship with her family members prior to the discussion about parental influences on her life. Her religious, cultural and extra-curricular activities are revealed before presenting a discussion of her approach to her own schooling. During my interviews with Mona, she presented herself as a quiet, wise, eloquent, mature and self-driven individual.

5.4.1. Mona's domestic environment

From 1989, the year of her birth, Mona lived in Grasslands (pseudonym), an urban suburb in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, situated in the southern suburbs of the city of Cape Town. In the early 1900s this was rural farmland. It is described by some as 'apartheid's dumping ground'. In the 1950s the area became home to people the apartheid government designated as coloured who were forcibly removed from 'white' areas in Cape Town. Today it is a thriving colourful, coloured community, where people of different religious persuasions live alongside one another. The area now has six primary schools and five high schools.

5.4.2. Mona's socio-economic environment

Mona was reared by maternal grandparents. Her home language was English. Her mother did not feature in her life, nor did her father. All she knows about her father is that he is not South African. As a child she visited her mother occasionally. When asked why she did not live with her mother she responded: "*I don't know actually ... I remember visiting her during the holidays sometimes. But we were always with our grandparents*".

She had four siblings, two older brothers and two younger sisters. Except for one sister who was reared by another family member, her maternal grandparents reared them all, in addition to their own children who were still living at home. There were two uncles and an aunt who were not much older than Mona and her siblings. The three-bedroom home was owned by her grandparents. While living with her grandparents, Mona shared a room with her sister and her aunt. Her brothers shared a room with their uncles. She lived in Lows River (pseudonym) until she left for the Focus School, which was 12 kilometres from her home. The family moved to another house, while Mona was at the Focus School. Although she is not sure why her family moved house, she relates that: *“I don’t know what happened actually. I don’t know if they lost the house. Not sure. I was not there when they moved”*. The family then moved to Otters Way (pseudonym) an area less than three kilometres from where they had lived previously.

Her grandparents originally came from Otters Way. Her grandfather was employed as a policeman, and when Mona was quite young her grandmother was employed as a care-giver to an old woman. After that, her grandmother was always a housewife. Although her grandfather was always employed until his retirement, Mona remembers some financially tough times. Despite those tough times, Mona recalls that her grandmother had always ensured that they had something to eat.

Mona owned roller blades, and books and toys such as puzzles and Lego were available. She fashioned toy guns with sticks and elastic bands. Although Mona remembers books being available in her home such as Disney Stories, she does not recall anyone ever reading to her. She was able to read to herself at five years of age. They owned a television set, but did not have any telecommunication facilities.

Mona regards her grandparents as having had quite a lenient style of child rearing. She does not remember being disciplined as she was a fairly obedient child. Mona’s grandparents ensured that she had domestic responsibilities such as helping with the cleaning of the house as was the case with the others who lived there.

Mona’s grandparents were practising Christians who attended church every Sunday. They used to force her to attend church as well, when she would rather sleep. About this she said:

I remember my grandmother ... she used to bake a lot, and would walk around praising and praying while she was busy. My grandfather would lecture us about doing well in school, in life, and for ourselves ... and used to say ... you must do it for God as well. You are not doing this for anyone else, except for yourself.

Her grandparents emphasised the importance of family supporting one another. Mona's family had strong traditions such as spending Christmas and Easter at her great-grandparents' home. At Christmas they had a family lunch, and at Easter she fondly recalls the Easter egg hunt. Mona interacted with her aunts and uncles as if they were her peers- she regarded them more as siblings than 'uncles' and 'aunts'. Despite the family having strong family traditions, going on outings was not something she had ever done. Mona had never travelled beyond her urban home area, until she was at the Focus School and accompanied her friend to her home in a rural town.

Mona had never expressed as a child what her aspirations were, nor did her grandparents encourage her in any particular career path. It was only when she was at the Focus School that she started to think of possible careers.

Mona went to a crèche in Grasslands where she stayed until she was six years old. She then attended a former Model C school some 10 kilometres from her home in a former white suburb, till Grade 7. She had no idea how her grandparents could afford to send her to a former Model C school, since the fees were more than the former coloured schools. Fees at former Model C schools could easily be ten times more than those at schools in her (coloured) neighbourhood. I suspect that she had a benefactor, but I could not confirm this. She relates that there was a time in high school when they could not afford her fees and her grandmother found employment at her high school as a means of paying for her fees. Mona recognised the sacrifices her grandparents made for her in order to "*give me the opportunities that they probably never had*" because, as she explained: "*no one in my family had completed matric at that time*". At the time of my research, Mona's mother was doing her matric year.

For Grades 8 and 9 Mona attended a working-class high school in her neighbourhood. She was not impressed with the work that was being done at the high school as it was not of the same standard as she experienced at her former Model C primary school. She remembers that the teachers displayed negative attitudes and lack of enthusiasm towards teaching and learning. This was in contrast to her primary school teachers. Despite this, Mona thought that both those schools contributed positively to her educational foundation. For Mona, the best part of being at her former schools was the hockey she played at the primary school, and the band that she had joined at high school.

When Mona heard about the Focus School from her Mathematics teacher when she was in Grade 9, she attended the Open Day. With the help of a teacher at her high school, she made all the necessary arrangements to be accepted at the Focus School. After experiencing the poor conditions at the working-class High School, she saw the Focus School as an oasis.

With excitement, Mona remembers the extramural activity arranged by her working-class high school. The Mathematics teacher from her former high school takes a group of students to the Open Day at the Focus School. This school, the Focus School, was going to be her escape from a school where education was not great, and from a rather dysfunctional home.

In sum, Mona's story is a typical narrative of a young girl born and raised in an urban township in the broader Cape Town area. Mona had never ventured beyond her home environment. While most young people tended to construct their identity as students on the basis of interaction with their institutional and broader social environments, Mona's self-awareness as student was disrupted when she was moved from an environment of a former Model C school to a working-class high school. Yet, her narrative reveals the life of a person who was highly motivated to succeed academically. Despite minimal support from her family, their strong religious and traditional background set the tone for her to develop full self-awareness. The character that was built by the experiences and responsibilities she had as a child provided her with the ability to adjust and adapt to various situations. By reading and understanding how to adapt to the demands of both her home and school life, Mona had accumulated an adaptive ability to carry with her to the Focus Schools.

5.5. Luke's domestic habitus: "My childhood experiences are not washed away"

In this subsection of the dissertation, the development of Luke's educational subjectivity is traced in terms of his broader socio-economic context. Then his domestic context is discussed in relation to the economic, cultural and social capital which shaped his habitus. This includes his relationship with his family members prior to the discussion about parental influences on his life. His religious, cultural and extra-curricular activities are revealed before presenting a discussion of his approach to his own schooling. Luke invited me to conduct the interviews at his place of employment which was housed in a high-rising corporate building. He had the air of an accomplished, respectable individual.

5.5.1. Luke's domestic environment

Born in 1988, Luke grew up in Pula (pseudonym), the third oldest town and European settlement in the Republic of South Africa, and the largest in the Cape Winelands. This area was first inhabited by the Khoi-khoi and the San people. The Chochaqua were cattle herding people and among the richest of the Khoi tribes consisting of between 16 000 and 18 000 members. In 1687, the Dutch Governor of the Cape gave title to the first colonial farms in the area to 'free burghers'. The following year the French Huguenots arrived in the Western Cape and began to settle on farms in the area. The arrival of the European settlers brought conflict with the Khoi-khoi people, as land and water resources began to be contested and the Khoi traditions of communal land use came in conflict with the settler's concept of private property. The Khoi people were defeated in a local war and were further decimated by (European) diseases. The population scattered inland or became labourers on settler farms. Pula is home to a diverse group of people, still living in mostly separate areas that were created by the apartheid government. Today the town boasts some of the best academic high schools in the country, that is, former white Model C schools.

5.5.2. Luke's socio-economic environment

Luke grew up with both parents being around, but he has no memory of them being married as they had divorced when he was quite young. Both parents completed Grade 12, and were originally from Pula. He and his brother lived with their mother while their father moved to Cape Town. Luke's parents had an amicable relationship, and he visited his father in Cape Town every fortnight. Although his home language was Afrikaans, he spoke English to his father. His mother's marriage to another man caused some tension, and his father died when Luke was eight years old. This was a very difficult time in his life as he relates:

From that point onwards things became difficult. So she (my Mom) has always been there. So it was a single parent for a while. But then she got married ... that was quite a challenge. Parents always ignore their children, as they are dealing with their own issues. I was eight years old.

While his mother was a single parent, they first lived with Luke's grandparents and then rented a home. His mother later bought a two-bedroom house. At one time Luke had his own bedroom but, later, had to share with his brother. After his mother's marriage, Luke had a stepsister who shared her parents' bedroom. His home was alive with music as they owned a television and a radio.

Although Luke's biological parents were always employed, he remembers some tough times when there was not much food at home. Since his mother was employed for the full day, Luke had the responsibility of chores such as taking care of the dogs, washing of clothes, washing the car and gardening. He had to look after his brother and sister, and prepare food for them, take his little sister to school and fetch her. As he was sharing his mother's responsibilities Luke amusingly told me:

I learnt to be domesticated. It was a weird relationship ... because we use to rely on each other[he and his mother] ... at moments we were looking at each other not as equals, but for a long time it was ... If I[his mother] am not here, you will look after the kids.

It was in caring for his siblings that he learnt the values of responsibility, commitment and hard work, which played a crucial formative role throughout his childhood.

Luke's paternal grandmother, a former teacher, played a huge role in his life, in supporting him both emotionally and financially. There were always educational toys around her home because she was the owner of a crèche. Luke also remembers his mother, who was an avid reader, reading Dr Seuss to him. Luke's mother supported him in his reading as he was a slow reader. Despite having completed a Master's degree, reading is still a challenge for Luke. His grandmother, the teacher, also helped him.

Luke regards himself as being a rebellious teenager, and the tensions in his home exacerbated the situation. He was on the receiving end of corporal punishment from his mother, as well as being deprived of privileges. When asked how he was disciplined, he responded: *"I was very naughty ... very naughty. Maybe it was also being grounded. And I think they took away my stuff that meant a lot to me. ... so jaaa"*.

Luke regards his relationship with his mother as very trying. They were constantly at loggerheads. His relationship with his stepfather was fraught with tension and friction. Luke regarded himself as a rebel and relates the following:

My Mom and I had a difficult relationship ... there were spells after she got married ... because we were used to staying alone. But by this time I was becoming a teenager, and I was always rebelling. From my point of view, there were lots of tensions in the house.

Luke does not recall having much support at home through the stressful times he experienced. He was of the opinion that his mother was over-involved in her relationship with his stepfather. It was his maternal grandmother who looked after him when he was a little boy. She was the stay-at-home grandmother with a nurturing disposition, always preparing food for him. His paternal grandmother was the one with whom he had conversations on an intimate level, and had discussions about topics such as girls with whom he was romantically involved.

Christmas and Easter were celebrated at the homes of both his maternal and paternal grandparents. His maternal grandfather sang in the church choir, and his maternal grandmother attended church regularly. Luke and his brother accompanied their grandparents to church. Luke strongly expressed his discarding of the convention of marriage, an indication that he was not very spiritual. When asked what values he remembers being taught by his family he responded: *“Be conscious of earning your own. Be aware of who you are. Be cognisant of things ... Ma (my paternal grandmother) pushed the principles of education”*.

Luke fondly remembers the traditional Friday night braais (barbeques) at his maternal grandparents' home. He describes how his:

...oupa (grandfather) would cut up a watermelon for us ... and we would braai (barbeque) there. The children would run around till the sun goes down. The older people would play dominoes.

Luke's father was a musician in his spare time. Luke proudly remarked:

Ya ya ... He played all over. I remember vividly that he played in Muizenberg. He was a basist ... played at the Golden Key (pseudonym) on a Sunday. We used to go with him sometimes.

Luke and his brother also played the guitar. They were interested in starting a band before Luke went off to the Focus School. Luke enjoyed the time he spent with his father who was also an artist. He recalls: *“My father was a skilled musician. He was an artist basically. He used to paint and sculpt ... it was a really cool place to be”*.

Going on outings was a big feature of Luke's life. Before his father's death, Luke and his brother went on outings with him. His paternal grandfather also took them on annual camping trips. His paternal grandmother would arrange Sunday lunch picnics. There were not many outings with his mother.

Luke's father was an activist in his younger days. He was imprisoned for his beliefs, and his paternal uncles and grandmother were African National Congress (ANC) supporters. Luke suggests that he is very much like his father.

Luke has no memory of his parents' educational aspirations for him. He had wanted to be a veterinarian since he was little, because of his love for animals. Then, again, he wanted to be a musician as he idolised his father. By the time he was fourteen years old, however, he had developed an interest in Civil Engineering.

At the age of four-and-a-half years Luke went to a pre-school located at the church his mother attended. It was chosen for convenience because it was close to his grandmother's house. She looked after him while his mother worked. He spent his first four years of primary schooling at Bill Lewis Primary (pseudonym) which was a former Model C school they could afford because his father was still alive and supporting him. After his father's death, he attended a coloured school called Bill Boyd Primary School. He believed that Bill Lewis Primary School provided him with a sound educational foundation. *"I learnt a lot of stuff there. Like my Maths was good ... my Science was good. I obviously had a good foundation"*, he explained.

The education was not the best at Bill Boyd Primary School, but Luke felt he was lucky enough to be educated by two of the best teachers at the school. They supported him to gain enough confidence to recite at the Eistedfodd cultural competition and achieve a Special Gold Award.

Luke was enrolled in Nuweland High School which had their first English medium Grade 8 class. The teachers did not appear to be ready for the English medium learners that enrolled. He recalled that:

The education was bad ... it was terrible. The school was more of a social place. ... Now you get a teacher who must teach Maths in English for the first time. The classes were big with 50 to 60 students. Umm ... all full of hormones and crap.

Luke hung out with those students who were failing and struggling with their education. He felt responsible to help them because he was of the opinion that the teachers did not have these students' interest at heart. He was getting top marks in Mathematics, but would support the other students by not handing in homework when the rest of the class did not do theirs. Luke tells of how he helped his friends in class who clearly needed more attention: *"I was busy distributing the answers, and*

helping my friends to pass, and all that". It was Luke's opinion that the principal did not manage the school very well.

Luke's tenacious determination to complete Grade 12 was fulfilled by means of the strategic development of his relationship with space and people. His shrewd manipulation of such components of his environment shaped his self-formation by enabling him to transfer between his working-class school and the Focus School. He explains how he orchestrated this trans-location:

A friend of mine who attended a former Model C school in my town who knew that I was good at Maths informed me about the Focus School. When I told my grandma about it, she got the application form for me. The principal of the high school I was attending at the time, did not want me to go. After I filled in the application, I made up my mind that I was going to that school. The school was pissed off with me.

Luke's principal, from his former High School in the rural town of Pula, withheld the information about the Focus School from the students. He did not want to lose the students who were the potential top candidates of his school for the WCED Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examinations.

Luke got to hear about the Focus School through a friend. His paternal grandmother obtained the forms to get him registered at the Focus School. The news that he was leaving his high school was not received well by his peers, or by the principal who saw Luke as one of the potentially successful matriculants that could help improve the school's matriculation results and improve the image of the school. Luke explained that: *"They (the school) did not want me to go. They intended not to tell anyone at Nuweland High about the opportunity to go to the Focus School"*.

It was a hard time for Luke at home. The tensions were causing him to be more aggressive. Luke had made up his mind that he was going to attend the Focus School. With the assistance of his paternal grandmother, Luke was entirely responsible for the application process. He also managed to get two of his classmates from Nuweland High School to join him at the Focus School.

In sum, Luke's narrative is relatively complicated. He described in detail his progress from pre-school to high school in Pula. His schooling provided him with the basis on which he could establish his own subjective consciousness, shaping his own youthful identity. Luke's story reveals the life of a boy who was afflicted with tensions in the home. A distinguishing characteristic of who Luke was to become, and how his identity as student was formed, was his response to his father's death when he was eight years old. Such an event radically impacted on how he came to interact with and react to his institutional and environmental space. Luke's environmental support base structures were sufficient in addressing his emotions after losing a key figure in his life, which resulted in his positive attitude and in positioning his identity as a student. His ability to adjust to a situation can be attributed to support from his maternal grandmother, and the strong religious background of both maternal and paternal grandparents. This paved the way for his development and burgeoning aspirations which set the tone for him to develop full self-awareness. The capital accumulated by his character that was built by the responsibilities he had as a child provided him with the ability to adjust to the diverse situations experienced at the schools he attended. Moving from one spatial terrain to the other served to develop his survival and coping mechanisms, which allowed him to exploit each space to his benefit.

5.6. Phumla's domestic habitus: "Something I carry with me as I move through life"

In this subsection of the dissertation, the development of Phumla's educational subjectivity is traced in terms of her broader socio-economic context. Then her domestic context is discussed in relation to the economic, cultural and social capital which shaped her habitus. This includes her relationship with her family members prior to the discussion about parental influences on her life. Her religious, cultural and extra-curricular activities are revealed before presenting a discussion of her approach to her own schooling. One interview with Phumla was done in another province where she lives, and the others were done using Skype. She presented herself as a fashionable, sensible, confident and independent young individual.

5.6.1. Phumla's domestic environment

Phumla was born in 1990 in a town in the arid Karoo region of South Africa called Bovey East (pseudonym) which was founded in 1818. It is the oldest town in the Central Karoo and has been inhabited for centuries. Some of the world's most interesting stone-age sites were discovered on the outskirts of the town. San people once lived there and fine examples of their rock engravings have been found nearby. The farmers came in mid 1700s and Xhosa tribes-people also moved into this area, once a swamp, now one of the world's most interesting arid zones. This town is the site of one of the largest migrations of mammals on record. The establishment of the town signalled the demise of the Khoisan in the district and after a period of prolonged conflict with the townsfolk and the farming communities the Khoisan moved away into the vast spaces of the northern interior. By April, 1900, 466 adults and 514 children lived in the township, which for many years was home to both black and coloured people. Today there are fourteen primary schools and five high schools. A famous pioneering heart surgeon matriculated from the Bovey East High School before he went to study medicine at the University of Cape Town.

5.6.2. Phumla's socio- economic environment

Phumla's father was born in Bovey East, and speaks Afrikaans while her mother was born in the Eastern Cape and speaks Xhosa, and English. Phumla is one of four children. When she was five years old her mother had her second child, and Phumla was sent to live with her grandmother in the Eastern Cape for a while. She considers more than one language to be her home language as she explains:

I spoke all languages at home as a child. Afrikaans when I was at school and at my grandmother's – which was most of the time. Then Xhosa and English with my parents and siblings, as we had to help my younger siblings adjust to speaking English. I cannot point out one language and say that it was spoken the most.

Her parents owned their home in Bovey East and there were sufficient rooms so there was no need to share a bedroom. Because both her parents were employed in education, they moved to Gregon when Phumla was 12 years old, where they took up teaching posts. When she was 15 years old, Phumla's parents moved to the

Western Cape where she lived in the Northern Suburbs. She recalls that her parents were always employed, except when her father was ill for six months. Although times were tough at times, it was her grandmother who ensured that they always had food. She explained that she had *“a very diverse family, but I have a very supportive family, and very understanding”*.

She regards her siblings as being very different, pointing out that:

Yes, yes I am the outspoken one, the social one. My brother is becoming a social person. He is very quiet, and not social. But he is the very sporty one. He plays rugby. My sister ... she is the arty one, She likes music ... she likes such things. Then the baby...he is the combination of all of us. He is 13, and he loves going to church.

Phumla describes her family as complementing one another:

My mom is the talker, and my dad ... he is not shy, but he is like my brother. He likes to speak only when it is necessary. My Mom likes to take charge, and my Dad is the leader from behind. He is the one that pushes people from behind. He is very, very sweet. I think that is why we get on so well.

Except for the brief period she lived with her grandmother, she was reared by both parents.

Because her parents were in education there were always books and educational toys around. Her mother used to read Bible stories to her. They had a television set, a computer and, later, Internet facilities. Both parents were supportive in assisting Phumla with her schoolwork. Her mother taught her values such as being honest and doing the right thing, while her father was encouraging and motivated her. Phumla was responsible for chores such as washing the clothes and doing housework. She had always aspired to being a medical doctor since she was a little girl.

Phumla indicated that her parents were very proud of their traditions such as rituals to introduce their ancestors. She regarded her family as being very spiritual, and religious. They attended church regularly and her mother was very involved in

church activities. When asked if she is spiritual, she responded: *“Uhm ... I’m in touch with my faith. Yes, I am spiritual. I still do the things that normal girls do ... I like going to church. I don’t know ... the older I get, the more I enjoy it.”* Her mother is a skilled craftsperson, who does craft such as mosaic. Her sister plays musical instruments and Phumla played the piano when she was younger.

Phumla indicated that her family enjoyed regular outings. They would visit tourist sites near to Bovey Easy and seaside resorts in around Gregon during school holidays. A family outing was a regular occurrence which happened at least once per month.

Phumla attended a crèche as well as Grades 1 to 3 in Boveys East. She then attended Gregon Primary School as well as Gregon High School in Gregon for Grades 6 to 9 respectively. When her family moved to urban Cape Town, she attended DK Louw High School in the city’s Northern Suburbs. The last three schools she attended were former Model C schools. She regarded the education received at those schools as having laid a good foundation for her further education. Her parents supported her well throughout her schooling.

She was involved in sporting activities in both primary and high schools. Her mother enrolled her at the Focus School where the principal was her mother’s acquaintance.

When her parents made the decision that Phumla should attend the Focus School, she did not object, describing the situation thus: *“just goes with the flow”*. This was not the first time that she had to leave her family. Her diverse family, consisting of a coloured paternal grandmother, a Xhosa paternal grandfather and Sotho maternal grandparents contributed to her being an independent and responsible child from an early age. The attendance of the Focus School is regarded as a ticket by Phumla to achieve her ambition of becoming a medical doctor, as she states:

I always wanted to be a doctor, but later I thought that it was unrealistic. You can have the brains to do it, but if you are scared you will move further away from it. The Focus School was my ticket to achieve my ambition.

In sum, Phumla’s narrative is intricate as she crosses spatially between rural and urban schools. Her story suggests a complicated evolution of her subjective

awareness as a student. Her transition through six schools entailed her attendance of a diverse range of schools as well as her experiences in rural and urban schools. Moving from one spatial terrain to the other served to develop her survival and coping mechanisms, which allowed her to exploit each space to her benefit. Phumla inherited a strong religious and cultural background from her parents who were always present in her life. The support that she received from her family and their strong religious and traditional background paved the way for her development and burgeoning aspirations, which set the tone for her to develop full self-awareness. Her self-awareness as a student can only be understood in relation to the interactions and transactions between her home and school environment. Her ability to adjust is attributed to the acquisition of capitals from her unique cultural upbringing and ethos and the requirements of her home on the one hand, and school life on the other. When Phumla's parents came to hear about the existence of the Focus School, they thought that the school would be instrumental in her achieving her aspirations.

5.7. TK's domestic habitus: "Imprints of early influential experiences are difficult to dislodge"

In this subsection of the dissertation, the development of TK's educational subjectivity is traced in terms of his broader socio-economic context. Then his domestic context is discussed in relation to the economic, cultural and social capital which shaped his habitus. This includes his relationship with his family members prior to the discussion about parental influences on his life. His religious, cultural and extra-curricular activities are revealed before presenting a discussion of his approach to his own schooling.

TK is a slender, young man who arrived at the interviews well-groomed. He is a well-spoken gentleman whose mode of address was characterised by respect and humility. When asked what he thought about his achievement as a dentist, he responded: *"I still cannot believe that people are talking to me ... when they call me Doctor"*.

5.7.1. TK's domestic environment

Born in 1989, TK was raised in a rural town called Wolmarans (pseudonym). This town, established in 1820, is as old as hunting grounds and cattle runs go in the Cape, but as new as a settled area. Before 1700, the area was a hunter's paradise, with the main source of income being the sale of elephant tusks. When European settlers first arrived at the Cape Colony, the area was inhabited by San hunter/gatherers and Khoi livestock farmers. The Gainou and Korannas tribes traded livestock with the settlers. The smallpox epidemic, introduced by the Europeans, took its toll on the existence of Khoi people by 1713. The first Europeans to settle in the region were farmers. One of the first buildings to emerge was the local Drostdy (magistracy), which is part of the Drostdy Technical High School today.

The first Black African people arrived in Wolmarans at the end of the Second World War and it was at this time that Apartheid responded with total segregation, dividing the people in the community along racial lines into separate areas. It was under the apartheid system that schools were built for coloured and black children. Today, Wolmarans is home to a diverse group of people, still living in mostly separate areas that were created by the apartheid government.

5.7.2. TK's socio-economic environment

TK's parents and grandparents were originally from Wolmarans. He was reared by his parents who were employed full-time. His sister studied Financial Management at a Technical College after completing matric. His home language is Afrikaans. TK's parents owned their three-bedroom home where he and his sister had their own bedrooms. They owned a television set and a computer. Although there were no books at his home, TK visited the library with his sister to access literature. He enjoyed playing with puzzles, and he recalls making toys such as guns and cars from materials such as sticks and stones.

TK regards the members of his nuclear family to be similar and describe them as follows:

My parents, my sister and I are very similar. We can be described as vibrant, energetic, friendly and outgoing people. We always have fun together.

His parents' aspiration was for him to be an achiever at school, and as a little boy he aspired to be a pilot. Since he stayed with his grandmother during the time his parents worked, he engendered a very close relationship with her. Although he had a supportive family, he does not recall his parents reading to him when he was young, but his mother helped him with his languages, English and Afrikaans, as he was not proficient in them. TK recognised the sacrifices his parents made for him in order to, in his own words: *"give us all the opportunities that they probably never had"*.

TK was responsible for chores such as taking care of the dog and cleaning the garden. He was a well-disciplined, hard-working boy, and does not recall being punished by his parents. He amusingly explains that:

We were not really naughty children. We were boring. Our parents were lucky. Maybe we got hidings up to Grade 1. They (my parents) were begging us to be naughty.

TK's family had strong religious commitments, and upheld traditions such as celebrating Christmas and Easter. As a family, they regularly attended church. When asked if TK regards himself as spiritual he responded: *"Uhhh ... 50/50 (laughs) I go to church, but I'm not involved in church activities, or giving bible lessons, and so on"*. When asked what values he remembers being taught by his family, he responded: *"My parents always reminded my sister and I to show respect to older people"*.

It was a family tradition for TK's family to take regular outings to Cape Town and, once per year, during the summer vacation, they would visit a seaside town about 500 kilometres from home. Camping was one of TK's family's favourite past times. While TK's hobbies were playing soccer and doing karate, he also enjoyed running and cycling with his father. TK and his family were a sport-oriented family.

I briefly trace TK's school career from early childhood to high school in this subsection of the dissertation. The crèche that TK attended was close to his grandmother's house, as she was responsible for taking care of him after school. The schools he attended were Elsies Park Primary School established in 1953, and the Elsies Park High school that was opened in 1961. The choice of primary and high schools was for convenience as it was close to his grandmother's house where

he and his sister stayed after school. However, the nature of that choice was differentiated by social class, as is evident in TK's account as a working-class child:

I wanted to attend the Model C school but my parents could not afford it. Even if they could afford it, the reason they chose the coloured school was that it was close to my grandmother's house where my sister and I stayed after school as both our parents worked.

A negative impression of his working-class school made TK wish to be at a former Model C school (reserved for whites during apartheid). While TK defined the period of his schooling as characterised by the convenience of proximity to his grandmother's house, the nature of the locality is powerfully influenced by social class. For parents of working-class children, the choice of schools was made based on what they could afford or which school was closest to their own homes. Since he dedicated all his time to his schoolwork and sport, TK was not involved in community activities. Explaining that he was an achiever, TK recalled that: *"I was a good student at Elsies Park. I was an achiever. The education was not bad ... I learnt to work hard, and there were a few good teachers"*. It was because of his good record of results at Elsies High School that the principal approached him and four other respondents to attend the Focus School in this study.

TK's home environment dynamics served as a key element in shaping his identity as a student. Both his stable home life and the relationship with his family, teachers and peers provided him with the capacity to develop the foundation for his educational subjectivity. When he was approached by his High School principal in 2004, to attend the Focus School, he was reluctant to leave the comfort of his home, but was encouraged by his parents to take up the opportunity. He was, however, attracted to the school's location (an area in which houses are listed for sale at R80 million), spacious grounds, resources, small classes and well qualified teachers.

It was an exciting day for TK in 2003 when the principal of his former high school called all the top performing Grade 9 Mathematics students together to inform them about the opportunities at a Focus School that was opening in the city 105 kilometres from them. Unlike Luke's principal, TK's principal was eager to provide the students

at his rural school with the opportunities presented to them. TK was reluctant to leave the comfort of his home, but was encouraged by his parents to take up the opportunity.

It would be the first time TK would be confronted by the challenge to navigate a dissonant space, make connections in and across it, and mobilise available discursive materials. TK's ultimate motivation for attending the Focus School was the coercion from both his parents and the staff from his working-class high school. TK describes the situation as follows:

My school (working-class school) was approached by WCED for students who showed potential in Maths and Science. Because I was a good student, the principal called me and four other students to tell us about the Focus School for Grades 10 to 12. The principal had faith in me. He said that the school believed in me.

In sum, TK's narrative reveals the life of a person who was highly motivated to succeed academically. The support that he received from his family and its strong religious and traditional background paved the way for his development and burgeoning aspirations which set the tone for him to develop full self-awareness. The opportunities provided by his hard-working parents in the form of space in his home, and other material resources and constant motivation and encouragement, as well as his personal aspirations, became durably incorporated in TK's body in the form of his permanent disposition. Both his stable home life and the relationship which he had in every phase of his upbringing, accorded him the capitals to have the ability to adapt and to become active in different environments. His self-awareness as a student can only be understood in relation to the interactions and transactions between his home and school environment.

5.8. Conclusion

In the above discussion I presented the data of the four respondents' 'lived realities' in their domestic environment, showing how they individually inhabit space, draw on various networks, interactions and connections with people and processes to navigate their spatial positioning, and how they transcend their spatial positioning to establish their educational subjectivities. Domestic environmental influences and

educational aspirations, in other words, where they were born and raised, allow me to suggest that it has an impact on the way the students positioned themselves in their working-class environment.

I started each story with an overview of the home environment and its schooling context. I did this to prepare the way for a discussion of the subjective 'becoming' of respondents who were interviewed for the current study. Then I presented data-based narratives of how aspects of their upbringing shaped their outlooks, beliefs and practices that impacted on their educational subjectivities, prior to them entering the Focus School.

Each of the respondents experienced life within the space of their working-class domestic environment differently. Mona, from an urban township, received minimal educational support from her family, but her family had strong religious and traditional affiliations. Despite her domestic environment being rather dysfunctional, she attended a former Model C Primary School before attending a working-class High School, prior to attending the Focus School. Luke's life in a rural town was afflicted with tensions in the home. The loss of his father, however, resulted in a positive attitude and his positioning and identity as a student. The responsibilities he had as a child provided him with the ability and maturity to adjust to diverse situations.

Phumla's stable home life and movement between rural and urban schools suggest a complicated evolution of her subjective awareness as a student. Moving from one spatial terrain to the other served to develop her survival and coping mechanisms, allowing her to exploit each space to her benefit. Similarly, TK's stable home life in a rural town, and the relationships that he had in every phase of his upbringing served as key elements in shaping his identity as a student. This accorded him the opportunity to have the ability to adapt and to become active in different environments. The data presented in this chapter highlight domestic and institutional issues which constitute the students' interactions and practices in terms of their subjectivity establishment. This brings me closer to the heart of my research question: *What factors supported the students' ability to adapt from their domestic environment to the Focus School?*

This chapter, Chapter 5, provided the basis for Chapter 6 which will focus on how the selected students assert their identities and strategically draw on them in ways that help them navigate the Focus School and shape their educational subjectivities. The resulting disjuncture (conflicts, costs and contradictions) that arose is a key focus of Chapter 6. In other words, the focus in the ensuing chapter is on navigation practices of the trans-local students, and the strategies they used to establish relatively successful trans-local habitus in the context of their school-going at the Focus School.

Chapter 6: Data presentation and interpretation of the trans-local habitus of the four respondents

6.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the four students mediated their educational subjectivity as they moved from their domestic environment to the Focus School. I present data to show how these students established a trans-local habitus as they moved across the various fields. In other words, I show how the students figured out how to become successful via shifting and adapting key aspects of their subjectivity at the Focus School.

In the previous chapter I provided a detailed profile of each historically disadvantaged respondent in order to understand how their educational subjectivities were framed in their domestic environment. That chapter provided an understanding of their educational subjectivities as they were established in respect of their school going in their domestic environment.

I begin this chapter with a brief recap of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and John Urry (see Chapter 3 for elaboration) which I use to explain and discuss the way in which the students were able to adapt from their domestic environment to the Focus School. I then proceed to provide an explanation of the establishment and social context of the Focus School that the four students attended. This is followed by five themes which show how the students shifted their educational subjectivities in order to establish a trans-local habitus which enabled them to become successful at the Focus School.

The focus of this chapter is to provide an understanding of how the students engaged in shaping their educational subjectivities as a result of their move from their domestic environment to the Focus School. My focus here is on how they experienced the differences at the Focus School, what the educational expectations at the Focus School were, and what the students did to shift their educational subjectivities in order to invest their educational processes at the Focus School. The conceptual focus draws on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus, field and capital and Urry's theorisation of mobility to provide an understanding of how the four

students were able to establish a trans-local habitus that enabled them to be successful at the focus school.

Bourdieu offers us a way to bridge the problematic divide between objectivist and subjectivist understanding of what actors do (Webb, Shirato & Danaher, 2002) by showing that objective social surroundings condition subjective dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990). These dispositions, through the habitus, strongly influence human practice (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Building on habitus, the concept trans-local habitus enables us to understand how individuals build successful practices as they move from one field (domestic environment) to another (Focus School). Fashioning the dispositions on the move, in other words, via their practices on the move between or across spaces, is central to what I describe as trans-local habitus. This section considers how best to understand the development of a set of trans-local dispositions that are made possible by mobility across different fields.

Given that Bourdieu is clear that habitus is, in a large part tied to, and structured by different fields, it is conceivable that an individual who moves across more than one field will develop a trans-local habitus. A field is the social space within which relations, transactions and events occur at a specific time and location. These relations within the field are closely linked to the notion of habitus, which Bourdieu (1990) describes as a system of acquired dispositions that determines how an individual behaves, and what that person regards as normal or civilised human nature. The close link between field and habitus is explained by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) as follows:

Habitus realises itself, and becomes active, only in relation to a field, and the same habitus can lead to very different practices and stances depending on the state of the field (116).

Our responses are therefore largely determined by our context and those directly involved with us within our context.

As was explained in an earlier chapter, Bourdieu uses the analogy of a game to discuss the role that habitus and field play in the logic of practice. Within this game what determines the extent to which an individual is able to master the regularities of a particular field is their habitus:

Habitus as the feel for the game is the social game embodied and turned into a second nature. Nothing is simultaneously freer and more constrained than the action of the good player (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:63).

A good player, therefore, is one who has a feel for the game, one “who is so to speak, the game incarnate, does at every moment what the game requires” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:63). Bourdieu goes on to say that this requires ‘invention’ by an individual in order for them to adapt to varied and different field environments. For the four students in this study it was, therefore, their ability to learn what was required by the new school field and to adapt their educational subjectivities to align with the new school field which made them successful players.

Urry’s (2012) theory of mobility provides an additional dimension in understanding the way in which the four historically disadvantaged students developed a set of trans-local dispositions via their mobility. Using Urry’s mobility theory provides a supporting lens to describe the students’ mobile lives. Urry (2012) suggests that the most consequential feature of a mobile student is the re-casting of their identity in terms of flexibility, adaptability and transformation. Moving across different fields can never leave the self fundamentally unchanged (Urry, 2012). The aim throughout this study is to distil what is going on in the students’ mobile worlds and discuss how this assists them to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities at the Focus School.

In keeping with Man and Cohen’s (2015) description of trans-national students who moved from one country to another but staying connected to both countries, the selected students in my study lived dual lives, had living arrangements in two diverse areas, and did their education by moving through different spaces or across different field contexts. In other words, in relation to mobility, trans-localism generally refers to belonging to or organising daily life between and among different locales (see Man & Cohen, 2015). In the following paragraphs I provide a description of how the students adapted, navigated and established their trans-local habitus.

The next section is a description of the Focus School, where I highlight the school’s institutional identity. In particular, I show how the uniqueness of the school’s institutional identity came to support the way in which the successful educational subjectivities (trans-local habitus) of the four students were established in this space.

6.2. The Focus School context

The Focus School is situated in a leafy suburb that was formerly reserved for the white population, with vast school grounds and buildings. This middle-class area is one of the oldest suburbs of Cape Town, called Rosedale (pseudonym). Rosedale is situated about 15 kilometres south of the centre of Cape Town and lies at the foot of the Rosedaleberg Mountain (pseudonym). Rosedale is one of the most affluent and oldest suburbs of the city and is famed for its wine farms on which 220 slaves worked for 150 years. From the mid-1800s to the 1960s, Rosedale remained a rural area of wine estates in which black and coloured residents constituted the majority of the population. The farmers, farm workers (domestic workers and fruit-tenders) and flower-sellers were forcibly removed when Rosedale was zoned as a white Group Area under the *Group Areas Act in 1961*. In the late 1960s inhabitants classified as coloured or African were forcibly removed to working-class areas on the Cape Flats (explained in Chapter 1) such as Parkwood, Mitchell's Plain, Grassy Park and Lotus River (two areas in which one of my respondents lived). Residents of Rosedale included the son of Margaret Thatcher, 9th Earl Spencer, the brother of the late Princess Diana (of Wales), whose house was listed for sale at R80 million. Currently, there is one primary school, one former Model C school and two independent schools, which include an American International School, in Rosedale.

The impact of educational reform in South Africa resulted in the formation of Focus Schools. These schools were established by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) as an attempt to increase the numbers of students matriculating in Mathematics, Science and Technology. The aim of a Focus School was to enable more students from historically disadvantaged communities to achieve success in these subjects. It was thought that subsequent access to relevant tertiary education would open doors for these students to career fields of science and technology so as to contribute to prosperity and nation building. According to the WCED Directorate Specialised Education Support Services' Project Plan Document (2003), "the development of a strong economy to support reconstruction, transformation and development in South Africa is dependent on education for the development of expertise in the fields of mathematics, science and technology. This would further impact on the social and economic development of our Province".

Although the education system was transformed and democratised according to the new constitution in 1996 and the *South African Schools Act* (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, the educational policies and practices had exacerbated, rather than reduced, the existing inequalities in education (see Fataar, 2011). The Human Capital Development Strategy for the Western Cape in attempting to address the inequalities, states:

The number of subjects offered in the FET schools' curriculum has been greatly reduced but are more focused and relevant. The province will have to actively drive a process of curriculum redress to ensure that in all districts the full range of subjects is offered. This will require careful planning and strong redress action. The curriculum redress process must be supported by a systematic redress programme that provides equipment (especially computers) and specialist teachers to disadvantaged areas. The WCED has begun this redress process in the fields of math and science and already supports eleven Math, Science and Technology schools for disadvantaged students. These are the ten Dinaledi schools and the Math and Science Academy. Other 'focus' schools such as Arts and Culture schools will be developed in the FET band. (2006)

WCED defines Focus Schools as secondary schools that selected to offer a particular focused range of subjects. These schools were required to have the physical, human and material resources to offer all the Further Education and Training (FET) subjects in a particular learning field or were able to plan towards having the resources. They were meant to be schools of excellence, at the forefront of curriculum development and best practice, with the highest concentration of quality human and material resources and equipment, utilised optimally to benefit the students and the education system. Currently, the two types of Focus Schools are, those that receive specific departmental support to ensure curriculum redress, and those that provide their own resources but seek recognition as a Focus School. Amongst the criteria for the selection of Focus Schools were accessibility to historically disadvantaged students in terms of fees and location, availability of hostels to accommodate rural students, and schools with excellent management,

specialised teachers in the respective focus fields, and the ability to attract students with interest, aptitude or talent in the focus field.

The establishment of 21 Focus Schools was one of the priorities identified in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) three-year Strategic Plan in 2002. Funds were set aside for the development of three Focus Schools from 2004, in each of the then seven Education Management Development Centres (EMDCs) regions in the province, in three learning fields: Arts and Culture; Technology/Engineering; Business, Commerce and Management. Focus Schools were meant to allow for the best use of available resources to drive the goals of high quality, high knowledge and high skills.

The Focus School of my study was opened in 2004 after the Minister approved in principle the establishment of an education centre for mathematics, science and technology on 17 May 2002. The school was established on the property which was formerly Rosedale School for Boys, belonging to the state. The school was upgraded in three phases spanning the three years 2002 to 2005 at a cost of approximately R10 million. The upgrade included additional classrooms from existing workshops, inclusion of a science laboratory, a biology laboratory and a computer centre with 48 workstations for 150 students, and cleaning the hostel facilities for 90 students.

Reasons for choice of the location of the Focus School in Rosedale, was that the school was vacant and had sufficient classrooms to accommodate 350 students. The existing workshops and other available accommodation could be modified to accommodate at least an additional 400 students. There were two school halls and hostel accommodation (with kitchen and laundry facilities) available with a capacity for approximately 250 boarders. Ample housing for staff was available on the premises (14 family units and a number of single quarters). Sport facilities were also available.

Today, the Focus School is controlled by the Western Cape Education Department as a public school. The Focus School falls directly under the Chief Directorate: Education Support and Development. The policy on education for students with special needs makes provision for a continuum of progressive specialised learner support. On the one end of this continuum specialised support is rendered to gifted

students, whilst at the other end of the continuum support is rendered to students experiencing severe learning barriers. The promotion in achievement in mathematics, science and technology of students with an identified high potential thus falls within the ambit of specialised learner and educator support, the more so if the students in question are from historically disadvantaged communities.

The Principal at the time this study was carried out was a former Mathematics, Chief Curriculum Advisor for the Western Cape Education Department. Criteria for choice of principal for the Focus School was that he or she be appointed on Post level 5 in view of the duties and responsibilities of a principal of an institution of such a nature. In order to deviate from the ordinary criteria for the appointment of a principal, the highest rank (post level) of a head of a High School being Post Level 4, WCED required approval from the Minister of Education. In addition to the normal duties and responsibilities associated with the role of a principal of a high school, the principal of the Focus School was required to demonstrate competencies and knowledge in line with the special demands of a multi-faceted, community orientated learning institution. Apart from functioning as a learning institution, the Focus School also serves as:

- A research centre to promote good teaching practices in schools
- A specialist in-service training centre for educators and students teachers
- A curriculum development unit
- An adult education and training centre
- An after-hours support centre for educators, students, parents and the community. (Letter to the Minister Kader Asmal in 2003)

The staff establishment for College and School Educators (CS-Educators) also deviated from the ordinary criteria, insofar as CS- Educator posts were required to be on Post level 2, and the deputy principal on Post level 4. In 2004, there were seven male and seven female teachers who were representative of the school community, appointed at Post level 2. The calibre of the teachers is demonstrated by the fact that, at the time of my study two teachers were doing their PhD degrees, one was appointed by the National Minister of Education to write the National Curriculum

Statement on Afrikaans, one was appointed as an examiner in Mathematics, while a large number of teachers marked matriculation papers.

'Designer' students, who attended various working-class schools in mostly rural areas and townships were selected by their respective working-class schools, in conjunction with parents or guardians as potential Mathematics and Science achievers, and then transferred to the Focus School situated in a middle class suburb in order to obtain their National Senior Certificate. The students were from different areas in the Western, Eastern and Northern Cape. The characteristics of the 'designer' students were their potential for Mathematics, Science and Technology, their motivation to take mathematics and science in the FET Band, and were from historically disadvantaged schools.

In 2002 schools in the Western Cape were requested to identify potential students for the Focus School. The schools were visited to assess the potential students. After 2003 the identification of students with potential were based on the results of the University of Cape Town Mathematics Olympiad. These students mostly met the criteria of achieving 60% in Mathematics, Science and Technology, and sometimes were selected for having the potential as per the judgement of their teachers. The students were not always consulted in the choice of their attending the school. Teachers from their working-class high school, along with their parents, saw this as a viable option to move them to a better school environment with the opportunity to achieve educational success.

Since a Focus School is regarded as a privileged school space that is different to the school spaces experienced by the majority of students in the townships and rural areas, it was envisaged that a school of this nature would provide students an almost automatic route to higher education. Incentives to draw students to the Focus School were school and hostel bursaries and the possibility of bursaries for Higher Education. The bursaries included school fees, transport costs and hostel accommodation, amounting to approximately R5000 (about US \$800) per learner per annum. The table below is an indication of the enrolment for the period during which my respondents attended the school.

Year	Gr 10		Gr 11		Gr 12		TOTAL
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
2004	49	71					120
2005	48	43	52	69			212
2006	37	50	49	41	48	69	294
2007	28	62	34	47	43	33	247

Results for the first 115 Senior Certificate students who wrote in 2006 indicate that 114 passed (a pass rate of 99.1%), and one failed. Those students achieved 9 Distinctions with an A average, 41 with Meritorious Performance and 100 Exemptions. In his report after the first Senior Certificate Examinations (2006), the principal regarded the results as satisfactory due to the difficult circumstances of starting up a new institution, the adaptation of learners to a residential environment and also the challenges of a multicultural setting. He noted that the students came from an array of disadvantaged high schools throughout the Western Cape and he acknowledged the principal and staff of their former schools who laid the foundation on which the Focus School could build. He further attributed their success to teamwork, dynamic teachers, high-energy input and partnerships. He regarded these results as a personal achievement by the students, but also in the context of the contribution they would make in the development of South Africa.

The residential model of the Focus School offered a safe environment to the students where they received three balanced meals a day, and because most of the children were on site, late-coming was not a problem. The teachers were also always available to support the students afterhours. A normal school day started at 07h30 and it was not uncommon to find the lights on in the laboratory at 21h30.

Since the school is situated in an up-market area of Rosedale, students not using the hostel accommodation were transported to the nearest railway station which is five kilometres away. There is no public transport service in proximity of schools in this upper middle class suburb of Cape Town. Since a model such as this Focus School required more financial support than other schools, this school relied on partnerships. Companies such as Telkom, MTN, African Bursary Scheme,

Shuttleworth Foundation, and so on, have provided bursaries to the students of the Focus School.

Among the accolades of the Focus School, is that it was rated as one of the country's top Mathematics and Science schools in a national survey. This school is at the forefront of technological innovation. It was one of six schools selected to take part in a pilot project that uses Mxit mobile phone technology to deliver mathematics tutorials to students. The Focus School recently won eight gold medals at the Science Expo. The students regularly participate in international competitions. The school boasts a three-year Aviation programme run by a local Flying Club from which the students graduate with a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) which is accredited by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of South Africa. The school also has a Confucius Classroom, the first of its kind to be offered at a state school where Mandarin is offered as a subject and affords learners the opportunity to further their studies in China. Learners who excel are afforded the opportunity to participate in the United States Students Achievers Programme (USAP), for US university admission. Extra-curricular activities include Leo Club, Debating Club, Argus Quiz, Science & Environmental club, and many sport codes.

In this section I have described the context of the Focus School with the aim of presenting it as what Bourdieu would describe as the field, where the students in my study would have to 'play by the rules of the game' (Bourdieu, 1990) in order to establish a trans-local habitus. Below I examine the processes that characterise how these students mediated their educational subjectivities at the Focus School.

6.3. Mediation of the students' educational subjectivities via their trans-local habitus at the Focus School

This section presents a discussion of the complex ways in which the four historically disadvantaged students mediated their educational subjectivities at the Focus School. One of the students was selected by their former high school to attend the school, one student's parents organised her application, while two of the students themselves decided to apply to attend the Focus School. The respondents in my study were termed 'designer' students by the principal of the Focus School. The

reason given by all four students for attending the school was their aspiration to acquire successful educational subjectivities.

As a broad definition, the concept of student educational subjectivity that I use in this dissertation is based on an understanding of the ways in which individuals encounter the worlds of their schooling, and how their subjectivities are established in light of their educational and social practices (Fataar, 2009). Within the 'game' (Bourdieu, 1990), what determines the extent to which an agent is able to master the regularities (as opposed to the rules) of a particular field is their habitus:

Habitus as a feel for the game is the social game embodied and turned into a second nature. Nothing is simultaneously freer and more constrained than the action of the good player (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:63).

A student whose habitus does not match that of the school's values, attitudes and dispositions will more than likely find the school to be "a very alien and hostile environment" (Webb *et al.*, 2002:114). It was this initial 'mismatch' experienced by the students, which can be described as a form of alienation between their domestic habitus and the new field environment, i.e. the Focus School, which required the students to shift and change their practices in order to establish a successful educational subjectivity.

Subjectivity can be described as what the students become or how they develop their senses of self as they interact with the dynamics present in a specific context. For Woodward (1997:39), subjectivity relates to the unconscious and conscious emotions and thoughts in a social context. She claims that individuals experience their subjectivities in a social context, where language and culture gives meaning to their experiences of themselves and where they adopt identities. The things that make them who they are exist within a cultural context, i.e. the context in which they live, where they have come from, and where they are headed.

In order for the four students in the study to successfully shift their educational subjectivities to align with the requirements of the new school field, it was necessary for them to interact both physically and conceptually with the different 'spaces' at the Focus School. The four respondents' prior educational subjectivities were differently

framed by their embodied experiences within domestic environments which had shaped their educational identities. Of these experiences TK had this to say:

I have lived in Wolmarans all my life. My parents who are hardworking, are good role models for me. They sent me to what they thought were the best schools for me in the coloured area of Wolmarans. My parents and grandmother also instilled good education values in me. They always had time to take me and my sister on camping trips during the December holidays.

Similarly, Phumla, who came from a stable home, expressed that:

I come from a diverse family. My mom and dad were ambitious. That is where I get it from. In order to improve our lives, we moved across various towns in the Western Province. We always owned our homes. They taught me to be spiritual, and I remember us spending many happy times together as a family.

Despite not having homes as stable as Phumla and TK, Luke and Mona experienced a measure of functionality within their homes created by extended family members. Of this Luke had to say:

My mom who divorced my dad before I could remember, always worked hard to provide for us which left my grandmother (Mom's mother) to take care of us when we were young. After the death of my father when I was eight years old, his mother (my other granny), made sure that my brother and I experienced family outings such as picnics ... Between my grandparents, I experienced great support and lovely traditions over Christmas and Easter.

Mona stated that:

I don't know how my grandparents managed to take care of me and my three siblings, in addition to their own three children who still lived in the house ... hey? We were always fed and they made sure that we went to, what they thought, were good schools. They taught us to be spiritual and attend church, and that family took care of one another. I learnt from them that I must work hard if I want something out of life.

On arrival at the Focus school, the students found themselves in a new field environment. Bourdieu describes a field as a “structured social space” that contains “people with constant and permanent relationships that operate within this space by either transforming or preserving the space by defining their position within the space” (1998:40-41). Thus, the four students on arrival at the new school field found themselves within new social structures which required that they shifted and changed their individualised actions in order to begin to rearticulate and adapt their individual educational subjectivities.

The students, who are the focus of this dissertation, were four of 212 historically disadvantaged students from a variety of different rural and townships schools who moved from their domestic environments to attend the Focus School. Elliot and Urry (2010) state that in order to become mobile, individuals draw on a form of ‘network capital’, and it is through this ‘network capital’ that they are able to create a mobile field which enables them to access new experiences. They call this a ‘field of mobility’ (Elliot & Urry, 2010). The mobility for these students involved travelling between 12 to 109 kilometres from their homes to the Focus School as well as living in a different environment from that of their normal homes.

Despite the initial excitement, my respondents found themselves questioning whether they had made the right decision to attend the Focus School. The attendance of the Focus school was not as easy as they thought it would be. For some, they had left close and supportive family members behind, and they missed their siblings, Luke notes that: *“although I was excited to leave home, I was very close to my brother and sister and it was not easy to leave them behind.”* Phumla was worried about leaving her family and disclosed that: *“We are a very close family and as the eldest child, I usually help my siblings with their homework. I worried that I was not there for them.”* Mona and TK described the practical aspects of moving away from home that worried them:

I had very long hair that I wore in plaits (braids). Besides missing my sister with whom I shared a room all my life, I worried how I was going to manage my hair (Mona).

TK put it this way: *“I had never lived away from home. My parents were always there to guide me. I worried who was going to give me guidance at the Focus School”.*

Arriving at a school environment which was significantly different to their previous school created an element of unease and trepidation. All four students were of the opinion that only the brightest students from historically disadvantaged schools were chosen to attend the Focus School. They realised that the academic standards of the Focus School would be significantly higher than their previous schools, and they feared that they would not be able to meet the expectations of the school. It was the first time these students were navigating a school field that was different to the schools they had attended in their domestic environment, coupled with the additional challenge of attending a boarding school. They had varied levels of anxiety as expressed below:

I was a bit nervous. Suddenly, I longed to be back at my former high school. I was involved with music at the school, and that is what I was sorry about leaving behind. I was anxious (Mona).

When probed why she felt that way, Mona responded:

I felt that I did not come from the best of schools. I was anxious. I do not regard myself as a confident person. I kept to myself. They did say these were the brightest students. I thought that everyone is brighter than me.

Phumla, whose parents had chosen for her to attend the school, expressed that: “*I heard that this was a Maths and Science school. I was afraid that I would not keep up with the other students and that I would fail*”. Doubling his self-discipline in the absence of his parents, TK also expressed his anxiety:

It was a challenge to be away from home as a 15 year old. There was no more guidance from my parents. The first week was really hard. I missed home so much, I wanted to withdraw from the Focus School and return to my old school.

Luke feared that if he did not work hard enough, he would have to return to his former working-class high school. He commented:

I feared that I would have to return to Pula if I did not make it here. The embarrassment of having to return to Pula because I thought I was smart. I could just foresee all the nasty crap people would say.

Here the students are expressing their concern that their educational subjectivities are not congruent with the educational expectations of the Focus School. Bourdieu provides us with the analogy of a game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:63) to understand the role that habitus and field play in the logic of practice. The students at the Focus School were confronted with new 'rules of the game' which they needed to learn and apply in order to be successful in the new school field environment. Luke describes an example of their initial alienation at the Focus School and the manner in which they had to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities to the new school regularities: "*School started on time, and the teachers were in the classroom at the start of the lesson*". Mona also explains: "*We were provided with the list of assignments for the term with due dates ... and we were actually expected to hand them in on the due date!*"

TK notes that:

We could not use the excuses that we did not have textbooks when our work was not done ... because the Focus School provided us with textbooks on the first day of school.

Phumla, likewise, observed that the students at the school were competitive: "*All the students wanted to do well so there was no time for day dreaming in class. I had to remain alert and pay attention to the teachers.*"

Confronted by the new rules of the game in the new field environment of the Focus School, the students needed to understand the structures and rules implicit in the field and find ways in which they could re-position their educational subjectivities in order to become successful in the new educational field.

I now move to a discussion of how the students experienced their educational socialisation differently between their domestic environment and the Focus school. This provides us with an understanding of how they began to adapt their subjectivities in order to play by the new rules of the game as required by the new

school field context. By attending the Focus School, the students had to change their behaviour in order to 'fit in' at the new school as the Focus School's social and educational expectations were, according to all four students, very different to their home environments and that of their former schools.

6.4. Educational socialisation of the students at the Focus School

Socialisation can be defined as the process by which the students at the Focus School learned the ways of behaving, or, as Bourdieu states, learned to 'play the game', in order to function successfully within it. The students were required to learn how to play by the new 'rules' in the new school field environment in order to become successful. It was an understanding of and adapting to these new ways of socialisation that provided a conduit that enabled the four students to traverse the expectations of the Focus School. This process of socialisation called for the students to learn new social 'rules' in order to 'fit in' and play the game successfully. In other words, the students learnt to be concerned with what was expected and appropriate behaviour in the new school field as a general guide to their conduct. They developed a sense of propriety, which governed their behaviour and which, in turn, guided them in dealing with the new situations they encountered for the first time at the Focus School (Elkin & Handel, 1989:4).

Examples of these differences were found in the organisational structures of the school as well as the expectations of the teachers. The students noticed that the standards of the school were higher than their previous schools and, whereas before they had been able to easily achieve good marks, they now had to work much harder than before. The students also observed that the school had more resources to support their learning and that the teachers were clearly specialists in the subjects they taught. TK noted that at his former school it often took a week or two to finalise timetables and to organise stationery before teaching commenced. In contrast, TK noted:

The Focus School, was ready on the first day as we arrived. We were given our timetable, stationery and text books before the classes started. The classes started immediately after we completed the registration process!

TK recalled the difference he felt in the classroom: *“The students who surrounded me were A-Grade, motivated students. The workload was more and the pace was faster”*. When asked whether TK was prepared for the Focus School, he responded: *“Yes. I feel that I was mature. But I still doubted that I would cope with the Maths and Physics.”*

Luke was initially quite confident that he would cope with Mathematics at the Focus School, since he had consistently scored high marks at his former school. He was therefore shocked at his results after the first baseline Maths test. He relates the following:

I failed my first Maths test. I was horrified. We had a very good teacher, and we got a test out of ten. I remember. It was just to place the class and see where you are at, and for him to see where you are at. I got two out of ten! God ... I almost killed myself! I love Maths, and had breezed through it before.

The four students all noted that they initially feared that they would be behind with their work. This fear made them realise that they needed to find ways to adapt to the requirements of the new school field if they were to achieve their aspirations. Mona pointed out that she, too, had noticed that the dynamics of the school were very different to those of her previous high school. It appeared as if every student was there to learn. She noted: *“All the students were paying attention to the teachers during class!”* In contrast to the other students, Phumla, who had attended former Model C schools before her attendance at the Focus School, did not find the structure of the Focus School as alienating, and found it easier to adapt to the expectations of the new school.

Establishing one's subjectivity is not something that occurs automatically (Elkin & Handel, 1989). In keeping with Bourdieu's analogy of a game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:63) the students came to realise that they needed to find out the 'rules', both the implicit and explicit social rules, and begin to 'play' by the 'rules of the game' of the Focus School. In other words, in order for the students to be socialised into the field of the Focus School, they had to learn and develop a 'sense of propriety' that enabled them to conform to what was socially acceptable behaviour in the new field environment. This resulted in the students having to make daunting

adjustments by the end of the first week of the first term, due to the workload and structure at the Focus School. Mona mentions that: *“I just don’t remember spending so much time with schoolwork after school hours, before attending the Focus School”*. TK reported that he felt that he had to grow up quickly and organise and plan his time better. He also noted that, as a way of learning how to socialise in the new school field or, as Bourdieu describes it, to ‘learn the rules of the game’, *“support from my fellow classmates also helped.”*

In my interviews with the students, they reflected that living in the school hostel allowed them more time for their education as they were relieved of the chores and responsibilities they had had at home. They expressed their realisation that, in order to meet the requirements of the educational expectations of the school they needed to significantly adapt their educational subjectivities, if they were to achieve their aspirations. Luke feared that if he did not work hard enough, he would have to return to his former working-class high school.

Living in close proximity with the other students afforded them the opportunity to build support groups as a form of educational socialisation. Luke describes how he:

set up a group of students from Pula as a support group. I had to make drastic changes. I was self-conscious of not being on the same level of the other students. I made use of the school’s set times for study, and the venues which were made available.

Phumla’s ambition was to become a doctor, and it was this that drove her to embrace the culture and high expectations of the school. She noted: *“We were placed in classes according to our academic ability. I would work hard to make sure that I would not be placed in the lower classes”*.

In the analogy of ‘playing the game’, this section has shown how the students came to realise that they needed to employ different strategies to maintain or improve their position in the new school field environment. In the following section I describe how they developed social competencies and practices that enabled them to begin to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities successfully at the Focus school.

6.5. Attaining social competency

This section provides a discussion of how the four students in my study developed social competencies at the Focus School that allowed them to construct successful school lives. In other words, this section discusses the practices that helped the students shift their educational subjectivities to incorporate dispositions that supported their successful integration into the Focus School. These practices involved finding ways to develop social competency by coming to understand and to follow the rules and regulations of the new school field. For the four students in this study, this involved aligning their habitus to the values and imperatives of the Focus School. Bourdieu notes that successful relations in a field, such as the field of education, are closely linked to how an individual acquires an appropriate disposition, which aligns their habitus with the field structure. Bourdieu (1990) describes this as 'playing the game', and states that the field is a social space within which relations, transactions and events occur at a specific time and location. Bourdieu reminds us, though, that within a social field, unlike a game, these rules are often not explicit or codified, and what determines the extent to which an individual is able to master the regularities of a particular field is their ability to learn the tempo, rhythms and unwritten rules of the game. Thus, to understand and come to master a particular practice in order to 'play the game' well, an individual must gain a feel for the practical logic of the game, i.e. the regularities of the game. Bourdieu states that it is through one's habitus that mastery of this practical logic takes place (Bourdieu, 1990:63). Consequently, changing or adapting one's habitus requires one to find new ways in which to respond to cultural rules and contexts of the new field. As Bourdieu (1990:63) puts it, "[t]he habitus as the feel for the game is the social game embodied and turned into a second nature."

The students in the study, as discussed in sections 1 and 2, on arrival at the school, quickly came to realise that in order for them to become successful in the new school field they needed to shift and adapt the way they engaged with and managed their learning. In other words, they had to find ways to gain certain social competencies that would enable them to navigate their schooling successfully. The Focus School made certain rules and expectations clear, for example they had to be punctual, achieve certain marks in their tests to stay at the school, and they had to take part in

extra-curricular activities. However, as with most 'fields', the Focus School field operated on a set of unwritten rules which implicitly governed the successful integration of the students into the new school field environment. For the four students, these unwritten rules of the game, the underlying practices within the Focus School, were the competencies that they endeavoured to embody in order to be successful in the new school field environment. Regarding this Phumla expressed that:

I was so excited. If I did what the school expected of me, then I could reach my dreams of becoming a doctor! I asked myself, why am I here? I have a goal in life. I thought I knew what I wanted to do after Matric, but then when I got here ... I don't know what happened, but being at the Focus School, made me want to make a success of my life.

Similarly, TK noted that:

I think that when I arrived at the Focus School, I immediately started maturing faster. I saw that things were different here. I was used to working hard. I had to work harder. I had to become responsible.

The students realised that the way in which they comported themselves at the Focus School needed to be different to the way they had behaved in their previous schools. They recognised that they needed to adapt their educational dispositions developed in their previous school environment to meet the requirements of the Focus School. In other words, their habitus, as a 'socialized subjectivity', and the 'social embodiment' emanating from their domestic and previous school environments, needed to shift and change to adapt to the new field requirements. Reay (2004) notes that, "when habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting dis-junctures can generate change and transformation" (436). Therefore, in order to work towards developing successful educational subjectivities and social competencies that aligned with the Focus School requirements, the four students needed to adapt their habitus to the requirements of the new school field.

The students realised that particular strategies, such as having effective time management, working collaboratively, utilising resources available to them, and learning to interact with their teachers regarding aspects of their school work, would

assist them to become successful at their new school. They describe how utilising these strategies enabled them to begin to develop more social competency:

I started to focus better by adopting ideas from the school. I put in the extra effort. It was a strain as we would study in our dorms (dormitories) at night. But there were eight people there and lights were put off at ten o'clock. I used to sit in the hallways at night and do extra Maths. Sometimes other students would join me (Luke).

Similarly, TK mentioned that: *"The workload was more ... the pace was faster. So I was glad that the school set times for working in the afternoon and the evening ... I used all those extra hours"*. Phuma explained that she spent long hours in the library and approached students who were willing to help her in order to get through the workload and high expectations of the school. Mona noted that the structured environment of the Focus School almost 'forced' her into becoming a conscientious student and reported that: *"Here we were forced to do study time. I enjoyed the structured environment ... It was nice. I had never worked so hard at my school work before"*.

One of the ways in which the school was structured was that the boys and girls had separate hostels. The four students explained that within the hostels the students formed study groups according to the two main languages used at the school, English and Afrikaans. These study groups became an important mechanism by which the students developed social competencies which enabled them to cope with the pressures of the Focus School. Mona describes how she spent most of her leisure time with the English speaking female students, and that it was this peer group which was instrumental in supporting her aspirations. She noted that:

I was different. But what I had in common with the other students was that we were all focused. The students formed cliques. The smarter students hung out together. I was always in the top ten and dated a student who was one of the top two. We (the students) used to all be up late at night, and we would help each other study.

TK and Luke had peers from their former high schools that attended the Focus School with them. Together they formed a group to support their learning. Their accounts regarding this issue are given below:

My brother arrived at the Focus School a year after me, and together with two of my friends from my former high school, we formed a group that supported one another in our school work (Luke).

I put in the hard work. It really helped to work in groups. When you sit with others who understand the work better than you do it helps you. All the students went to this one guy in the hostel. He was good at computers (TK).

Phumla revealed that, in her opinion, the groups that they formed were part of the reason they were able to achieve at the school, expressing that: “*Group work saved time, and helped us to motivate each other to keep our eyes on our goals*”.

Another strategy that enabled the four students to become competent and successful was their ability to identify and use the resources available at the school. TK described the situation thus:

I took full advantage of all that was available to me. The Focus School had provided me with a golden opportunity. I was exposed to all the equipment and facilities which improved my learning. I did not have these opportunities at my other school.

Phumla agreed with TK’s sentiments, noting that:

There was excellent support from the teachers at the Focus School. They (the teachers) helped me with Maths and Biology. I attended the extra classes that they provided. I had fostered good relationships with my teachers.

The students also came to realise that the staff that lived on the premises were willing to make themselves available after hours to assist the students. Mona describes this situation in the flowing words:

I was shy and insecure when I first arrived at the school. But when the teachers informed us that they were available at any time, I plucked up the

courage to go and ask them to explain the work to me that I did not understand.

Fearing that he would be left behind, Luke realised that he needed to find ways to meet the high educational expectations of the Focus School if he was to achieve his aspirations. He came to realise that interacting with the teachers was key. He narrated that:

I engaged with my teachers. Even to the extent of being demanding of my teachers. Most of them lived on the premises of the school. I was not used to having teachers around all the time. But I was going to use this situation to my advantage. I approached them for everything that I did not understand.

As the transcripts above indicate, the students developed strategies that allowed them to respond to the cultural rules and contexts which confronted them at the Focus School. These strategies included finding ways to shift their dispositions to include adapted social competencies learned through their interactions at the school site. These competencies allowed them to construct the practices that allowed them to become good players of the Focus School game. As was quoted earlier elsewhere in this dissertation, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:23) are of the opinion that a good player is one:

who is so to speak, the game incarnate, does at every moment what the game requires. That presupposes a permanent capacity for invention, indispensable if one is to be able to adapt to indefinitely varied and never completely identical situation.

Thus, it was the students' 'capacity for invention' that enabled them to learn the new regularities of the Focus School and acquire the social competencies necessary for developing a trans-local habitus that would enable them to successfully integrate into the new field.

In the following section I discuss how the four students adopt fluid and adaptable educational subjectivities in relation to their navigation at the Focus School that results in the establishment of their trans-local habitus.

6.6. The development of the students' fluid and adaptable subjectivities at the Focus School

In this section I describe how the four students navigated the social spaces of the new school environment in order to adopt fluid and adaptable subjectivities which would enable them to become successful at the Focus School. In the previous sections I described how the students mediated their subjectivities via their socialisation practices and the development of social competencies at the Focus School. In this section I show how these practices work together to develop the students' fluid and adaptable subjectivities that enabled them to cultivate a trans-local habitus.

Continuing with Bourdieu's metaphor of 'playing a game', this section describes how the students began to embody the rules of the game in the new school field in order to become successful 'players' at the Focus School. This embodiment involved the students shifting and adapting their habitus to align to the rules and regulations of the new school field. Bourdieu notes that habitus and field are relational in that they operate only in relation to one another, and a field is seen, "as a space of play which exists as such only to the extent that players enter into it who believe in and actively pursue the prizes it offers ... [c]onversely, the theory of habitus is incomplete without a notion of structure that make room for the organised improvisation of agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:19). As such, the four students, through their investment in the structures of the new school field, over time adopted fluid and adaptable subjectivities that enabled them to become successful students.

To embody the rules and regulations of the Focus School the students engaged in a range of behaviours. These behaviours included a strategic reading of the Focus School's cultural functioning and expectations, many of which differed significantly from their previous school. During my interviews, the students identified a variety of activities and resources that supported their successful transitioning into the new school environment. These included: living on the school premises, longer school hours, after-hours support, sporting and cultural activities, access to science laboratories and library facilities, availability of text books and technology as well as well-qualified teachers. The four students stated that not only did these activities and

resources support their learning but, they also created a climate of learning that was significantly different to their previous schools. The students describe the Focus School as having a culture of teaching and learning that included high academic expectations combined with an investment in the aspirations of the students to study in tertiary institutions when they left the school. In this regard Mona notes that:

I had a much better understanding of the work. It made me want to engage more in learning. There was a well-resourced Science lab. Even the teachers, as resources outside school hours ... they were amazing. They (the teachers) were always approachable ... and always willing to help.

Luke expressed his engagement with the Focus School stating that, “*I just lapped it up ... I was like a sponge ... I had always wanted a Science lab.*” Likewise, TK describes how, although the school demanded a higher level of academic achievement, the school also supported them to attain this. TK puts it this way:

It was not difficult to cope at the Focus School because there were more resources, more expertise-based educators such as the Maths, Science and Computer Science. The educators stayed on the premises making themselves accessible when I needed help. There were less learners per class and mostly I was surrounded by A-grade learners. This motivated me to push my own limits.

In discussing how the culture of teaching and learning provided opportunities that they had not had before, Mona proudly mentioned that: “*I won the Lego competition that was hosted at the MTN Science Centre, I would not have had that opportunity at my old school*”. Similarly, the students were provided with opportunities to develop leadership skills. Phumla states, in this regard, that:

I knew that I had leadership qualities. I was chosen to be a member of the student council called the Representative Student Council (RCL). This was new to me.

Not only did the school provide them with new opportunities, the school assisted them to raise the necessary funds to take up the opportunities presented. Luke

explains how: *“although it was a difficult thing to raise funds for the trip to India, it is a journey that I will never forget.”*

Within the first year of their attendance at the Focus School, based on their strategic readings and figuring out what behaviour to adopt, the students settled into the new school environment. Despite describing themselves as ‘settling in’ and beginning to understand what was expected of them at the Focus School, the students also describe the immense pressure they endured in order to perform well. This was due mainly to two specific reasons. One reason is that the Focus School had threatened students who did not perform well in the initial tests that they would have to return to their former schools. The second reason was that the students felt that their former schools and their communities and families were watching to see if they would succeed. TK notes:

Everybody’s eyes were on me from Wolmarans. I could not let them down. I could not let myself down. I could not go back to my former school. Also ... my old school had faith in me. The principal believed in me. And my parents had aspirations for me to be an achiever. Also I want to be a pilot or an optician.

Luke describes his motivation to achieve as a fear,

fear ... of having to return to my own school and my old life ... because people from Pula thought I was smart, and because you now also think that you are smart, imagine having to come back because you are not as smart as you thought you were. I could just kind of foresee all the nasty things people would say.

Mona discusses how other students had to leave the school and says that this motivated her to work hard, stating that: *“I remember so many people left ... I wanted to be there, I did not want to be sent home”*. TK notes that he came to realise that much more was expected of him if he was to be successful at the Focus School:

I have a very competitive nature. I knew I had to get behind the books. I was in the top 5 at my former high school but not at the Focus School. I knew I had to work harder.

The students also came to realise that in order to become successful at the school they had to be strategic in the social adaptations that they made. Mona describes how she understood that the choice of friends at the school was decisive in positioning her as an achieving student. On this issue she points out that: *“I only hung out with the students who were in the top ten and hardly ever got into trouble”*. Phumla notes that although she did not consider herself good at working in groups, she came to realise that in order to do well she needed to find ways to work with her peers in order to understand the work. Staying at the school made this easier and during the weekends she notes that it was much easier to study at the school than if she went home.

Not only were their peer socialisation practices important, the students also described how they realised that they needed to develop relationships with the teachers at the school as this positioned them as hard working students. Luke describes how he made an effort to endear himself to his teachers by always showing an interest in his learning, observing that: *“I practically made a nuisance of myself asking the teachers to explain everything that I did not understand. The teachers liked me for that”*. Phumla notes that her Grade 11 Maths teacher in particular was instrumental in helping her improve her Maths mark and explains that: *“Mr Gibbon was very helpful, offering help to us whenever we asked, usually it was at least once or twice a week after school that he would help us with our work”*.

Mona’s realisation that she had been granted an exceptional educational opportunity for fulfilling her academic aspirations had transformed how she interacted with the school space. Although Mona was an introvert she realised that she had to make use of the resources available to her if she wanted to succeed. She described how she pushed herself out of her comfort zone to approach the teachers when she experienced difficulties with her work. She noted that the fact that the teachers were always so willing to help assisted her to overcome her shyness in approaching them for help and reported that:

well ... they were very helpful and always available. That was the nice thing about the Focus School. I could knock on their door at any time and they were always willing to help.

Over time Mona stated that she became more confident and was later invited to become a tutor to the Maths students in the lower grades. She explains that she *“became a tutor at the Focus School where I tutored the students in the grades below me”*. Phumla notes that she involved herself in leadership roles and served as a class representative and was elected as a member on the school’s Representative Council of Learners.

Over time the students came to invest themselves in the new field environment and explained that they no longer wanted to return home at the weekends. When asked if she chose to go home for the weekends, Mona responded by saying:

I did not, no, no. I actually enjoyed the Focus School. I would rather go home with my friend from school to Wolmarans (a rural town). We are still friends today, and I still visit her. I went home with other students who became my friends. I preferred to go elsewhere than to my grandparents.

Similarly, TK and Luke, who had previously missed their siblings when they had moved to the Focus School, also discuss how they chose to stay at the school over weekends: *“I enjoyed socialising at the Focus School. I found that my friends from home had not seemed to move on as I had (TK)*. Luke puts it as follows:

Remember, I told you ... my friends that I left behind were not happy that I had ‘deserted’ them. Our relationship was not the same any more. The Focus School had become my haven...away from the conflicts at home ... and where I was achieving much better results than ever before.

Investing in the new school field over time, the students came to embody the rules and regularities of the Focus School as their own. As their subjectivities were shifting and adapting they describe how they began to develop what Fataar (2015:113) describes as a “thin connectedness” to their domestic environment and “firmer attachments” to the new school field. They accomplished this over time via their investing in the new school field and the development of fluid and adaptive subjectivities, i.e. a trans-local habitus.

6.7 The students' establishment of a trans-local habitus at the Focus School

In the previous sections I showed how the practices of the students' mediation of their subjectivities via socialisation and development of social competencies, worked together to develop the students' fluid and adaptable subjectivities that enabled them to move towards cultivating a trans-local habitus. In this section I discuss how the students established a trans-local habitus which enabled them to become successful at the Focus School.

The idea of trans-local habitus builds on the idea of trans-nationalism. Trans-nationalism, in relation to individuals migrating to different or new locations, can be defined as: "belonging to or organizing daily life between and among different locales that span borders" (Man & Cohen, 2015:258). Trans-localism refers to individuals as they move within local boundaries from one location to another. Fataar (2015), in his work on young people's emerging subjectivities in relation to their school going in the post-apartheid urban landscape, refers to trans-localism as the shifting processes and adaptations that young people make as they move across the city spaces in order to access quality schooling. For the four students in my dissertation, developing a trans-local habitus required them to mentally and physically embody the requirements of the new school field. A trans-local habitus is therefore a habitus that incorporates a socio-spatial mobility which the students had embodied over time in order to become socially, geographically, culturally and linguistically integrated into the new social space or field. It is this integration, i.e. the cultivation of a trans-local habitus that allowed the four students to gain access to the opportunities at the Focus School in order to realise their educational aspirations.

Adopting Bourdieu's analogy of 'playing the game', the students came to embody the rules and regulations of the new field environment that enabled them to develop a 'feel for the game' at the Focus School and begin to play the game successfully. This required them to conform to what was considered acceptable behaviour at the Focus School and learn to optimally utilise the resources that were available to them. TK started to improve his time management, stating that: *"I had to get used to the fact that classes started on the first day of school at the Focus School. There were no*

'free periods' which I was used to." Luke realised that he would have to change his behaviour as the way he had behaved at his previous school would not be tolerated at the Focus School and reported that: *"I was used to fooling around in class at my old school. I realised that this kind of behaviour was not going to get me anywhere."* All four students realised the value of working with their peers and organised study groups that supported their learning. Both Phumla and Mona noted that they had to work harder than they ever did before. Phumla stated that: *"I like to work on my own most of the time, but I saw that I would benefit if I worked in groups."* Mona describes how she learned to use the teachers as a resource to support her learning:

I was not used to asking teachers for help because I am shy. But they were there ... They were available ... so I just had to be brave as it was for my own good ... and ask for help.

These strategies were used by the students to shift their educational subjectivities in order to establish a trans-local habitus. Not only did the students shift and adapt their educational subjectivities at the Focus School, they realised that when they went home they needed to change how they engaged with education and their new learning practices when they were in their domestic space. Regarding this issue TK states that: *"When I went home on the weekends and school holidays, I drew up a time table for studying and spent a lot of time with my school work."* Mona describes how she changed her views regarding her school learning saying, *"I did not see school work as such a burden anymore. When I went home with my friend to Wolmarans, over weekends, we actually worked on our projects."*

These shifts and adaptations the students had made to their educational subjectivities were noted by their family and friends, with Luke noting that: *"My friend in Pula could not understand why I was not fooling around with them anymore. They called me a nerd because I was sitting with my books more"*. Phumla describes how she now felt confident enough to support her siblings with their school work and reported that: *"I used my skills that I had learnt at the Focus School to assist my siblings in their school work when I went home during the holidays"*. What this data illustrates is that the students had now embodied the shifts and changes in their educational subjectivities as seen in their ability to utilise the practices of the Focus School across different spaces.

My argument is, therefore, that by shifting their educational subjectivities via the socialisation practices in their new school field, they were able to develop social and educational competency that enabled them to cultivate a fluid and adaptable habitus, i.e. a trans-local habitus. Thus, a trans-local habitus can be described as a habitus that is successfully established through the weaving together of new practices across different spaces.

6.8. Conclusion

In this chapter I have applied Bourdieu's analogy of 'playing the game' to describe how the four students developed a trans-local habitus by successfully integrating their adapted practices at the Focus School into their educational subjectivity. On arrival at the Focus School, the students realised that they had entered a field that was different to what they were used to – they were confronted by new 'rules of the game' which initially alienated them from successfully integrating into the new school environment. This alienation required them over time to begin to make adjustments to their educational subjectivities in order to learn the 'rules of the game' and to 'fit' in and become successful in the new school terrain.

Their initial anxiety and longing to return to their domestic environments over time, was replaced by a desire to begin to interact both physically and conceptually with the new school environment, i.e. learn and apply the new rules of the field. They did this by applying extra effort to meet the expectations of the Focus School. In other words, they worked towards embodying the norms and values of the new school field in order to generate adapted educational subjectivities (changed dispositions) that enabled them to act and think in ways that aligned with the new school field.

Once the students had come to realise the different expectations of the school field, i.e. the new social and educational 'rules of the game', they began to develop competencies that allowed them to 'play the game' successfully. These competencies, which involved the unwritten 'rules of the game' or the rules implicit in the new school field, required them to begin to change the way they interacted and comported themselves differently, in order to become successful players at the Focus School. For example, the students describe how they realised they had to be

punctual for their classes, work towards achieving higher marks in their tests and exams, and participate in the extra-curricular activities offered by the school.

It was these practices which over time supported the development of a fluid and adaptable habitus that enabled them to construct viable school lives at the Focus School. They did this by shifting and adapting their habitus to align with the rules and regulations of the Focus School. This involved an investment in the structures of the Focus School and a strategic reading of the cultural functioning and expectations of the school, many of which differed significantly from their previous schools. Thus, it was their ability to adapt their practices to align to the expectations of the school field that capacitated the students' fluid and adaptable subjectivities and enabled them to become successful students.

The final point that signalled the students' successful shift towards a trans-local habitus was their embodying of the rules of the game, both the explicit and implicit rules of the Focus School. This is seen in the way in which they shifted and changed their educational practices to embody the expectations of the new school field. By this I refer to the students not only complying with the rules of the Focus School, but the manner in which they came to engage with their own schooling practices differently. Examples of this are seen in the forming of study groups, working longer hours, drawing on the resources available to them, and so forth. Further, the data from the research study describes not only how the students shifted and changed their educational subjectivities at the Focus School, the data highlights the manner in which they came to embody these practices as they moved between the school and their domestic environments to develop a successful trans-local habitus.

Thus, a trans-local habitus, i.e. a habitus that involves practices and relations across different social spaces, can be described as the ability to live and feel at home in more than one space (Levitt, 2001). A trans-local habitus is one that involves a set of dualistic dispositions (Guarnizo, 1997) or "contrapuntal schema" (McKay, 2005:85) through the combining of elements from the different social spaces that the individual moves through. For the four students in my study, it was the combination of their domestic habitus from their home environment, their mobility between their domestic environments and the Focus School and their adapted educational subjectivities in

the new school field that developed their trans-local habitus and, consequently, enabled them to become successful at the Focus School.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

The aim of this dissertation was to describe and discuss the navigational practices of four historically disadvantaged high school students as they established their educational subjectivities across different social spaces. This study contributes to the emerging literature on the experiences of disadvantaged students who ‘trans-locate’ between working class domestic environments and institutions in middle class settings. The four students, who are the focus of this research, moved from their working class home environments to attend a school that was established by the WCED as a Mathematics, Science and Technology boarding school for students who had previously been disadvantaged under the apartheid schooling system. The school was established to accept students in the Further Education and Training (FET) school phase, i.e. Grades 10-12. This meant that the four students in this study only attended the school for their final three years of schooling, staying as weekly boarders in the school’s boarding facilities during this time.

In response to my main research question the dissertation has developed an argument for how the four students, via their navigational practices between their domestic environment and the Focus School, established a trans-local habitus. I have suggested, drawing on Bourdieu, that it was the students’ ability to embody the ‘rules of the game’ in the new field environment that allowed them to establish a trans-local habitus which enabled them to become successful in the new school field context.

The dissertation includes seven chapters that respond to my research question and sub-questions. In Chapter One I introduced and located the study and provided a rationale for why I embarked on this particular research process. I briefly described the term trans-localism as the movement of individuals across different spaces and then introduced the conceptual lens of Bourdieu and Urry which enabled me to explain the students’ establishment of a trans-local habitus. In Chapter Two I presented a literature review on youth and the adaptations and changes that they undergo in the post-apartheid era in their attempts to secure a good education. Definitions and characteristics of youth and their school-going mobility are explored

in this chapter as a prelude to the focus on trans-locating students. Chapter Three developed my theoretical framework using Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus and field, augmented by Urry's theory of mobility. In this chapter I developed a conceptualisation of a trans-local habitus which enabled me to analyse the data of the four students as they moved (trans-located) from their domestic environments to the Focus School field. The first three chapters of the dissertation thus, provided a rationale and background to my study and the extant literature and theoretical framework that was used to analyse the data.

In Chapter Four I described the methodological aspects of the study. Situated in the qualitative research paradigm, this chapter explained the interpretive theoretical framework that I used. This chapter further provided the rationale for how my respondents in the study were selected and described my use of multiple semi-structured interviews as the data collection instrument. This chapter laid out how the data was analysed and validated and the ethical considerations that were taken into account for the study.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six presented the respondents' narratives regarding their domestic environments (Chapter 5) and their navigation to the Focus School (Chapter 6). In these two chapters I offered an understanding of how the students mediated and established their educational subjectivities at the Focus School in light of their mobility across different social spaces. Chapter Five provided a presentation of the empirical data as four narratives of the selected students' domestic working class context before they attended the Focus School. This chapter provided the background information for understanding the students' subjective becoming before their arrival at the Focus School. In Chapter Six I analysed the narrative data of the four students and discussed the way in which they developed social competencies and fluid and adaptive subjectivities that enabled them to shift and adapt their subjectivities at the Focus School. I concluded this chapter by discussing how the four students established a trans-local habitus which enabled them to become successful at the Focus School.

7.2. Theoretical considerations: the establishment of a trans-local habitus

This dissertation draws on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field to discuss how the students shifted and adapted their habitus to the requirements of the Focus School. Bourdieu's theory of practice, habitus and field, augmented by Urry's theorisation of mobility, provided a theoretical lens that allowed me to analyse how the four students established successful educational subjectivities on the move. Bourdieu defines one's habitus as "an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:133). According to Bourdieu, the dispositions of habitus predispose individuals to choose behaviour which appears to them to achieve the desired outcome given their previous experiences, the resources available to them, and the prevailing state of the field. In this way habitus, as a system of transposable dispositions, guides an individual's actions in a social space (Bourdieu, 1977:82-83). Calhoun describes the process that an individual embarks on to cope with changes in the field, as a practical reaction to a situation based on experience, combined with an embodied sensibility that leads to a structured improvisation of the habitus (2000:712 in Hillier & Rooksby, 2005:22). Bourdieu notes that, as habitus is constituted in practice and is "always orientated to practical functions", it is constantly subjected to a range of different experiences which will either reinforce or modify the dispositions of the habitus (1980:52). Thus, Bourdieu accepts that one's habitus can be modified; habitus "is durable but not eternal" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:133).

As discussed in Chapter 6, the four students in this study, were required to shift and adapt their subjectivities to the new school field environment in order to become successful and achieve their future educational goals. Bourdieu states that an individual's practical relation to the future, which defines one's present behaviour, consists of the relationship between habitus and the opportunities offered to them, and is therefore "constructed in the course of a particular relationship to a particular universe of probabilities" (1980:64). In this way, the four students' "sense of the probable future" was constituted through their relationship "with a world structured according to the categories of the possible ... and the impossible" (ibid: 64). The

changes that the four students made, therefore, by shifting and adapting their educational subjectivities to match the requirements of the Focus School field, can be described as a “selective perception of a situation which generates a response according to the practical potential of satisfying the actor/s’ desire/s” (Hillier & Rooksby, 2005:23-24).

Bourdieu terms the socially structured space, in which activities occur, a field. A field is a “relational configuration endowed with a specific gravity which it imposes on all the objects and agents which enter in it” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:17). A field, as a social space, is also a space of conflict and competition where individuals struggle to achieve their aims. Bourdieu employs the analogy of a ‘game’ to describe how individuals work to improve their positions in a social field. To be successful in a game requires not just understanding and following the rules of the game, but involves players having a sense of the game:

It requires constant awareness of and responsiveness to the play of all actors involved. It requires assessment of one’s own team-mates/s’ resources, strengths and weaknesses and also those of the opponent/s. It requires improvisation and flexibility and above all it requires use of anticipation as to what one’s team-mate/s and one’s opponent/s will do. Behaviours cannot be reduced simply to theoretical rules. (Hillier & Rooksby 2005:23)

It is in learning to play by the ‘rules of the game’ (written and unwritten) that the four students within the social space of the Focus School environment, learned how to modify their behaviour in order to work effectively within the existing practices of the new field. In other words, they learned what was possible (or not) within the rules and regularities of the Focus School field. In this manner, when the four students were faced with new field conditions, they began to figure out what they could do, based on their own limits and abilities and, in this way, chose their adapted course of action given the new field circumstances.

For the four students discussed in this dissertation, their initial move to the social field of the Focus School was fraught with unease and anxiety. The Focus School was initially alienating and discordant to their working-class home environments. The written and unwritten ‘rules of the game’ of the new school were significantly different

to those of their previous school. Being weekly boarders added a further dimension to the students' changed lives, as none of the four had ever lived away from their home environments before.

In order to become adept within the new field environment of the Focus School, the four students had to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities to 'fit' the requirements of their new school field. My argument is that this required them to develop social competency and fluid and adaptable subjectivities to play by the 'rules' of the new 'game'. Webb *et al.* (2002:38) note that the habitus is constituted "in moments of practice" when an individual's set of dispositions meets a particular problem or context with which it is not familiar. Thus, for the four students, the challenges of the new school context required them to find ways to shift and adapt their dispositions in order to learn to 'play the game' in the new field. It is this that Bourdieu refers to as acquiring a 'feel for the game', i.e. developing a habitus-field match, and which enables an individual to become a successful player in a new field environment.

The four students in this study are considered mobile students, in that they moved weekly from their domestic environment to the Focus School field. Thus, Bourdieu's analogy of 'playing the game', combined with Urry's theory of mobility, provided a lens that has allowed me to understand and explain how the four students adapted their subjectivities to the rules and regularities of the different field contexts 'on the move'.

The conceptualisation of subjectivity is taken from Hall (2004) who describes one's subjectivity as something that is always produced or created from the ingredients of one's past, and is always in the process of transformation. Elliot and Urry (2010), in their discussion on the development of mobile lives, describe a number of subjective transformations that individuals make and which create what they describe as a 'field of mobilities'. Relevant to this study is the "centrality of mobilities in people's social and emotional lives" (Elliot & Urry, 2010:59). They describe how mobilities, as a distinct field, is characterised by "struggles, tastes and habituses ... a site of multiple intersecting contestations" (Elliot & Urry 2010:59). They go on to argue that it is through the embodiment of an individual's experiences 'on the move', as a form of network and social capital, that one is able to engender and sustain social relations

with those we encounter within our social fields. For the four students in the study, the 'field of mobility', therefore, applies to the manner in which they were able to successfully move between two distinct fields, drawing on the network and social capital in both fields, to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities to the requirements of each field environment. The ability of the four students to draw on the network and social capital within their various 'fields of mobility' was analysed in Chapter 6. Here I described how the students, through their development of social competency, establishment of fluid and adaptable subjectivities, and the embodiment of a 'sense of the game', established a trans-local habitus that enabled them to become successful at the Focus School.

7.3. Conclusion and recommendations for further studies

This dissertation has placed as central to the research focus, how the four high school students mediated their educational subjectivities at the Focus School, in light of their mobility between their domestic environments and the school field.

With an understanding of how the students mediated their educational subjectivities at the Focus School, it is hoped that the study could add value to the debates on schooling and learning within the South African school context. The study highlights what could be achieved when historically disadvantaged students traverse the locales from their domestic environments to the Focus School which was an environment conducive for quality education. It is my recommendation that policymakers could lobby for the replicating of Focus Schools that have the physical, human and material resources to offer all the Further Education and Training (FET) subjects in a particular learning field. An educational environment that is significantly different from the working-class environments of the students could create a space in which they could establish successful educational subjectivities.

Furthermore, what is of interest, and could be considered in a further study, is whether the students were able to continue the shifts and adaptations they made in their educational subjectivities at the Focus School to another new field environment. As this was not the focus of this study, I do not investigate in any depth whether the students were successful as they moved into future new field environments. I would, therefore, suggest that a study that tracked students' movement across various

different and, possibly, disjunctural educational fields, for example, from a working class domestic environment to a high school in a middle class environment, to tertiary studies and onto a career path, would provide a valuable understanding of the enduring aspects of the shifts and adaptations that students made to their educational subjectivities, across different and varied field contexts, to support their future aspirations.

Included in my interviews, the four respondents in this study provided a brief discussion on their tertiary studies after their successful completion of Grade 12. This narrative shows that three of the students had embodied the changes they had made to their educational subjectivities, allowing them to continue to move successfully between multiple field environments. Here I define 'becoming successful' as the students' aspirations for their tertiary education and future careers. Of the four students, Luke and Mona established a desire to become mechanical engineers while studying at the Focus School. On completion of their Grade 12 studies they were accepted into a tertiary institution to study mechanical engineering. TK's aspiration was to become a pilot, however, while at the Focus School he realised that as he wore spectacles he would not qualify to study aviation. He therefore changed his career plans and chose to study dentistry. Phumla's initial aspiration was to become a doctor. During her Grade 12 year, due to her very good Mathematic results, she was awarded a bursary to study a Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) degree and was accepted at the University of Cape Town (UCT). This was strongly supported by her father and she thus decided to accept the bursary and shift her aspirations to study towards a B.Com degree. She did not, however, complete the degree at UCT, leaving at the end of the first year to begin work at a bank. While working she enrolled to complete her studies through the University of South Africa (UNISA) on a part-time basis. She was (at the time of writing) working and completing her part-time studies.

The manner in which the four students were able to move beyond the Focus School to go on and become successful in their further studies, for me is an indication of their establishment of a successful trans-local habitus. For the four students in this study their ability to shift and adapt their educational subjectivities 'on the move', through the development of social competencies and fluid and adaptable

subjectivities, and an embodiment of the 'sense of the game' in the new field environment, enabled them to become successful at the Focus School. A trans-local habitus, I argue therefore, is the ability to successfully shift and adapt one's subjectivity as one moves across different field contexts. In other words, a successful trans-local habitus is one that allows the individual, via their navigation across different field contexts, to successfully change or adapt their dispositions to the rules and regularities of the new field context.

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Addendum 1: Interview schedule

Semi-structured interview guidelines for conversations with the students

Past students from the Cape Academy of Maths, Science and Technology Focus School were approached, and agreed to a series of interviews with the focus on research about the academic discourse of how academic success is achieved while people are “on the move”.

1. Guidelines for the **first** conversation with the students:

The home and its environment- Examine the practical relevance of Bourdieu’s notion of habitus in understanding the relationship between the internal process of personal transformation, growth and change over time to the experiences of these students

- 1.1. Tell me about yourself.
- 1.2. Could you sketch your personal family history?
- 1.3. What can you tell me about your schooling (educational background)?
- 1.4. What were your parents’/guardian’s aspirations for your future?
- 1.5. What aspirations did you hold for your future as a child and teenager?
Can you talk me through it and give examples.
- 1.6. How were you involved in the community and/or extra-curricular activities as a child and teenager? Can you talk me through it and give examples.
- 1.7. How did it happen that you attended the Focus School?
- 1.8. How did you feel about the decision to move to the Focus School?
- 1.9. What was the main attraction to the Focus School?
- 1.10. What were you most anxious about the Focus School?

2. Guidelines for the **second** conversation with the students:

Translocation - explore the movements of the students that include various forms of internal migration as well as commuting and everyday movements both within cities and rural and urban areas. To explain how the students deploy their capitals across

the field in order to shift their educational habitus and how material and conceptual mobility come into this.

- 2.1. How did you prepare for the change to the Focus School?
- 2.2. What changes did you undergo to fit into the Focus School?
- 2.3. How do you think you were prepared for the new environment?
- 2.4. What strategies did you employ to adapt to the new environment?
- 2.5. What were the challenges you experienced at the Focus School?
- 2.6. How were you/your family affected by the financial constraints of being at the Focus School i.e. travel, etc.?
- 2.7. How did your parents engage in the arrangements of your transfer to the Focus School?
- 2.8. How did attendance and living at the focus school impact on your behaviour when you returned to your home environment?

3. Guidelines for the **third** conversation with the students:

Mediation- To understand the trans-local mediation of their educational experiences and accomplishments of the students

- 3.1. What were the hardest things to endure at the Focus School? How did you cope?
- 3.2. What were the easier things to endure? Why?
- 3.3. How did the experience alienate you/or not? Explain.
- 3.4. How did the school understand you and where you came from?
- 3.5. What do you think the school missed about you?
- 3.6. How did the school acknowledge you culturally?
- 3.7. How did the school treat and organize you?
- 3.8. What was most different about the Focus School and your previous school.
- 3.9. How did you engage with the education provided at the Focus School?
- 3.10. What value do you think the resources at the Focus School added?
- 3.11. How did the teaching at the focus school address you as a student?
- 3.12. Do you think that the teaching was on your level? Explain.

3.13. How was your background recognized during the teaching/instruction at the Focus School?

Addendum 2: Ethical consent Stellenbosch University:



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Approval Notice New Application

04-Mar-2015
Domingo-salie, Nazli N

Proposal #: DESC/DSalie/Feb2015/6

Title: 'Translocal Habitus': High school students' mediation of their educational aspirations at a focus school

Dear Mrs Nazli Domingo-salie,

Your **New Application** received on **18-Feb-2015**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **20-Feb-2015 -19-Feb-2016**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (DESC/DSalie/Feb2015/6) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents:

Permission letter_Cape Academy
Research Proposal
Interview schedule
DESC Checklist form
Email correspondence
Informed consent form
REC Application form
Permission letter_WCED

Sincerely,

Western Cape Education Department consent:

Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20140409-27987

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Nazli Domingo-Salie
21 Domingo Road
Retreat
7945

Dear Mrs Nazli Domingo-Salie

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: 'TRANSLOCAL HABITUS': HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' MEDIATION OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AT A FOCUS SCHOOL

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 July 2014 till 30 September 2014**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 10 April 2014

Respondent consent form:



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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TRANSLOCAL HABITUS: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MEDIATION OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION AT A FOCUS SCHOOL

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Nazli Domingo-Salie, Masters in Education, from the Education Policy Studies Department at Stellenbosch University. The results of this research will form part of a dissertation. You were selected as a possible respondent in this study because you are an historically disadvantaged student who attended the Focus School.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

My research aims to elucidate the experiences shown by 10 individuals possessing the putative translocal habitus that may have enabled them to succeed at the Focus School.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- that you share your experiences as a student moving between home and the Focus School, with the researcher during semi-structured interviews.
- the researcher plans to conduct three, one-hour long interviews with you over the next six months. The interviews will be conducted at private venues of mutual choice, at a time that is suitable to you.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no reasonable foreseeable risks, discomforts, inconveniences attached to this research.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no personal benefits to you, but Education in general, could benefit from your participation.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no remuneration for your participation in the study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping your, and the school's identity anonymous. The semi-structured interview will be audio-taped. You have the right to review/edit the tapes, before the content is used for research. Only the researcher will have access to the tapes which will be used for educational purposes. The content will be erased from the tapes as soon as the dissertation is complete.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

- The researcher: N. Domingo-Salie from 21 Domingo Road, Retreat, 7945, tel: 021 7120674 (H); 021 467 2235 (W); cell: 0798894139; Email: domingosalie.nazli76@gmail.com
- The supervisor: Prof A Fataar - cell: 0793007843; Email afataar@sun.za

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact MsMaléneFouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described toby N. Domingo-Salie in *English* and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Respondent

Signature of Subject/Respondent

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator

Date

School consent letter:

	The Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science & Technology	<small>Firgrove Way, CONSTANTIA Postal address: Private Bag X3, TOKAI, 7966 Tel. (021) 794 5104 (021) 794 0974 Fax. (021) 794 0824</small>
<hr/> <small>www.capeacademy.co.za</small>		<small>admin@capeacademy.wcape.school.za</small>

Mrs Nazli Domingo-Salie
21 Domingo Road
Retreat
7945

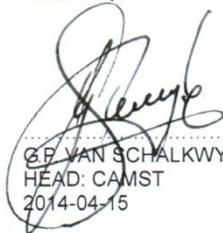
Dear Mrs Nazli Domingo-Salie

RESEARCH PROPOSAL : 'TRANSLOCAL HABITUS' : HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' MEDIATION OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AT A FOCUS SCHOOL.

As per our telephonic conversation of 15/04/2014 and your request dated 10 April 2014, permission is hereby granted that you can conduct your investigation at our institution under the conditions set by the Directorate : Research of the Western Cape Education Department reference: 20140409-27987.

We value your interest in our institution and wish you success in your research.

Yours truly


G.F. VAN SCHALKWYK
HEAD: CAMST
2014-04-15



gregvans@gmail.com

