

**Opening the ‘Black Box’: A Multidimensional Approach to
Perceptions of Social Mobility Among Black Students
at the University of Cape Town**

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of Master of Philosophy in Development Studies*

by

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List of Abbreviations

B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
B Bus Sci	Bachelor of Business Science
B Com	Bachelor of Commerce
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CAS	Cape Area Study
CAPS	Cape Area Panel Study
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHEC	The Cape Higher Education Consortium
CHED	The Centre for Higher Education Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
EDU	Education Development Unit, Faculty of Commerce
FoC	Faculty of Commerce
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
KMPS	Khayelitsha/ Mitchell's Plain Survey
NIDS	National Income Dynamics Study
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
UCT	University of Cape Town
IUCEA	The Inter-University Council for East Africa
R	Symbol for South African currency (The Rand)
SA	South African
SASCO	South African Standard Classification of Occupations

1. Introduction

In the past decade, the high persistence of inequality has been a cause of concern for most countries. The fact that social class has become more of ‘a lifetime experience’ (Goldthorpe 2002, 14) rather than gradually being eroded, has made it clear that inequalities between social groups, if not acted upon, can be perpetuated across generations. Hence, in the past decade and especially in the last few years, both the intrinsic value of equity and how it matters for long-term development have come to global attention. As a response, improving social mobility is now the avowed primary social goal of many governments (Major 2012).

On the eve of its transition to democracy, South Africa ranked “among the most unequal societies in the world” (Seekings and Nattrass 2006, 188). Despite hopes that the enfranchisement of South Africa’s poor Black population with democratisation would work to redress the socio-economic legacies of Apartheid (Seekings 2011, 22), South Africa’s inequality still remains extremely high, ranked as one of the worst globally – the Gini coefficient was 0.66 at the end of Apartheid, 0.68 in 2008, and 0.7 by 2008 (Leibbrandt et al. 2010, 32). The persistence of high and growing levels of inequality has led to significant amounts of research being dedicated to analysing the nature and composition of this inequality.

Scholars highlight differential returns to education as an important mechanism driving income inequality in South Africa (Branson et al. 2012). While employment and earning returns to tertiary level education have been rising, returns to levels of education below tertiary level have stayed constant (Fasih et al. 2012; Keswell and Poswell 2002; Schultz 2004). Tertiary qualifications continue to enhance young people’s labour market

access and high income career opportunities (Tonheim and Matose 2013). In fact, the wage gains associated with each additional year of higher education in South Africa are relatively high by global standards, standing at between 10 and 15 per cent (Schultz 2004).¹

Furthermore, the partial de-racialisation of South Africa's class structures has been achieved through extended education and employment opportunities for South Africa's disadvantaged black population (Seekings 2008, 22, 40). The proportion of income controlled by South Africa's white citizens (constituting 8.4 per cent of total South African population) fell from 71 per cent to 48 per cent between 1972 and 2001 (Leibbrandt et al. 2006, 102; Seekings and Nattrass 2006, 304). During the same period South Africa's black population experienced income growth as the proportion of income going to black citizens rose from 20 per cent to 38 per cent (*Ibid*). Consequently, black South Africans constituted over 45 per cent of the top two income deciles in 2000, compared to 28 per cent in 1995 (Seekings and Nattrass 2006, 306). This trend reflects the importance of stable income resources, such as formal employment attained through education, to well-being and social mobility indicators (Adato, Carter, and May 2006). The ability of marginalised groups to excel within the institutions of higher education therefore proves crucial to redressing deep inequities rooted in South Africa's history of racial discrimination.

However, has education really acted as the great social leveller for all, as popularly imagined? Or has it simply allowed the privileged to consolidate and reproduce their position in society? Or has it played little causal role at all – instead simply responding to the bigger societal and occupational shifts that define opportunities? (Major 2012, 155) In light of these questions, to what level has education created more (or less) interaction between social groups in a socially compartmentalised society?

¹ Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2004) estimated that the global average social rate of return to higher education was 10.8 per cent. In most cases developing countries exhibit high returns to primary education while returns on tertiary education are higher in developed countries (*Ibid*).

Although there has been a global increase in university participation among students from poorer backgrounds, this has been less evident within elite institutions (Crawford 2012; Simon 2014). In a recent study, Hoxby and Avery (2012) in the US demonstrate that high-achieving, low-income students are less likely to apply to selective universities. This, in turn, results in lower labour market returns for graduates from poorer socio-economic backgrounds. This shows that individuals from different social backgrounds do not necessarily take advantage of opportunities in the same way.

Aside from the impact of socio-economic background, negative stigmatisation of certain identities, such as categories of race, gender and caste, may also have profound socio-psychological implications for academic achievement and future career expectations (Quintana et al. 2012). These factors affect social groups' sense of what is possible and, therefore, may perpetuate inequality within a society as individuals internalise their perceived chances of success based on the lessons of history (Rao and Walton 2004). What role do the material and cultural resources that students bring with them to educational institutions play in their day-to-day interactions with others inside these institutions?²

In order to answer this question, a better understanding of the processes through which higher education produces socio-economic benefits, and their translation into social mobility, is required. Students' experience of university's social and organisational 'habitus'³ – a term coined by the French sociologist Bourdieu (1977a) to describe “a set of entrenched cultural dispositions” – is an important channel through which socio-economic background and social identity affect the transition to employment. De-emphasising the process of socialisation within university, or the role of institutional policies, may lead one

² To narrow it down, for the purpose of this study, the particular focus is on higher education, as a last step up to employment.

³ Sociologist Patricia McDonough (1998) has applied Bourdieu's 'habitus' concept to illustrate how organisational practices affect the lives and welfare of participants.

to either overestimate or underestimate the level to which social background affects employment prospects.

The following questions form the basis of this thesis: how does the higher education experience affect perceptions of social mobility in post-Apartheid South Africa? Is higher education experience able to compensate for disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, primary/secondary poor schooling, and negatively stigmatised social identities? Do students have equal access to opportunities within higher education? Do inequalities therefore persist because of variance in the way different groups take advantage of these opportunities? The principal aim of this study is to understand how, beyond the effect of income inequality, other inequalities embedded in systems of policy and cultural meaning within universities affect students' perceived opportunities in post-Apartheid South Africa. To this end this study focuses on elements within institutions of higher education, which may widen or narrow students' opportunities, and subsequently lead them to reformulate their job market expectations.

Asking these questions in the South African context is particularly important because current trends show growing black economic participation as a result of education. Landman et al. (2003, 7) state that "the main driver of inequality currently in South Africa is no longer the Black/White divide, but rather the intra-group divide between rich Blacks and poor Blacks." Although the public discourse has not changed significantly, there has been a shift in academic thinking. Where before the primary focus was on race-based decision-making now academics also acknowledge the importance socio-economic class cleavages to analysing the issue of inequality in South Africa.

Drawing on this debate, how, then, do institutional policies and social environment affect expectations regarding employment outcomes among black⁴ South African students from various socio-economic backgrounds, and at different levels of higher education? To answer this question, it is important to understand how these black South African students behave, make sense of themselves, their social identity and their overall educational welfare, and how they plan their futures within a historically white institution is important. There is a gap in the literature regarding the mediating or reproducing role of ‘education as experience’ between socio-economic backgrounds and future job expectations, particularly in South African context. This study aims to fill this gap by directly linking the socio-cultural climate of a university – and how it interacts with students’ socio-economic background and social identities – to their future mobility expectations.

This thesis proceeds as follows: Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on factors that influence social mobility and social mobility expectations. It highlights the key academic debates across disciplines and controversies among scholars on whether education is a social leveller or if it simply reinforces the social divide. Chapter 3 presents the research hypotheses and derives a multi-level analytical framework from the existing literature to answer the research questions. Chapter 4 contextualises the case study and describes the collected data, the methodological approach and the study subjects, as well as, the challenges faced conducting research at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Chapter 5 explores interviewees’ perception of current South African economic stratification and their place within it.

⁴ In South Africa, “black has been used as a racial category in narrow or broad terms time to time. On the one hand, black refers to those with indigenous and African origins such as the Zulus, Xhosas, Ndibebes, Pedis, Sothos, Swazis, Tswanas and Vendas. Later on, as part of anti-Apartheid resistance, black has become more inclusive, including all of the economically and politically disadvantaged groups – Africans, Coloureds (generally refers to mixed-race people) and Indians” (Carter 2012, 21). Throughout this paper, unless I specify otherwise, I use black to refer to the group with native African descent.

In the following three empirical chapters (6, 7, 8), I will make the central argument of the thesis: (i) social networks formed in university, and (ii) institutional policies and culture are crucial to an understanding of the impact of socio-economic background on job market expectations. I will show that, although education was perceived as a great social leveller by all interviewees, ‘education as experience’ was experienced differentially, which resulted in different mobility expectations. Finally, Chapter 9 concludes by summarising the findings, explaining how they contribute to the central argument of this thesis and highlighting areas for further research. I argue that ‘education as experience’ should be given serious attention because education is not an abstract force mediating the effect of parental education on occupation destinations; it is an entity that is interactively shaped and contested by students’ experiences and interactions. The social mobility literature should take social and institutional processes at the tertiary level into account.

2. Literature Review

This chapter first provides a review of the theoretical and empirical debate around the conceptualisation of education as a social leveller or reproducer of inequality. Following this debate, the role of socio-economic background, and social environmental and institutional factors that affect students' achievement and job market prospects are reviewed.

2.1 Understanding Social Mobility: Is Education a Social Leveller?

One of the great but unresolved theoretical debates on social mobility concerns the mediating role of education. Analysing the link between education and the economy began with the emergence of 'functionalism' where it is assumed that one of the core functions of schooling is to prepare young people for working life (Parsons 1959). This vision is also present in several analyses that see the educational system as the driving force behind changes in social mobility patterns (Blau and Duncan 1967 cited in Tach 2015, 84). In the following decades, the debate has unfolded into two main strands: one based on a structural link where education is seen as a tool for reproducing the socio-economic structure as a whole, and the other centred on the role of education as a key instrument of individual and social transformation.

Education plays a role, Sen's 'capability approach' argues, "not only in accumulating human capital but also in broadening human capability" (Dreze and Sen 1995; Saito 2003, 24). Sen (1999) insists that education has an impact on individual and social transformation, which is "intimately connected to people's ability to obtain a range of substantive freedoms", such as "employment, political participation and dignity" (cited in Jeffery, Jeffery, and Jeffrey 2008, 4). In his understanding, education can be viewed as "a complex good entailing both intrinsic and instrumental values," that is foundational to

the expansion of other, more complex, capabilities (Brighouse 2000; Saito 2003; Swift 2003; Unterhalter and Brighouse 2007). In this sense, the ‘capability approach’ locates education within a larger vision of social and human development. Structuralist sociologists, on the other hand, argue that young people’s ability to actively shape their own lives are mostly determined by the parameters of existing cultural and material constraints (Roche 2009, 4).

The ‘reproduction theory’ suggests that higher education is a tool of the class structure through which the intergenerational reproduction of class positions – defined in terms of occupational categories – is achieved (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bourdieu 1984). Thus, from this viewpoint, continued education is no longer considered a means of social emancipation, but, rather, it is seen as a means of reproduction (*Ibid.*). Moreover, ‘reproduction theory’ suggests that the education system has little effect on promoting social change, apart from the fact that “it moulds those disciplined cultural styles already prominent among the higher social classes, and ensures the persistence of high status culture across generations” (Collins 1979; Katsilis and Robinson 1990; Webb, Schirato, and Danaher 2002).

What is missing from Sen’s writings on education is a sense of history and struggle, of the formation and reformation of identities, within institutions of education and in the face of dominant educational norms, values and learning practices (Contu and Willmott 2003). Bourdieu (1993), on the other hand, does not assume that people will inevitably benefit from education regardless of their social backgrounds and he provides a framework for analysing the struggles faced by disadvantaged groups in education systems based on the values of the dominant group. The effect of education, however, is more complicated than inevitable middle-class reproduction (Blackburn and Jarman 1993; Connell 1983; Goldthorpe, Llewellyn, and Payne 1987).

As different people experience education in different ways, it can lead to diverse outcomes but both the ‘capability approach’ and the ‘reproduction theory’ fail to recognise that different social groups have different experiences of the education system. “The ‘black box’ of imputed links between school attendance and its socially beneficial outcomes remains largely murky, as do the institutional and cultural contexts that selectively facilitate or block the process of individual development” (Levine and White 1986, 3). Examining the behaviour of marginalised students would provide an incomplete analysis without opening this almighty ‘black box’ to critically examine what these students have actually gone through, how they benefited or failed to benefit from the education system in relation to students originating from more advantaged backgrounds. A close analysis of education, which seeks to untangle the ‘black box’ and its effects, necessarily hinges upon examining the quality of ‘education as experience’ across individuals and social groups. This theoretical debate informs the following empirical debate.

In assessing the impact of education on social mobility, a number of background and social environmental factors are identified as important determinants in the transition from higher education into gainful employment.

2.2 Background Factors: Family Background

Family background can indirectly shape the job prospects through its effect on educational attainment (Blau and Duncan 1967). People either experience intergenerational social mobility – where the “socio-economic status of a person is independent of his/her starting conditions such as family background” (Tonheim and Matose 2013, 1) – or inherit the social status of their parents. One consistent finding in the empirical literature is a strong association between social origin⁵ and educational outcomes (see for Ireland, Breen and Whelan 1993; Whelan and Layte 2002; for the U.S., Hout and Dohan 1996; Hout,

⁵ “Conditions and circumstances of early life that block opportunities or help them flourish” have been continuously referred to as ‘social origins’ (Hout 2015).

Raftery, and Bell 1993; Mare 1993; for South Africa, Van Der Berg 2013). Numerous ‘class mobility’ studies have shown that individuals’ social origin is a determinant of both educational attainment and occupational destinations (see Ishida, Muller, and Ridge 1995; Shavit and Blossfeld 1993). Most of these studies used similar background variables as a proxy for social origin, i.e. fathers’ occupation/class and education and, later, both parents’ educational and occupational attainment. Researchers have found that each parent’s class position has an independent effect on children’s educational outcomes (Kalmijn 1994; Korupp, Ganzeboom, and Van Der Lippe 2002).

Many studies on ‘status attainment’ find, however, that education mediates a large part of the association between social origin and occupational destination (e.g. Treiman and Yip 1989; Warren, Hauser, and Sheridan 2002). Similarly, in a more recent study of ‘class mobility’, Breen and Luijkx (2004) argue that education is mediating an increasing share of the socio-economic background effect in several European countries (see also for Sweden, Erikson and Jonsson 1996; for the UK, Richard Breen and Goldthorpe 2001; for Ireland, Whelan and Layte 2002; for Russia, Gerber and Hout 2004; for France, Vallet 2004). In post-Apartheid South Africa, however, although a considerable degree of educational mobility has been observed, this increased educational attainment did not translate into occupational mobility, especially for black South Africans (Girdwood and Leibbrandt 2009, 6, 11, 12).⁶

As shown above, the results of sociological studies are mixed. Another approach to mobility – known as ‘economic’ or ‘income’ mobility, favoured by economists – focuses on the changes in individual or household income over time. Unlike the sociological analysis of ‘class’ and ‘status’ mobility, which dates back to the 1960s, ‘economic’ mobility studies are relatively new, burgeoning in the last two decades (Torche 2013, 3). In

⁶ Overall, the literature on social mobility in South Africa is quite limited because of a lack of available data.

income mobility measures, it is shown that in societies with lower levels of social mobility, fathers' earnings are strong predictors of sons' earnings (Stokey 1996). For example, in a recent study in the UK, parental incomes and earnings were found to explain more than 80 per cent of the rise in persistence of income across generations (Blanden, Gregg, and Macmillan 2006). Similarly, in the U.S., a student from the top economic quartile is four times more likely to graduate from college than a student from lowest quartile (Conlin-Dickert and Rubenstein 2007). In this case educational expansion can thus be understood as more education for a narrow elite and a related increase in earnings only for this narrow elite, rather than increased education for society more broadly (Lindley and Machin 2012; Macmillan 2009).

While many studies of mobility are available for the United States and Europe, our insights into the differences and trends in social statistics for developing countries are quite limited. Particularly in new democracies, there is a growing enthusiasm reported for acquiring more education at every level of income group. For example, in India, in the imaginations of parents and young people living in rural areas "education provides a good job, manners and an escape from the 'dust of soil of the village'," (Jeffrey, 2008: 3). Yet, the few available studies show that in developing countries educational outcomes can also be explained largely by family backgrounds (Buchmann and Hannum 2001). Despite the educational expansion over the last two decades in Latin America, for example, intergenerational mobility has remained low, with significant differences across social classes in accessing high-quality institutions of education (for an interesting case study of Chile, see Torche 2008).

There is, however, more to this debate. Although financial hardship is cited as the principal reason for not attending school in South Africa (Tonheim and Matose 2013), the main reason so few children from lower income families go to university is

underinvestment in their education at much earlier stages. Children from lower income families attend lower quality schools, and are therefore less successful in acquiring the cognitive skills (Stokey 1996) as well as non-cognitive characteristics that influence education outcomes (Blanden, Gregg, and Macmillan 2006). Family income, in this sense, absorbs the explanatory power of other unmeasured characteristics of high and low income families, such as; family conflict, learning experiences and parenting styles (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn 1997).

There is extensive research on the actual social mobility trends but much less is known about the perceptions of social mobility in South Africa. Although social psychologists tend to question the degree to which perceptions of social mobility can be associated with objective trends (Heath, De Graaf, and Li 2010; Jussim 1991), earlier research shows that “subjective social class is an overall assessment of one's place in the social hierarchy, being about as highly correlated with education and income as with objective occupational status” (Kluegel, Singleton Jr., and Starnes 1977). Similarly, Baumberg and Gaffney (2014) show in their cross-country analysis that perceptions do follow reality, that is, less socially mobile countries are less likely to perceive their system as meritocratic.

In the South African context, however, perceptions do differ greatly from reality. This was demonstrated by Burns (2009, 7–12). Using data from the first wave of National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS), he observed “an expectation of significant upward economic mobility” among South Africans at every level of the income distribution. Similarly, Bray et al. (2010, 217–9) in their study of expectations of educational attainment among Cape Town youth and their parents, show that respondents generally held an exaggerated view of their potential for success. Zoch's (2013) analysis of mobility in South Africa, on the other hand, highlights the importance of class membership on

perception”ns of mobility. His findings show that people from lower socio-economic backgrounds have lower expectations of the labour market, and thus lower ‘reservation wages’⁷, even when controlling for education.

In probing the role of financial hardship on aspirations Appadurai (2004, 76) formulates the concept of ‘capacity to aspire’ as the ability to read “a map of a journey into the future”. Students can navigate educational pathways to gainful employment if they are supplied with the information and experiences required to make powerful choices (Ball, Macrae, and Maguire 2000; Sweeney 2002; Wyn 2007). His thesis is that students from low socio-economic background have substantive desires for the future but they might have less developed capacities to realise them (*Ibid.*). Socio-economically disadvantaged groups thus end up with consequential restrictions on their horizons. For example, students from poor backgrounds often do not go through enough academic preparation that will allow them to understand the university application process. In addition, due to lack of information about the cost of attending university and availability of needs-based financial aid, they often do not make an informed decision regarding which university to attend (Haveman and Smeeding 2006). Parental education (regardless of family income or background) thus plays a crucial role in terms of being able to teach children about navigating the education system and finding relevant and reliable information (see Henderson and Mapp 2002).

Family background can also have a direct effect on socio-economic destination by affecting job search. Social capital – which comes from relations/ networks among persons that can constitute useful capital resources – plays an important role in employment and social mobility prospects (Ioannides and Loury 2004; Marsden and Gorman 2001; Topa 2011). One particular important effect of social capital that is especially important is its

⁷ A ‘reservation wage’ is the minimum wage rate at which the person will accept employment.

effect on the production of human capital in the next generation. Both community and familial social capital can be mobilised for this purpose. Social capital in the family appears in “the relations between children and parents through which the child gains access to the adult’s human capital and social network – depending both on the physical presence of adults in the family and on the attention given by adults to the child” (Coleman 1988, 89).

The productivity of social networks in the context of South Africa has been studied by Burns et al. (2010) who find that the use of available social networks in job search increases employment probability between 3 and 12 per cent. Similarly, Magruder (2010), who focuses on the intergenerational persistence of employment status between father and son, finds that a 10 per cent growth rate in the father’s industry leads to an increase of 3-4 per cent in the employment probability of sons. Moreover, the 2000 Khayelitsha/Mitchell’s Plain Survey (KMPS)⁸ data show that about two-thirds of participants obtained their first job through friends and family (Seekings and Nattrass 2006, 284). But social origin is not the only determinant of mobility and there is a comprehensive set of conditions, which describe the pathways taken by youth to work.

2.3 Social Environmental and Institutional Factors: University Environment

Educational research tends to view schools only as organisations whose instrumental aim is to cultivate students’ human capital so they can become productive economic actors. This is why the focus has always been on measurable outcomes, such as test scores, enrolment rates and dropout rates. However, questions about how schools are experienced disparately by people from different strata of society, with different social identities, are often supplanted by the public goals of equal educational opportunities and outcomes (Carter 2012). For example, it has been observed in the U.S. context that socio-

⁸ KMPS is a representative survey of adults over the age of 18 in the Mitchell’s Plain Magisterial District, Cape Town.

economic factors cannot fully explain group differences between black and white students in terms of academic performance (Steele 1997). But what emerging factors may disconnect a large body of students from schooling and from one another across socio-economic as well as cultural lines has not sufficiently been tackled in the current literature. Although limited, this literature calls into question past research on social mobility, which focuses solely on families without emphasising the importance of structural factors.

School environment appears to be an important factor in determining social mobility. Several studies not only focus on characteristics of schools, such as quality of teaching and resource differences, but also on social interactions that influence school's culture, norms, and educational aspirations (see Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002; Small and Newman 2001). Given that students interact with one another throughout the school day, both in and out of class, the level of academic achievement and ambition among a school's student body may influence students' academic performance (Hanushek et al. 2001; Hoxby 2000). Specifically, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) find strong evidence that the choices of dominant peer groups strongly influence career choices of other students. Similarly, Akerlof (1997) highlights the influence of students' social networks, and the norms and values prevailing in these networks, in decisions regarding educational attainment. In his social distance model, he shows that most people's educational ambitions are often the educational ambitions that meet the approval of friends (*Ibid.*).

Particularly at higher education levels, students may have access to new and more diverse forms of social networks. The benefits of mixed-group networks across race and class cleavages are well known, despite the fact that students have a tendency to socialise with people from similar racial and socio-economic backgrounds. For example, Braddock and McPatlan (1987) find that those black high school graduates in the U.S. who make use

of desegregated social networks in their pursuit of jobs are more likely to attain higher salaried positions than those using segregated social networks. However, building social networks across groups seems unlikely because, as is widely documented, feeling alienated on college campuses, and cut-off from the social capital that white students enjoy, is the norm rather than the exception for black students (Loo and Rolison 1986; Steinhorn and Diggs-Brown 1999).

Moreover, a sense of social connectedness is significantly associated with achievement motivation and, subsequently, with social mobility outcomes (see Steele 1997). Participation in extracurricular activities, for example, by facilitating social integration in school, is found to decrease the school dropouts (Mahoney and Cairns 1997). Involvement in extracurricular activities can also enhance students' educational and occupational aspirations (Feldman and Matjasko 2005). For example, participation in extracurricular activities provides an opportunity to extend social networks of (high-achieving) friends (Kahne et al. 2001; McNeal 1999; Newmann, Wehlage, and Lamborn 1992; Patrick et al. 1999). Furthermore, participation can be protective against feelings of social isolation (Barber, Eccles, and Stone 2001).

However, students' experiences of social integration and a sense of belonging largely depend on the social and institutional context of the schools. These may vary across social groups and result in differential educational and psychological outcomes. Specifically, Carter (2012) found, in her study of U.S. and South African high schools, that students from similar racial and socio-economic backgrounds but who attend different schools, with different levels of racial demographic compositions, could attain significantly different levels of socio-cultural integration. For example, in the U.S., African

American students in majority-black schools were found to have significantly higher levels of school attachment than their counterparts in majority-white schools (Carter 2012, 70).⁹

Social life in institutions of education therefore involves a series of choices and actions that may be affected by individuals' identity, which is a product of history, culture and personal experience of discrimination. 'Culture as identity' (see Akerlof and Kranton 2010; Rao and Walton 2004) can play an important role in sustaining inter-group differences in wealth, status and power through shaping "beliefs, aspirations, stigma, social narratives, and symbolic and information structures" (Walton 2007). For example, Deshpande and Newman (2007, 4140) in their study in India point to the fact that, although they complete comparable degrees at elite universities, Dalit students have lower expectations in the job market than their high caste counterparts due to the historical stigma associated with their caste identity – which acts as a signal about their ability level to the employer. Low-caste students' own feelings about their identity limit their aspirations and employers' prejudices limit their actual options – a mutually reinforcing relationship. How and through what channels does culture as social identity, created by historical conditions, shape how individuals respond to opportunities presented to them? According to the literature, it impacts the responses to opportunities through at least two channels: loss of self-confidence in the domain of stereotype and loss of trust that effort will be rewarded.

A large body of work by social psychologists and sociologists shows how stigma attached to social identity causes a sense of social-psychological threat, which might affect performance in the domain of the stereotype community (see Cohen and Steele 2002; Steele, Spencer, and Aronson 2002; Steele 1997). This body of work provides evidence that situations that cue negative identities (i.e. categories of race, gender, caste, and class)

⁹ African Americans and Latinos feel more attached to school when they attend with greater proportions of their own race or ethnicity (Johnson, Crosnoe, and Glen 2001)

lead individuals to experience a ‘stereotype threat’, which hurts self-confidence and disrupts performance due to perceptions of how domain groups feel about them and the level to which they welcome them in to the school (*Ibid*). For example, Walton and Cohen (2007), based on their experiment with black and white students in the U.S., make the point that negative stigmatisation in an academic setting can give rise to what they call ‘belonging uncertainty’ – uncertainty about the quality of social bonds – which contributes to racial disparities in academic achievement. Indeed, black students in both U.S. and South African majority black high schools, even after controlling for parents’ educational levels, scored higher in self-reported self-esteem than their counterparts in affluent majority white schools (Carter 2012).¹⁰

Moreover, as a basic drive to evaluate their own opinions and abilities, students often make reference to other people in their school environment to compare themselves to. The change of reference comparison group in the new environment of university might cause a change in students’ perception of their own abilities and performance. Experimental and field research do suggest that where the group’s identity is insecure, in-group members’ comparison with an out-group may lead the in-group to develop negative perception of themselves (Ashforth and Mael 1989). These perceptions seem to contribute to self-serving implicit assumptions of “why the groups differ in the first place and attribution biases that rationalise the successes and failures of each group” (Deschamps 1983 cited in Ashforth and Mael 1989, 32).

Furthermore, social identity may have persistent effects on a group’s earnings through its effect on individuals’ expectations. World Bank economists ran an experiment in rural India to test the level to which salience and public-ness of caste identity among

¹⁰ Other examples of similar results are as follows: Americans do worse on academic tests if before the test their racial identity is made salient (Steele and Aronson 1995); Asian-American women, if the Asian aspect of identity is made salient, do better on math tests than women in the no-prime condition, but if their gender is made salient, do worse than women in the no-prime condition (Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady 1999).

junior high school boys affected maze solving, while controlling for three indicators of socio-economic class –parents’ education, mother’s employment outside the home, and whether or not the father was a day labourer (Hoff and Pandey 2011). They found that low-caste boys expect the reward system to be biased against them, based on the lessons of history and personal experience. This expectation undermines their motivation and this, in turn, causes their performance to suffer (*Ibid.*). The study shows that this is not only the result of self-confidence an/or psychological effects but also of low expectations about the reward system. A factor no doubt exacerbated in a historically discriminatory society.

Similar arguments can be found in the anthropological literature. There might be induced effects on the behaviours of the group with an inferior identity. If there are lower returns to effort, this is likely to prompt lower effort or motivation – potentially leading to a self-fulfilling belief system. Loury (2002), for example, argues that, in the U.S. context, if returns to education are lower because of projections of future discrimination at work, incentives for parents to send their children to school and for children to exert effort in studying are also reduced. In practise, on the other hand, it is difficult to explain the extent to which impact of current preferences and future projections on observed behaviour is due to expectations distorted by experience of social and/or legal disabilities (Hoff and Pandey 2011).

Previous research has widely documented that elite university attendance is positively associated with job attainment, career mobility and subsequent earnings, especially for those of lower social class (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991). Yet, besides institutional quality, the organisational structure and cultural ‘habitus’ of the university – specifically certain policies, practices, codes, ideas and meanings – can play an active role in the provision of opportunities for social mobility or exacerbation of social inequality (Bourdieu 1977a, 1977b, 1984). Previous literature suggests that background disadvantage

is likely to be exacerbated by practices of educational institutions if “the language styles and cultural practices of the socio-economically advantaged are rewarded” (Bernstein 1974; Bowles and Gintis 1976). Particularly for new-comers in a university to become accepted members of dominant institutional discourses, such as an academic discipline, they are required to attain proficiency in how to “act, think and speak within their ideological frameworks” (Gee 1990; Kress 1989). Thus, the socio-cultural logics of institutions of education, by indicating the actual stance of school communities towards equity and inclusion, can affect the academic incorporation of different groups (see Davis and Murrell 1993).

Carter (2012: 5) argues that academic incorporation is about how schools move those on the margins of society to its centre without forcing acculturation or assimilation into the institutional culture of the school. Thus, access to material resources alone does not necessarily contribute to social cohesion in the school, and welfare of the students (*Ibid.*). Muller et al. (2010, 1041), for example, highlights the importance of academic segregation in many racially diverse schools with many resources in the U.S., where African American and Latino students enrol in lower level classes compared to their white or Asian counterparts, because of the oppositional culture, peer influence, ‘stereotype threat’ and racial preferences of school personnel. This finding shows that even racially diverse schools may be racially segregated internally, limiting or denying students the opportunity for interracial social contact (Mickelson 2001).

In the context of South Africa, Bangeni and Kapp (2005) document how black students from marginalised communities are either uncritically assimilated into or alienated from dominant discourses of a historically white institution of higher education, UCT. The emotional consequences of this alienation, however, could be quite acute. For example, sociologist Crosnoe (2009) shows that the more disadvantaged students feel

socially isolated from middle and upper class students and unwelcome in the school community, the more they suffer from various negative socio-psychological outcomes such as depression and lack of self-esteem (cited in Carter 2012, 14). Therefore, in most racially diverse schools, self-segregation might play a protective role for students who feel isolated and not really included in their social environment (see Carter 2012; Tatum 1997).

Nevertheless such underlying mechanisms, potentially driving the relationship between educational experience and social mobility, have not yet been comprehensively covered in the literature on South Africa. In particular the potential adaptation, or acculturation, of disadvantaged but high-achieving students in elite institutions is significant for the new South Africa to close the gap of core critical skills needed to boost the economy.

3. Research Hypotheses and Approach

From the previous section, it is clear that much can be learned from adopting a multidimensional approach as an interactive tool to explain the role of the various familial, social and institutional factors that shape the educational experience. In this chapter, I introduce my research hypotheses of this study and describe the analytical framework adopted to evaluate them.

3.1 Research Hypotheses

In the post-Apartheid era, while poverty has remained concentrated amongst the black population, there is some evidence of improved real incomes at the top end of the distribution (Leibbrandt and Levinsohn 2011). Nevertheless, the ideological legacy of Apartheid continues to stigmatise black South Africans long after the legal barriers were abolished, or the conditions that gave rise to those barriers have changed (see Durrheim, Mtose, and Brown 2011). Ideological continuity with the past shapes responses to economic opportunities through its affect on aspirations, expectations, self-confidence and perceptions of the probability of success. Students' social identity and motivation are therefore central because identity, when incorporated into the academic and social institutions of higher education, influences economic outcomes. Drawing on the existing literature discussed above, this paper is motivated by two competing hypotheses regarding these effects.

At higher education levels, students have access to:

- (i) A more heterogeneous population
- (ii) New networks (possibly more heterogeneous in terms of racial and/or socio-economic composition), and

(iii) Institutional support

Those three aforementioned elements can, among other factors, improve students' access to information regarding job market possibilities and appropriate strategies to follow for success in the job market. This may inflate perceived probability of success, which may reformulate expectations. Accordingly, research hypothesis 1 is proposed:

H1: Universities with a more heterogeneous population, new networks and support mechanisms will enhance students' perceived probability of success in the job market and thus enhance expectations.

There are also many other factors that negatively impact students' expectations, for example:

- (i) Realisation that other students are more talented and better equipped to cope with the requirements of higher education, and to successfully enter and navigate the job market
- (ii) Highly compartmentalised nature of the university environment may reinforce social and racial stigma, and
- (iii) Institutional obstacles

These three factors may impact students' self-esteem and this, in turn, may cause students to revise their expectations about what can be achieved in a society where they are marginalised. They may believe their goal is unachievable due to perceived less abilities/capacities. Or they may believe that they will be sanctioned, regardless of effort, because of discrimination and Apartheid's legacy of racism; first in the education system, then in the labour market. This thinking generated research hypothesis 2:

***H2:** The highly compartmentalised nature of universities with non-supportive institutional structures and relatively more successful out-group peers will diminish students' belief in their abilities and trust in the reward system, thus leading to lower expectations.*

3.2 Approach

This study adopts a multidimensional framework to evaluate the research hypotheses, as illustrated in **Figure 1**, to examine the effect of 'education as experience' on future job and income prospects, by considering interactively the effect of each factor. First, I analyse the impact of family background on job market prospects of students as a pre-existing factor prior to university. Second, in relation to these prospects, I discuss the impact of learning setting under enabling and limiting institutional factors.

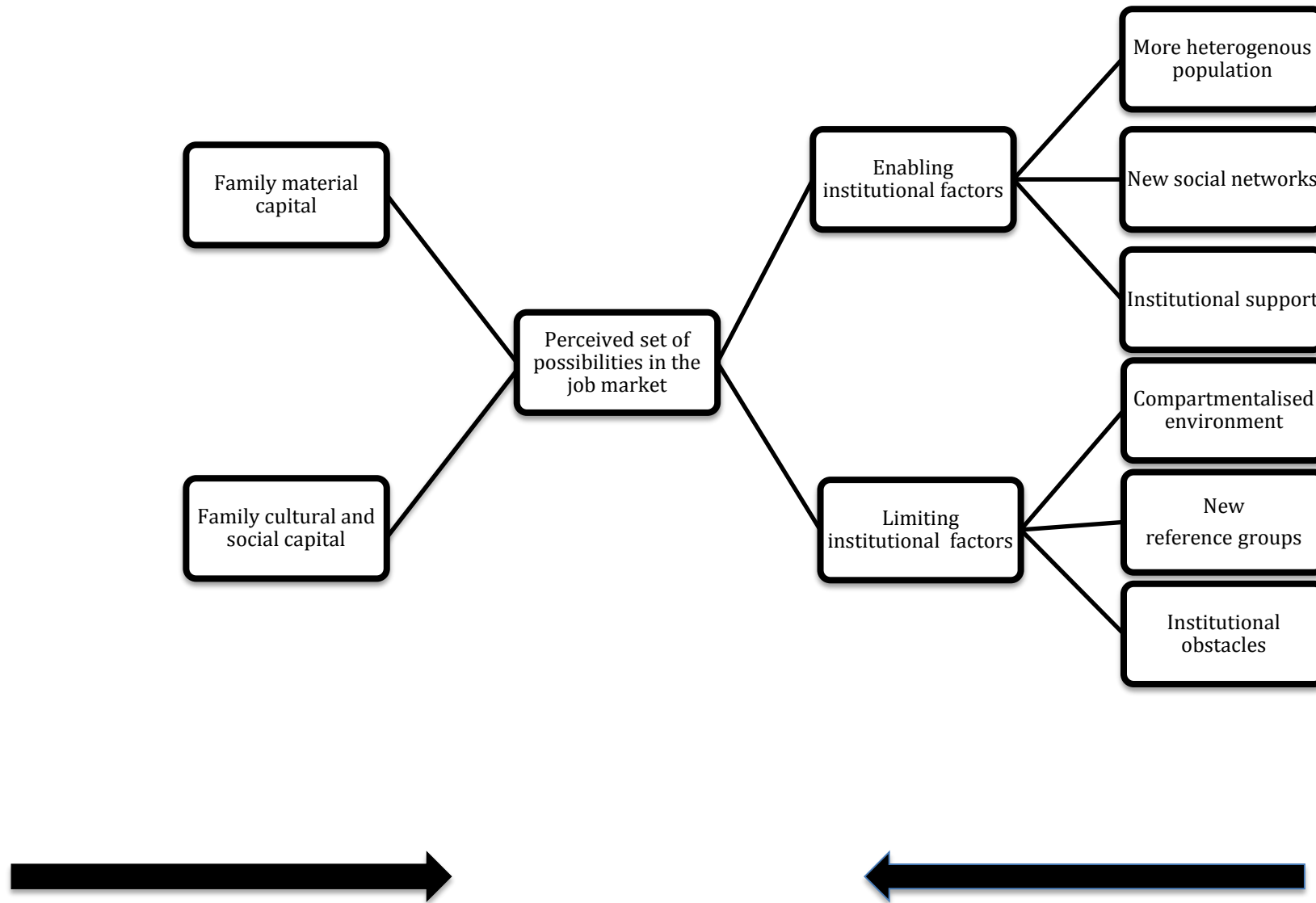
Family background includes a family's material, cultural and social capital. While the former includes predictors of students' socio-economic background (i.e. parents' occupation, parents' education and household income level), the latter, closely intertwined with material capital, captures the effect of families' social networks and other non-material household characteristics regarding the home learning environment. The meaning of 'learning setting' is more complex. Learning setting includes formal and informal institutional factors, constituting both formal institutional policies and practices, and informal interactions among students respectively. The nature of formal and informal institutional structures can provide support or create obstacles for students in launching their careers. Institutional factors are thus divided into two categories: enabling and limiting.

While the new social networks joined and exposure to a diverse group of students on campus can be seen as enabling institutional factors, universities' compartmentalised social environment and changing reference group of comparison with superior social and

academic skills might limit perceived probability of success in the job market. Moreover, the specific culture of the institution can enable or limit the students' career expectations. The policies, symbols and codes that universities implicitly or explicitly enforce can impact students' sense of self and the educational well-being. This approach also takes account of a wide variety of other features of learning settings. These features include the ways in which students interact with the academic staff and available resources on campus.

This is an interactive model where effects of both the background factors and the institutional factors meet in the middle in interactively shaping students' perceived probability of success in the job market. Such a framework also enables us to disentangle the effects of background factors from the effects of students' interactions with the learning setting. Examining a particular learning setting and versions of social interactions thus provides insights into whether 'education as experience' compensates for background disadvantages or perpetuates existing inequalities.

Figure 1: The Effect of Background and Learning Setting in Perceptions of Transition from University to Work



4. Case Study: Contextualisation and Data Collection

I have described the framework to explore the effect of background factors and learning setting on students' employment outcomes. In this chapter, I will discuss the historical context – the evolution of education and labour market sectors in post-Apartheid South Africa. The chapter briefly outlines major shifts and continuities with the past, which helps to conceptualise transformation, or lack thereof. Part of this discussion is informed by open-ended interviews with high-level officials in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Council on Higher Education (CHE), Higher Education South Africa (HESA) and Department of Labour (DoL). After this discussion I outline how my data were collected and analysed. Finally, my study subjects are briefly introduced.

4.1 A New Education Policy despite Inherent Limitations

Apartheid – an Afrikaans word meaning “separate development” – as a system of racial segregation was designed to keep political and economic power in the hands of the white minority and was enforced by the National Party, the ruling party from 1948 to 1994 (Chisholm 2012). A bevy of laws, designed to control the identities, residency, movement and sexual relations between different racial groups, were passed. The unequal nature of Apartheid was apparent in almost every aspect of policy-making, including the education system, closely related to the labour market. Following the installation of the National Party government, institutional and legislative constraints based on race were enshrined in law with the 1953 Bantu Education Act on the provision of education (*Ibid.*). The act specifically and deliberately trained blacks only for lower skilled jobs so that they could

act as a cheap reserve labour to meet the demands of white-owned businesses (Cross and Chisholm 1990).

In the aftermath of democratic transition, inspired by Mandela's vision of the new South Africa as a democratic 'rainbow nation', a number of legal and institutional changes have been brought about at every level of education, with a particular focus on transformation, equity and change (Chisholm and Fuller 1996). Although later the focus shifted slightly in the direction of education quality and throughput rates (to assess not only participation but also the success rate), achieving equity of access has been viewed as one of the fundamental goals of higher education transformation (Jansen et al. 2007, 160).

Real policy changes in favour of transformation and equity have coincided with changing race patterns in higher education participation (Jansen et al., 2007: 158). DHET (2010) reported an increase, for the 2000-2008 period, in the number of full-time equivalent enrolled South African black and coloured students from 51 to 57 per cent and 5 to 6 per cent respectively. Whereas white and Indian South African students' participation rate dropped from 30 to 23 per cent and 7 to 6 per cent respectively. Although democratic transition in 1994 heralded "a new era of possibilities for inclusiveness" (Engelbrecht 2006, 254) to what extent are black students able to benefit from this increased equality of opportunity and access in the educational market?

CHE's recent report (2013) found that less than five per cent of black and coloured youth can graduate from university and noted the high levels of failure and dropout among this group. White completion rates, however, remain 50 per cent higher than black completion rates. This arguably has "the effect of negating much of the growth in black access that has been achieved" (Scott, Yeld, and Hendry 2007, 19). More importantly, the National Planning Commission (NPC) acknowledges the fact that differential graduate

output by race has “major implications for social mobility and... for overcoming the inequalities of Apartheid” (2011, 16).

From a systemic point of view, Diane Parker – Acting Deputy Director General of the DHET – indicated that DHET prioritises transforming the education system by ensuring uniform standards for infrastructure and equipment, student accommodation, teaching resources, and research and knowledge production capabilities across universities in South Africa (Interview 2014). DHET’s 2012 Green Paper acknowledges that “despite the many advances and gains made since 1994”, higher education is “inadequate in quantity... and, in many but not all instances, quality” (2012, x). University funding has not kept pace with the rapid expansion in tertiary student enrolment (Parker Interview 2014), which, in some cases, has resulted in low quality graduates.¹¹

Tendani Ramulongo from the Department of Labour, furthermore stated that the government and the key policy documents have taken a utilitarian view towards higher education as a means for providing the skilled workers required for the economic development and growth in the new country (Interview 2014). However, Genevieve Simpson – Research Manager at CHE – argued that transformation is a much broader concept than just demographics, that it includes ‘institutional culture’ and the level to which university environments embrace the students and staff from different cultures and backgrounds (Interview 2014). This is, in her opinion, something that is much slower and more difficult to achieve. But, because of the autonomy and academic freedom of institutions of higher education, “DHET can steer the universities towards more inclusive transformation only through its limited earmark grants”, said Parker (Interview 2014). As a result, the gap between the constitutional mandate and social reality remains wide.

¹¹ It has been reported by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) that many law firms in South Africa have found that LLB graduates are unable “to draw affidavits and pleadings as they lack both numeracy and literacy skills” (Kerre, Kitima, and Mwawaza 2014).

4.2 The Labour Market and ‘Black Economic Empowerment’

Under the Apartheid regime, an economic system based on exploitation of cheap black labourers, who were left with little to no formal education (Cross and Chisholm 1990), was enshrined by social and economic policies. Residential segregation and influx control, brought in under the 1950 Group Areas Act and Populations Registration Act, respectively, also restricted the mobility of blacks into urban areas with a larger pool of job opportunities. Thus investment in education by black parents remained relatively low due to poverty, politics, and low expected returns (Unterhalter 1987, 41).

The post-Apartheid government has implemented a series of remedial measures, including an ambitious set of affirmative action policies to redress the injustices of the past by facilitating a new South African middle-class alignment (Burger and Jafta 2006, 6). The new labour market, in particular, was viewed to be ‘non-discriminatory’ and ‘socially equitable’ under the Labour Market Commission Report (1996, 138–9). The 2003 Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 (B-BBEE) has as its purpose the “economic empowerment of all black people, including women, workers, youth, people with disabilities and people living in rural areas” (The Presidency-Republic of South Africa 2004). For that purpose, it also includes a mechanism for monitoring various sections of the economy in their compliance with the B-BBEE requirements (Tucker 2003 cited in Burger and Jafta 2010, 7). The three core components of B-BBEE comprise direct empowerment through ownership and control of businesses and assets (Mason and Watson 2005), human resource development (skills development and employment equity) and indirect empowerment by means of preferential procurement, enterprise development, profit and contract sharing by black enterprises, local content requirements and so on (Burger and Jafta 2010, 9).

Thus the representation of previously disadvantaged races at the top end of the occupational ladder is prioritised over facilitating the transitions from unskilled to semi-skilled occupations (Burger and Jafta 2006). Consequently, while around one-fourth of the labour force was unemployed in 2014 (Statssa 2014), the graduate unemployment rate remained at only 10.1% (Cape Higher Education Consortium 2013).

4.3 The Western Cape: The Case of the University of Cape Town

UCT is South Africa's oldest university. It became a full-fledged university after democratic transition when most 'technicons' (South African institutes of technical) and historically black universities, pushed by the Minister of Education, underwent mergers after 2001 (Cooper 2014). Despite the efforts, enrolment rates in UCT on the basis of racial classification remained low, at the level of 28 per cent for black South Africans in 2013 as opposed to 30 per cent for white students, according to undergraduate student enrolment records. White students still constitute the majority (See **Table 1**). Moreover, most of the debates on transformation or lack thereof at UCT target its academic staffing figures; as of 2013 there were only 48 black academics at UCT, out of a total of 1,405, and not one black South African woman with a full professorship (MacGregor 2014). UCT has recently come under attack, both in the media and academia, by those who say 'whiteness' still characterises the university's institutional culture, which alienating those who do not fit its "Eurocentric tradition and practices" (Steyn and Zyl 2001, 69).

Table 1: Undergraduate Students Enrolment by Population Group, UCT

Population Group (Undergraduates)	2008	2013
Black SA	3,511 (22%)	4,811 (28%)
Coloured SA	2,477 (15%)	2,510 (14%)
Indian SA	1,129 (7%)	1194 (7%)
White SA	5,961 (37%)	5288 (30%)
International- Africa	1,524 (9%)	1,316 (8%)
International- Outside Africa	986 (6%)	1,149 (7%)
Unknown	535 (3%)	1,140 (7%)
Total undergraduate	16,123	17,408

Source: UCT Administrative Correspondence. Percentages are rounded and consequently might not add up to 100.

In terms of graduate destinations, in 2012, finance, insurance, real estate, information technologies and business services absorbed the largest group of university graduates at 25 per cent, one third of whom graduated from UCT (Cape Higher Education Consortium 2013, 45). In terms of graduate employment levels, unemployment rates could be as low as 6 per cent and 5 per cent for graduates from UCT and Stellenbosch University, respectively. Yet graduate unemployment rates vary widely across institutions, jumping to 16 per cent for the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and 13 per cent for the University of Western Cape¹² (Cape Higher Education Consortium 2013, 13). Unemployment rates also vary a lot by race in Cape Town 21 per cent of black graduates were reportedly unemployed in 2013, compared to 8 per cent of white graduates (*Ibid.*).

My interest in UCT as a particular case was sparked by a study recently undertaken by the head of a ministerial oversight committee on transformation in South African higher education. Based on the ‘equity efficiency index’¹³ applied to racial demographics of students and staff across South Africa’s 23 universities (see **Appendix 1**), UCT, Africa’s

¹² There are in total four universities in the Western Cape Province: Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, University of Cape Town and University of Western Cape.

¹³ This index measures the difference between university’s student enrolment demographic profile and student graduation demographic profile in terms of matching to the national or regional demographic profile (for further discussion, see Govinder, Zondo, and Makgoba (2013).

highest ranked university, stood out, holding the lowest (negative) score in the index in the Western Cape region (Govinder, Zondo, and Makgoba 2013). That is, UCT's student enrolment demographic profile is a better match to the national demographic profile than its student graduation demographic profile. UCT fares worse than other universities in the province at addressing its graduation mismatch with the national demographics because of a sizeable black student dropout rate (*Ibid.*). As this thesis focuses primarily on the role of the learning setting in black South African students' mobility perceptions, UCT seemed the most appropriate case.

4.4 Data Collection and Analysis

4.4.1 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Acknowledging the sensitiveness around talking about race in post-Apartheid society – the 'rainbow nation' – I was aware, from the beginning, of the effect of my position as a researcher in this setting. Jenkins (1994) argues that there is a two-way relationship between the researcher and the researched, not only do researchers interpret the 'subjects' under study, the 'researched' interpret the researcher in turn and thus, as a white Oxonian researcher, I understood that I might solicit a particular response from student interviewees. But student participants explicitly referred to me as Turkish, a complete outsider to South Africa and the fact that I did not have South African historical, political or educational baggage helped to establish my neutrality on Apartheid history. As all interviews were conducted in English, I did not need to have a translator. 70 per cent of the interviewees identified as non-native English speakers. It is difficult to determine what difference interviewing these people in their native languages would have made to the content of the interviews but, as all interviewees could speak proficient English, I will assume for the purposes of this study that the potential difference was negligible.

Working with and within organisations could sometimes be an extremely sensitive process and generate particular problems. As Beynon (1988, 21) points out institutions are very capable of using their power to exclude researchers and regulate the information they provide. Accessibility and availability of resources also presented an obstacle to my research. Despite my best efforts, for about 5 weeks I had had difficulty in gaining access to UCT. In line with the University of Oxford ethics expectations I obtained research ethics approval from the Oxford Department of International Development prior to my departure for fieldwork. But upon arrival at UCT, I was asked to obtain ethics approval from the UCT Humanities Faculty Ethics Committee as well. The application and assessment process for this ethical and institutional approval prolonged my research preparation period and delayed data gathering. In the meantime I tried to be flexible and worked with the information I could gather and the connections I could make in the field prior to formal interviews with students. Nevertheless, in the end, due to time constraint, I had to adjust my methodological strategy to account for real world limitations.

Initially I was planning to conduct interviews with students from two different departments (preferably, one in humanities and one in engineering) in order to rule out the impact of subject studied on future job prospects. However, for the reasons mentioned earlier, I had to shift and focus the research on one faculty, one that could both provide me with both a big enough sample size and assurance that this sample contained the minimum possible variability across different fields of study in terms of student's employability perspectives.¹⁴ Eventually I embedded myself with the Faculty of Commerce (FoC), spending most of my time on campus. As much I tried to legitimise my status as a "serious, independent, yet sympathetic researcher" (Beynon 1988, 21), my independence from the institution and society as a whole for the purpose of objectivity does not mean I detached

¹⁴ Faculty of Commerce has the highest proportion of black students of all faculties at UCT. About 60 per cent of the students of Commerce come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are mostly funded by private sector sponsors to attend the special education programme, EDU (Ross Interview 2014).

myself from the institutional setting I was observing. My full time presence at the university created crucial opportunities to observe the students and their interactions with the staff members, professors and other students, in short, student engagement with the learning setting.

Social science disciplines have established formal codes of ethics to guide their research activities. In line with these ethical codes I have tried to ensure that the aims of my research are of value and that my methodology is sound. My priority in ex-ante and ex-post contacts with research participants was to ensure that potential risks to participants were minimised and that participants' welfare was protected (Boulton and Parker 2007, 2190; Miller and Boulton 2007). Participants in my study were fully informed about the purpose and audience of the study as well as potential risks and benefits that their participation might entail (Babbie 2013). None of my formal interviewees requested anonymity but the identities of student and academic staff participants were nonetheless kept anonymous and assigned identification numbers for each student and lecturer were used for reference instead.

4.4.2 Observations, Semi-Structured Interviews and Surveys

As my research focused largely on the relationships level, group interactions were also treated as research data (Ivanoff and Hultberg 2006, 125). For this reason, I exposed myself to all formal campus events, including seminars, lectures, the Student Representative Council campaigns and house committee meetings as well as unscheduled and unplanned campus activities like joining a weekly student Bible study group with other students, visiting some students at their residences and attending UCT's Thursday lunchtime Jameson Plaza events, such as concerts and society events.

By working with the concept of social mobility expectations, space opens up for tracking changing perceptions over time. In an attempt to capture the impact of higher

education on such perceptions, this study examines two groups of people: first and final year undergraduate students. Unfortunately longitudinal analysis is beyond the scope of this study but, in order to gain some insight into effects across time, I used fourth year students as a comparison group (see **Table 2** for comparison between first year and final year groups) for how the current first year students would perceive their chances for social mobility if they were now in the final year of their studies.

To answer the research questions of this study, I utilised both quantitative and qualitative research methods. As I planned to conduct descriptive statistical analysis using information provided in the interviewees, a lot of attention was given to fully structuring these interviews and, as such, my final list of questions were the result of several refining pilot interviews. In order to avoid restricting the information I could receive through relational and interactive dialogue with the participants, however, I also conducted a series of semi-structured interviews to fully uncover students' ideas and perceptions of the subject matter. A total number of 43 semi-structured interviewees and surveys were conducted with 23 first year and 20 final year black students. I used open-ended questions to encourage a range of responses. Each interview was fully recorded.

Table 2. Comparison of First Year Students to Final Year Students

	First Year	Final Year	Comparison
Number of students	23	20	No test is necessary
Number of students who spent their life in urban area before coming to university	13	12	*
Number of students whose mother tongue is English	6	7	*
Number of students who attended historically white secondary schools	15	10	*
Average matric exam score	78.9	79.6	*
Number of students in EDU	15	16	*
Number of households received a type of social grant from the government	7	5	*
Average number of rooms in the households they grew up	6.44	7.75	*
Number of fathers who at least achieved an undergraduate degree	8	8	*
Number of mothers who at least achieved an undergraduate degree	12	11	*
Number of fathers who at least held Group 2 ¹⁵ level occupations	9	7	*
Number of mothers who at least held Group 2 level occupations	11	11	*
Number of families who at least fell in the middle of income distribution (fifth decile and above)	11	11	*
Number of students who had family networks	12	12	*

Source: Own calculations.

Note: * sign indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between the year standing at university (first or final year) and any of the parameters listed. To obtain these results a chi-square test was used; except in two cases where a t-test was used (average matric exam score and average number of rooms). This finding indicates that the final year group can be used as

¹⁵ See **Appendix 4** for further explanation on classification of occupation types in this study.

comparison group since the first year and final year students did not significantly (statistically) differ across personal and family background characteristics.

Research participants were recruited on the basis of population group, year of standing at university, socio-economic background and academic programme enrolled in. My target population comprised first and final year black South African undergraduate students, mainly from low or middle-income backgrounds, pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce (B Com) or Bachelor of Business Science (B Bus Sci) degree at the FoC. During this process, contacts and channels of access provided by Commerce Education Development Unit (EDU) Programme Co-ordinator, Daniel Munene, were utilised. E-mails were sent by the faculty administration to first and final year undergraduate FoC students as well as a number of posters and flyers posted on notice boards at the faculty, which allowed voluntarily self-selection into my study. Often self-selection leads to biased data (Olsen 2008) but sampling used in this research does not claim to be representative. The sample, however, has almost equal distributions of first and final year students from various subjects at the faculty and socio-economic backgrounds. This balanced representation was ensured through constant monitoring during data collection.

The recruitment strategy adopted in this study possibly resulted in a non-representative sample for a number of reasons. First, the students living off-campus were underrepresented in my sample, as they probably had lower chances than their peers living on campus to see the posters or fliers at the faculty. Second, response levels to the e-mails the faculty sent were very low because students generally receive series of e-mails regarding other studies conducted on campus and often delete them without even reading them. Also, the participation rate in my study was particularly low because the fieldwork period clashed with students' exam schedule. For these reasons, students who regularly check their e-mails and who can afford taking time off from their studies are possibly

overrepresented in this study. Therefore, the views expressed in this study do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire black population at the FoC, UCT.

Data collection for each individual student participant consisted of two separate sessions. In the first session they were given the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were conducted in the second session. The first session was followed by the second session with a break of approximately 15 minutes in between. Every meeting lasted approximately two hours. I recognised that the time and effort of participation of any student was valuable and worthy of recognition given their busy schedule and workload. Research participants should not have been disadvantaged by their participation in this research, and therefore appropriate compensation was provided for their time and effort, if they completed both the survey and interview.

The practice of paying the subjects for their participation in research is a contentious issue, as critics charge that it obscures risks, impairs judgement, or encourages misrepresentation (Cryder et al. 2010; Grady 2005). Empirical evidence shows that monetary payment is a positive incentive to participate in research. At the same time, compensation does not necessarily cause the study subjects to bias their answers to accommodate the expectations of the research or researcher (Bentley and Thacker 2004). I realised that the nature of study and the context in which the study was undertaken both allowed and favoured adapting such a recruitment strategy. I assigned 50 South African Rand (R), which could buy two meals at the university canteen, as an optimum participation remuneration amount. This recruitment strategy, however, attracted more students from lower socio-economic backgrounds than students from relatively higher socio-economic backgrounds. The underrepresentation of high-income students in the sample resulted in a biased sample. Nevertheless, I had to adopt this strategy to attract participants into my research, as the practise of paying the study subjects was a commonly

adopted approach by other studies conducted on campus. Consequently, the findings of this study cannot be generalisable to the target population at large.

A wide range of topics was covered in a fully structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire was composed of sub-sections with questions about personal characteristics, prior schooling experience, family background,¹⁶ household characteristics, social involvement, peer group connections and social networks on campus, and job search methods and expectations for the future. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were adapted from the 2002-2006 Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS)'s Young Adult Module, a longitudinal study of the lives of youths and young adults in metropolitan Cape Town, South Africa. Likert scales were used extensively in the questionnaire. The surveys were mainly used to examine the socio-economic and educational background of the respondents and their social engagement with others on campus, as well as their job market prospects.

During individual interviews with the same participants, open-ended questions asked of students regarded their perceptions of income distribution, social stratification and mobility in post-Apartheid South Africa, as well as their social mobility expectations, particularly in light of affirmative action policies. I also asked them about a number of issues regarding the university environment and policies: changes in demographic composition, availability of (access to) organisational resources and support, or lack thereof, possibility of forming diverse peer groups on campus and changes in perceptions of self. The objective of these interviews was to understand students' perception of the new South African society and economy and their social mobility expectations in relation to

¹⁶ In South African context, in order to address the historical disadvantages, the demographic data have often been collected in racial terms. There is a need to understand what 'disadvantage' means in more complicated and multidimensional terms, as the categories on which data made available provide the reader a very particular set of frame to understand the existing situation. Thus, this study is a significant attempt, although constrained by a small sample size, to critically address this issue by covering many aspects regarding the target population from their racial identity to socio-economic background to educational background.

overall quality of the perceived university experience. The analysis of the survey and interview data is organised by relevant topics and I refer to both types of evidence, simultaneously, as complementary elements. The questionnaire and the interview guide can be found in the **Appendix 2**.

Moreover, in order to obtain an informed perspective about the university administration and government officials' views on the management of transformation at the level of higher education in the new South African society, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with university staff from administrative, as well as teaching positions, and a number of high-level officials from DHET, DoL, HESA, CHE, CHEC, and CHED.¹⁷ Because the University of Oxford is a highly regarded academic institution in South Africa, and because my academic supervisor at Oxford had personal contacts to Genevieve Simpson (current Senior Research Manager for CHE), most of these interviews could easily be arranged. The information gathered from these elite interviews served to contextualise the case study, to inform the discussion on formal institutional structures in place and to complement the students' perspectives on the learning setting with the perspectives of institutional officials and policy makers.

The remainder of my evidence relies on other published secondary resources including publications from CHEC, DHET, and CHE and a review of the literature on the impact of the 'higher education experience' on perceptions of social mobility, particularly relating to shaped and distorted social identities under Apartheid. In assessing the research materials collected through interviews and surveys I utilised a number of software programmes. I used CPro for survey data entry and STATA for quantitative analysis. I also used NVivo to code, categorise and to identify similarities and differences in the interview data.

¹⁷ Interviews were conducted both in Pretoria and Cape Town, South Africa.

Although this study does not claim to be an accurate representation of the huge diversity and heterogeneity of student opinions at UCT, it does allow for an explanation of differentiated educational experiences and well-being, which act as a basis for opening the ‘black box’ of education in the new South African context.

4.4.3 A Brief Introduction to the Study’s Subjects

Student interviewees ranged in age from 18 to 27 years old. The respondents – depending on the region they come from – represent eight different language groups spoken across the country. 40 out of 43 identified as Christian and all were enrolled in a programme at the FoC. At this faculty almost all of the programmes that fall under either B Com or B Bus Sci were represented in this study. While both B Com in Financial Accounting and B Bus Sci in Actuarial Science had the highest representation in the sample as they have the highest total student intake, the rest of the participants are almost equally dispersed among other subjects of study. There is less age variation within the first year (19-20 years old) than the final year (19-27 years old) group. This is an expected difference as it is not unusual to take time off voluntarily or involuntarily from university and return to studies later. This is also a result of the fact that, every year, a significant number of students excluded from UCT for academic and/or financial reasons are readmitted later.

The survey data suggest high levels of parental education as 62 per cent of interviewees have mothers with a university degree or higher. This figure is even higher with regard to fathers’ education: 64 per cent of interviewees have fathers with undergraduate university degrees or higher. Surprisingly, however, one-fifth of the students interviewed had been raised in households with no books, or with less than five books available to read. 25 per cent of parents (mother or father or both) were reported to be currently working in the private sector, followed by public sector employment, at 22 per

cent, and self-employment, at 17 per cent. Almost one-quarter of parents (mother or father or both) were unemployed or not in employment at the time of interview.

According to the survey data 28 per cent of interviewees attended some form of private (semi-private or private) primary or private secondary school. The rest had attended all government schools. Of all the students who attended government primary schools, only 38 per cent of them attended historically white primary schools, which are associated with a higher quality of education, but this figure rises to 52 per cent at the secondary school level. Overall the interviewees were high-achievers who attended high-performing schools. They achieved high matric exam¹⁸ results – 79 per cent on average. 93 per cent of the students reported being toward the top of the class during secondary school. Moreover, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Johannesburg and the University of Pretoria, all among the top ten universities in South Africa, were reported as the main destinations for interviewees' friends from both their high schools and their neighbourhoods. These figures confirm that interviewees, on average, had previously attended good quality schools with high placement rates in the best universities in South Africa.

There is not a neat correlation between home province of students and province of graduation in South Africa, as higher education institutions are national institutions. The survey data illustrate that only 9 per cent of the students are from Cape Town and students from the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces constitute the largest group in the sample, at 28 and 26 per cent respectively. Although most of the interviewees who were born, or who lived for a significant period of time, in Cape Town come from disadvantaged backgrounds, those at the lower end of the income distribution generally come from the Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal provinces. The interviewees from Cape Town all lived in

¹⁸ In South Africa, matric exam is a term commonly used to refer to the school-leaving examination in the final year of high school. This score is also used to meet the minimum entrance requirements of universities.

townships in the Khayelitsha vicinity. No deliberate attempt was made to recruit a gender-balanced sample, which resulted in self-selection of nine more men than women into this study. Four-fifth of the interviewees lived in UCT residence halls in Cape Town's southern suburbs.

Although three-quarters of the interviewees had previous work experience, or currently held a job, only 60 per cent had worked before or were still working because they needed an income to support their studies. Almost half of interviewees in the current academic year contributed money that they earned to their studies and expenses. Three-fourths of the interviewees had received loans, grants, scholarships or funding from bursaries to fund their studies and almost half of them were benefiting from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).¹⁹ Further information regarding the study's subjects can be found in the **Appendix 3**.

The next chapter offers insights into how these respondents conceptualise the economic stratification of South African society, which underscores a strong perceived association between race and social class. Then, the potential mobility pathways are explored from the perspective of my interviewees, emphasising the perceived importance of education and hard work.

¹⁹ NSFAS is the South African government student loan and bursary scheme. They provide loans and bursaries to students at public universities and colleges.

5. Perceptions of Economic Stratification in South African Society

This paper differs from previous explorations of social mobility in South Africa in its approach. As opposed to statistical trends, this study is primarily concerned with perceptions of social mobility among black South African students in a single South African university, UCT. The existing literature has largely neglected to study perceptions of social mobility in South Africa while, as an area of study, it has gained an increasing importance worldwide in the past decade (Strauss 2006, 4). Although social psychology literature questions the extent to which perceptions reflect and shape reality (see Jussim, 1991), ultimately subjective perceptions of social mobility “can have a long-term direct effect on incentives and allocation structures” (Birdsall and Graham 2000, 228).

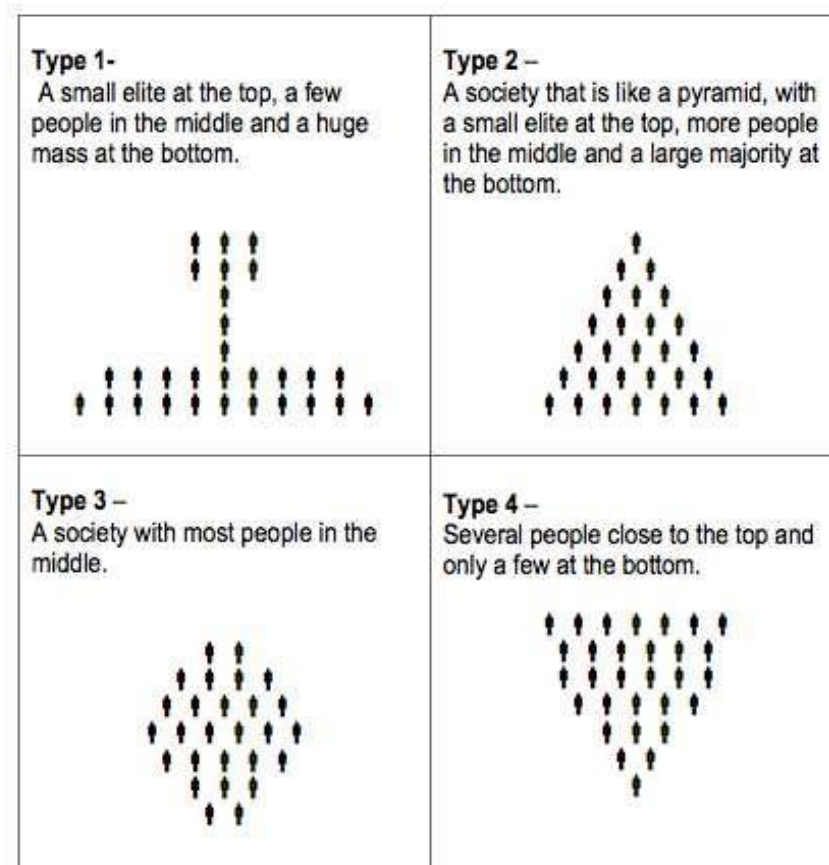
It is necessary, first, to explore how interviewees conceptualise the economic stratification of South African society in order to situate their own mobility expectations within the chosen frame of reference. Some visual tools were utilised to facilitate a more effective discussion on economic stratification in South African society. Interviewees were given a copy of **Figure 2** regarding the distribution of income in South African society, which was used in the 2005 Cape Area Study (CAS),²⁰ and read the following:

These four pictures show different types of society. The first picture represents a society with a small elite of rich people at the top, a few people in the middle, and a large number of poor people at the bottom. The second picture represents a society that is like a pyramid, with a small elite at the top, more people in the middle, and a lot of poor people at the bottom. The third picture shows a society in which most people are in the middle. The fourth picture shows a society with lots of people at

²⁰ 2005 CAS is a survey conducted with a representative sample of about 1200 individuals in metropolitan Cape Town, South Africa, covering aspects of diversity and inequality. It was designed as a part of a series of surveys.

the top, some in the middle, and very few at the bottom. Which of these pictures, in your view, describes South Africa today?

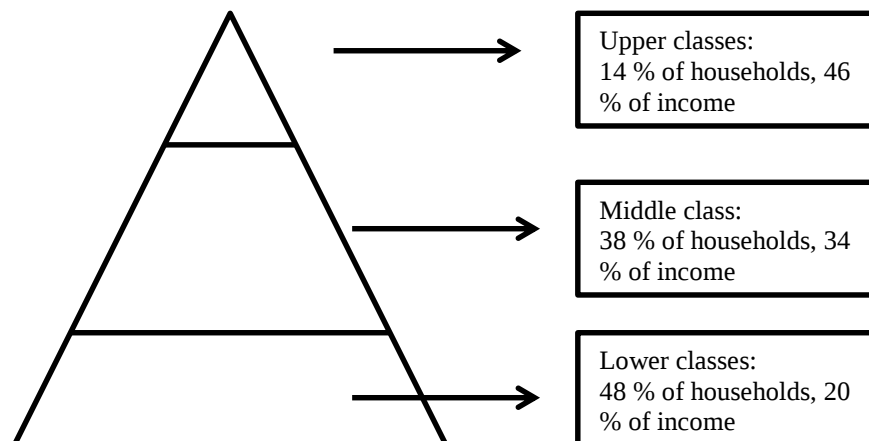
Figure 2. Pictures depicting Different Models of Economic Stratification of South African Society



It is evident from the interviews that the class structure perceived by the majority of the respondents does not entirely conform to actual statistical trends found in the previous literature (illustrated in **Figure 3**). The economic stratification of South African society was largely conceptualised by the interviewees as either a Type 1 society, with a small elite of rich people at the top, very few people in the middle, and a large number of poor people at the bottom, or a Type 2 society, that is like a pyramid, with a small elite at the top, more people in the middle, and a lot of poor people at the bottom (49 and 42 per cent

respectively). The point of contention is clearly around whether or not there is a robust middle class. Type 3 was selected only by 3 per cent of the respondents and type 4 was not selected at all.

Figure 3. The Class Structure of South Africa, 2008



Source: Calculated from NIDS data in Seekings (2011) for six major metropolitan areas.

Overall interviewees stressed the persistence of a strong relationship between race and class. Nearly all interviewees identified the top of the distribution in South African society as being predominantly white, maybe in some cases Indian, and the bottom as being entirely black, sometimes shared with coloureds. They agreed on the existence of a nearly insurmountable gap between those at the bottom and those at the top of South Africa's current income distribution. Seekings and Nattrass (2006, 6, 91), in contrast, argue that such perceptions of a racialised wealth distribution do not reflect South African reality as, beginning in the 1970s, race became increasingly less important for reproducing privilege. By 2000, the upper class was nearly as black as they were white (see Garcia-Rivero 2006; Nattrass and Seekings 2001, 47) although the bottom group does remain predominantly black. What could be the cause of such discrepancy between perception and reality?

These perceptions might reflect the prevailing discourse of political leaders regarding a lack of change in South Africa's wealth distribution since the end of Apartheid. As recently as March 2015 South Africa's current president, Jacob Zuma, asserted that "the structure of [the] economy remains racial..." and, he added, "the historical legacy of a racially-structured economy needs to be tackled as it is hampering transformation" (3 March 2015). Earlier statements provide further insight into his understanding of the current South African economy: "The economic power relations of the Apartheid era have in the main remained intact. The ownership of the economy is still primarily in the hands of white males as it has always been" (26 June 2012).

Alternatively, the perception of a still racialised income distribution among the interviewees might derive from limited cross-class exchange within the black population. In addition to economic stratification, the perceived societal racial segregation was high among interviewees. This is likely a consequence of slow paced of desegregation and/or the reproduction of segregation in newly developed neighbourhoods (Seekings 2011, 539). Thus, many South Africans continue to remain unknown to their fellow citizens due to absence of contact with other race and/or socio-economic groups (Besteman 2008; Bray et al. 2010). It is commonly observed among students that this is due to increased income inequality, which has resulted in social re-segregation in the form of gated communities.

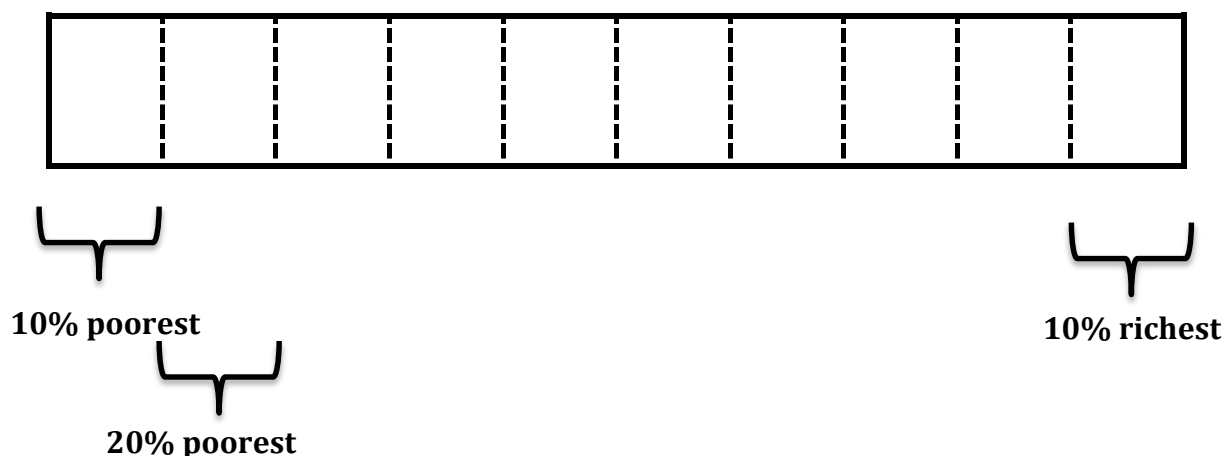
Despite their perception of a highly racialised economic structure, interviewees could identify pathways to gainful employment for black individuals. Almost all of the interviewees could imagine and describe these pathways, from the bottom to the top of income distribution, with a sole emphasis on education and hard work: "I think the growth of middle class has been based on education, economic growth and maybe people's determination to be better" (Number 116). The majority of students recognised a surge in the South Africa's black middle-class due to various affirmative action policies, i.e. B-

BBEE. Yet corruption, subtle racism and lack of government schemes to assist youth in acquiring competitive, employable skills were noted as the main barriers to achieving social mobility (Number 29). Where, then, do the interviewees stand in relation to these changes or continuities in their society?

In order to help students position themselves and their families in South Africa's income distribution, they were given a copy of **Figure 4**, right after **Figure 2**, and read a version of the following:

This picture shows a society divided into ten income-bracket deciles. Individuals are sorted, from lowest to highest, according to income. Starting on the left hand side, the first decile represents the poorest 10 per cent of South African wage earners, that is, at the bottom of the income distribution. The next represents the second lowest 10 per cent of wage earners, and so on, until the wealthiest decile. Within which decile, in your view, does your family fall? Where do you think you will fall 15-20 years from now?

Figure 4. Picture depicting Income Distribution in South African Society



In other words, they were asked how rich or poor their families are relative to other people in South Africa. Only a small proportion of respondents placed their households in the top three deciles (7 per cent), but one-quarter selected one of the bottom three deciles (26 per cent). Half of the respondents selected either the median or the decile directly below the median (50 per cent). The remainder chose a point just above the median (17 per cent). However, as a response to the second part of the question, the majority of students reported that they expected to be in the top three deciles in 15-20 years (59 per cent). The rest of the respondents selected a point between the median and the top three deciles. All students placed themselves above the median level in the future income distribution.

Seekings (2007, 24) shows, based on his analysis of the 2005 CAS data, that self-placement on the rich/poor scale is weakly associated with conceptions of distribution of wealth in society but how respondents perceive society is more likely to be associated with previous mobility experience. A Fisher's exact test was conducted to test for a statistically significant relationship between the type of society respondents believed represented South Africa's income distribution and perceived household income decile (a proxy for students' current class position).²¹ No statistically significant relationship was revealed between the type of society students chose and the perceived household income decile of their parents ($p > 0.05$). Moreover, there is no evidence that the income decile students expected to reach in the future and the type of society they chose are associated.

In their responses, most interviewees gave some indication that they had reconstructed their perceptions, because of new understandings from what they had studied, and had reformulated their thoughts about income distribution in South African society due to being exposed to a diverse student body at UCT. With this exposure to a new environment their frame of reference had undergone a change. Most had revised their

²¹ Here, instead of a chi-square test, a Fisher's test was conducted as one or more of the cells had an expected frequency of five or less.

previously held perceptions of their own socio-economic standing in the society: “I was not aware of how underprivileged we were before I came to university, I just knew that it was bad, but I did not know that it was that bad” (Number 34); or that of other groups: “I realised the whites are richer than I thought. Most of the white students here have cars, and they have everything compared to other races. I think they are richer than I thought they were” (Number 103).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that respondents tended to perceive race as a strong predictor of social class and economic standing in society. Nevertheless, hard work and education were identified as the main pathways to upward social mobility despite on-going corruption, indirect racism and inadequate employment opportunities for black people. Moreover, having established that there was no clear link between how the interviewees made sense of the current South African income distribution and where they believed their families fell on the income scale, the next chapter explores how their family background shaped these perceptions, by focusing on educational aspirations, and expectations for future employment opportunities.

6. Family Background

This chapter challenges the common assertion within the social mobility literature that the impact of family background on intergenerational mobility and mobility aspirations are mostly assessed in material terms (e.g. years of schooling, occupation groups and income). Although socio-economic background of young black South Africans (characterised by lower access to higher education) is still important, its relevance to mobility expectations is relatively insignificant beyond access to university. I argue that, in post-Apartheid South Africa, it is often a lack of cultural and social capital within the family (e.g. networks, understandings, experiences and socio-psychological support) that affects the quality of ‘education as experience.’ Consequently, limited or no access to non-material ‘social’ and ‘cultural’ resources can prevent high-achieving black South African university students from successfully navigating the labour market and attaining rewarding jobs.

This chapter critically examines two specific dimensions of students’ family background in relation to job market expectations: family’s material capital, and family’s cultural and social capital. Proxy measures for aspirations and expectations are outlined first, prior to discussing the details of each background factor. Finally this chapter concludes on the importance of family structure, networks and know-how to students’ university experience, closely linked to their perceptions of social mobility. I will also show that students hold high expectations due to a lack of information and experience in the family.

6.1 Aspirations and Expectations

Aspirations are defined as “forward-looking goals and targets” (Locke and Latham 2002) or “a desire or ambition to achieve something” (Oxford English Dictionary 1989). Both of these definitions seem to put emphasis on the desire, or willingness of the individual, to realise the goal. Aspirations motivate behaviour to achieve certain goals (Haller and Miller 1963). Empirical literature finds the impact of aspirations on both occupational choice (Cook et al. 1996; Haller and Miller 1963; Haller et al. 1974) and educational attainment (Beaman et al. 2012; Page, Garboua, and Montmarquette 2007; Quaglia and Cobb 1962) to be significant. The more we get to practice and explore our aspirational maps, the more robust and realistic our capacity to navigate that future becomes. People from more affluent backgrounds often have more experience in reading these maps, in other words, understanding the future pathways available. Those who have less opportunity to develop their capacity to aspire, such as marginalised and disadvantaged students, therefore have a more brittle horizon of aspirations (Appadurai 2004, 69). In other words, students’ capacity to aspire is influenced by their socio-economic background and past experiences.

Aspirations are different from expectations because they are not simply projections of how the future will look like. Individuals can aspire to conditional outcomes, which are dependent on the elimination of certain barriers or changes in individuals’ behaviours (Bernard et al. 2014, 5). Expectations and aspirations are, nevertheless, quite interrelated. As it is difficult to measure aspirations beyond educational aspirations, this study uses the following metrics to assess respondents’ expectations:

- (i) Salary expectations (short- to medium-term) and
- (ii) Expected relative economic standing in South Africa’s income distribution (long-term)

Educational aspirations were based on the highest level of education respondents reported that they want to achieve. Short- to medium-term expectations were based on respondents' expected 'reservation wage' (lowest monthly take-home wage respondents would accept straight out of university) and respondents' expected 'reasonable take-home monthly wage' (the amount respondents hope they will get paid at their first full-time job upon completion of their studies). A question regarding respondents' future projections of positioning in the income distribution (in 15-20 years) was also asked to measure long-term expectations.

6.2 Family and Household Characteristics

Families have played a central role in the study of social mobility for decades. Families can indirectly influence children's education performance and future expectations with economic capital. They can also directly influence these factors by providing support and career-related experience and by mobilising their social networks to widen job opportunities for their children (i.e. social and cultural capital). In the remainder of this section, both direct and indirect mechanisms of family effect are discussed in detail. In measuring the family effect, I use three different proxies for family background – parents' occupation, parents' education and parents' perceived income group – and explore how these explanatory variables affect students' short- to medium and long-term expectations. Bearing in mind that, due to the limitations of a small sample size and non-random sampling strategy, statistical findings in this chapter are not generalizable to the whole black student community at UCT. This analysis is, nevertheless, illustrative in investigating the general trends between students' family background and their future job market expectations.

6.2.1 Indirect Familial Effect: Material Capital

Parents' Occupation

Occupational class categories are widely used by sociologists to measure social or class mobility. This paper analysed families' occupational background by following the South African Standard Classification of Occupations (SASCO) and the work of Seekings (2011), which divided South African society into three composite class categories²²: Group 1, high managerial and professional occupations; Group 2, semi-professional, supervisory and skilled jobs, as well as semi-skilled and unskilled workers (excluding domestic work and agriculture) and Group 3, unskilled occupations in domestic work, agriculture or low-income self-employment and the unemployed. There are significantly more cases, among the households in which respondents were raised, of absent fathers than there are of absent mothers. Subsequently there are significantly more data available on mothers' occupational and educational background than there are on fathers'. For this reason, only mothers' inputs are taken account of in measuring the familial effect.

In the literature, the value of a "joint approach", incorporating both parents' class positions is widely accepted. Indeed, researchers have found that each parent's occupation and education independently shapes children's education outcomes (Kalmijn 1994; Korupp, Ganzeboom, and Van Der Lippe 2002). I observed in my data that while 57 per cent of the fathers held managerial or professional occupations, 24 per cent of the fathers held unskilled jobs in domestic work or agriculture or were reported as unemployed. 19 per cent of the fathers held semi-professional or semi-skilled jobs. There are more fathers who held unskilled occupations or unemployed than the mothers. Therefore, taking account of mothers' inputs only in measuring the familial effect might have generated measurement errors, i.e. an overestimation of familial effect.

²² See **Appendix 4** for further information regarding the classification of occupations.

In my sample, although 55 per cent of respondents' mothers held managerial or professional occupations, 37 per cent held unskilled jobs in domestic work or agriculture or were reported as being unemployed. A small group of mothers fell in between. Students with mothers who worked in either managerial or professional positions (Group 1) expected, on average, to reach the eighth decile in 15-20 years. This is reduced to the seventh decile for students whose mothers worked in unskilled jobs or who did not work at all (Group 3). Surprisingly, however, students with mothers in the Group 1 category expected to earn around R2,500 per month less in their first job than students whose mothers had less-skilled or unskilled jobs.

Parents' Education

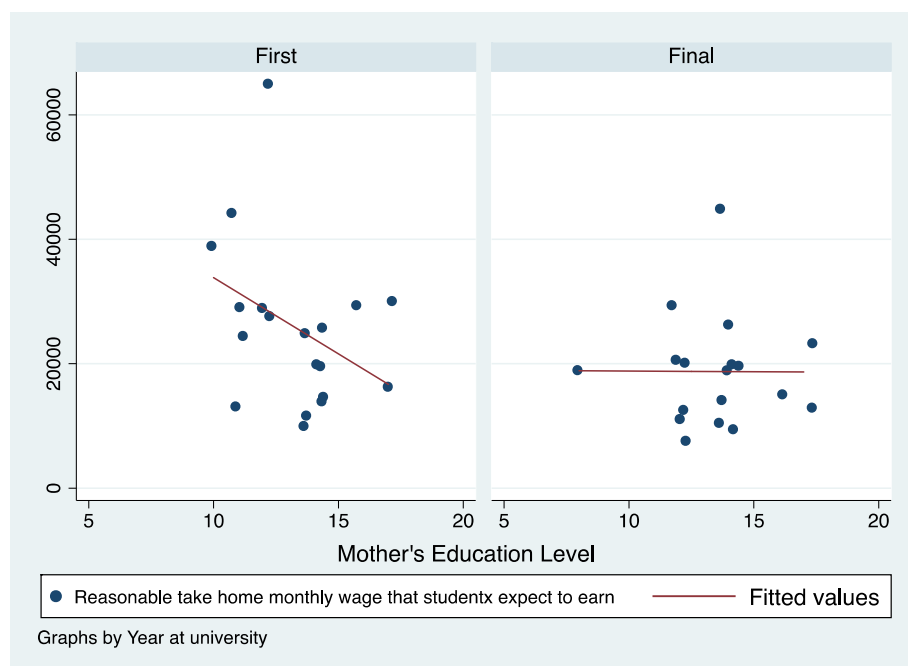
Besides occupational dynamics, intergenerational class and income mobility can also be measured through educational mobility. In line with a common view in the literature that a mother's education has a greater educational impact on children than a father's education (see Haveman and Wolfe 1995; Schultz 1993), the mother's education level (see **Appendix 4** for classification of highest educational attainment) is used to here explain children's education and job market expectations. The data suggest that those students whose mothers obtained at least a bachelor degree expected to be positioned, on average, in a higher decile in the income distribution in 15-20 years than those whose mothers held less than a college degree.

Regarding educational aspirations, independent of the year of standing at university (as not much variation was observed in education aspirations across years) almost all of the students interviewed (90 per cent of interviewees) wanted to further their studies after attaining an undergraduate degree, more than half wanting to achieve an honours degree, while the rest were, predominantly, hoping to gain a master's degree. Overall it is observed

that black students who came from a household in which other household members attended university had a desire to pursue postgraduate studies four to five times grater than those who did not.

Similar to the tendency found earlier, where respondents with high-skilled mothers expected to get paid at their first job than the respondents with low-skilled or unskilled mothers, the survey data suggest that children of mothers with university degrees or higher expected to earn around R5,000 per month less than those with high school degrees or less. These findings indicate the existence of higher expectations (short- to medium-term) among students with less educated parents than among those with more educated parents (see **Figure 5**). Yet, when decomposed into first and final year student groups, the association between mothers' education and students' expectations seem to disappear by the students' final year.

Figure 5. Mother's Education and Expected Reasonable Monthly Wage (Short- to Medium-Term expectations), by Year



Source: Own calculations.

Parents' Perceived Income Group

Unlike sociologists, who focus on changes in occupational class, economists measure intergenerational mobility by tracking changes in household income across generations.²³ In line with this tradition, household income group is used to explain children's short to long-term social mobility expectations. Students' self-placement of their households' position on the income distribution (divided into deciles) was used as a proxy for parents' income group. An indicator of perception of future opportunities, which further emphasises the role of socio-economic background, is the 'reservation wage'. Zoch (2013) argues that, in the South African context, people have lower expectations if they come from a lower socio-economic background are thus willing to accept lower 'reservation wages' for particular job types. He asserts that those coming from wealthier families can both better appreciate their true market value and afford to wait until they find the best work for themselves. Some of the perceptions among students seem to verify the close relationship between socio-economic background and expectations: "lower class people do not have high expectations because of the circumstances in which they grew up... Their mind-set is limited to [the conditions in] the environment where they grew up", says a final year female student (Number 47).

In contrast with this argument, my data show that the lowest monthly take-home wage (reservation wage) that students would accept when finished their studies is negatively associated with their self-positioning on the income distribution. It is observed in the data that those students coming from the lower half of the income distribution in society (below the fifth decile) were willing to accept a 'reservation wage' about R3,000 per month higher than their peers from the upper half of the income distribution (fifth decile and higher). Moreover, while young adults who were in their first year at university

²³ Household income level is, of course, closely related to occupational category as Morgan, Grusky, and Fields (2006, 5) assert "both methods are quite similar in spirit."

agreed to accept an average ‘reservation wage’ of about R20,000 per month once they complete their degrees, the expected average ‘reservation wage’ was only about R13,000 for final year students.

Moreover, students coming from the lower end of the income distribution expected to earn around R3,750 per month more than their counterparts from the upper end of the income distribution when they complete their degree and get their first job. On the other hand, students in their first year of university, from both the bottom and the top of the income distribution, expected to earn more than their final year counterparts. Overall, students in their first year expected to earn about R27,000 on average while their expectations decreased perceptibly when they reached their final year, down to R19,000 per month. However, the fall in wage expectations is bigger for those coming from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds, than among their wealthier peers; a fall of R11,000 and R4,500 respectively.

On the other hand, based on my data, it may be possible to observe a positive association between the family’s perceived income decile and the long-term expectations, measured by the income decile students expected to reach in 15-20 years after they graduate. This observation may provide insights into the possibility of intergenerational social mobility within the black group. The observed positive association between a family’s perceived income and that of the next generation, in line with the literature discussed earlier, although weak, may indicate the persistence of income inequalities across generations, as perceived by students. Moreover, when tracking the change in expectations over time, from first to final year, it is observed that students in their first year expected, on average, to be at a higher position in the income distribution (eighth decile) compared to their counterparts who are in their final year (seventh decile). This observation on expectations falls in line with previous findings regarding the short- to

medium-term expectations, which are both found to be lower among final year students compared with first years.

Overall, research findings on family and household characteristics suggest that higher levels of both perceived family income and maternal occupation and educational attainment positively associate with higher long-term expectations.²⁴ Short- to medium term expectations (measured by the reasonable wage students expect to earn in their first job and the lowest monthly wage they would accept once they start working) do not seem to be linked to any of these family background indicators. When disaggregated by ‘year of studies’, it is observed that, although short- to medium-term expectations are higher for first year students from low income backgrounds, with less educated and skilled parents, over time, these expectations appear to decrease and detach from background characteristics.

The observed fall in the income decile students expect to reach, from first to final year, could be due to a factor that influences long-term expectations negatively, especially for those whose family incomes lie at the lower end of the income distribution. There are at least two possible mechanisms at play here. First, students make adjustments in their long-term expectations after obtaining better information and, second, the observed change in aspirations, reflected in lower wage expectations across years, may influence long-term expectations. But if they revise their short- to medium-term expectations and not their long-term expectations, it may be the case that they have not changed their aspirations but, rather they changed their understanding of the path to follow in order to reach their long-term goal. My limited data set suggest these mechanisms might be at play, though a larger and more representative sample size may uncover further mechanisms.

²⁴ Yet, none of these positive correlations were found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level.

One of the reasons behind the observed downward pressure in long-term expectations from first year to final year is that students obtained better information about academic programmes after entering university:

“It’s because I realise that actuarial science does not pay as much as I was told it does, and it’s also about you qualifying... like your salary will increase yearly depending on your qualification. You won’t just immediately after getting your degree.... get a high salary within a month. That was so unrealistic, and I realised that and changed my perception of salary and stuff like that” (Number 109).

Ingrid Van Der Merwe, UCT career advisor, links this to the fact that information provided at schools is very poor and career decision-making is not very sophisticated:

“It is very clear that students have chosen courses [by assuming or wanting] one thing but they just do not have enough information about what they are actually choosing. There was one student, for example, who thought actuarial science was about physics, about science and had no idea that it was actually a business course” (Interview 2014).

Since aspirations reflected in wage expectations also fell from first to final year, one can also argue that lowered expectations can be explained by lowered aspirations (see **Figure 5**). Decreasing aspirations over time can be explained by the fact that students’ expectations become more realistic – the causal arrow is reversed. They make more realistic calculations, calibrating their aspirations with the labour market opportunities available to them given the particular skill sets they have. Overall, younger students seemed to be more optimistic about future opportunities, while older students were more aware of barriers to their educational and occupational success. Older students were

therefore more likely to have lower aspirations. Aspirations, however, remain high in absolute terms, keeping the hopes high for the future as one student said: “My experience at UCT has made me see that there are many possibilities. There are a lot better opportunities out there than I have ever thought of before. You can hold up top positions” and, he added: “having come to UCT, which used to be a no-go area for our parents, I think the sky is the limit now” (Number 28).

6.2.2 Direct Familial Effect: Cultural and Social Capital

Cultural Capital

The empirical analysis of family background has generally relied on “readily available measures of socio-economic status of families to proxy for the learning environment in the home without much attention to the details of structure” (Hanushek et al. 2001, 3). Yet, at the university level, it is often non-material conditions in familial settings (e.g. familial support or lack thereof) that directly impact students’ ‘capacity to aspire.’ One factor could be the prevalence of unstable and complex family forms, especially among low-income households, that has recently been recognised for its role in the measurement of intergenerational mobility (Tach 2015). It is observed in this study that one-third of interviewees reported that the mother, the father or both parents were not part of the households in which they grew up. Of the students who had one or both parents absent in their households, 70 per cent did not have fathers present during their childhood, while 29 per cent did not grow up with their mothers present. Absence of one or both parents had further implications in terms of developing a sense of belonging to the new university environment: “...So back home, there are a lot of people that do not have both parents... So in a way, you feel like you are alone, you feel like you are cursed when you come to UCT; it is a different setting. Everyone has at least a mother or a father [at UCT]. Then, you feel just out of place...” (Number 115).

Furthermore, white classmates were seen as having the best performance in their classes. This situation, in their eyes, is attributed to the existence of a decades-old culture of education within white families and the role of educated parents in providing necessary guidance, and social, psychological and financial support to their children. Especially “cultural capital”²⁵ provided via educational experience and well-resourced networks provides these families with knowledge of the ‘rules of the game’ ” (Crozier and Reay 2005; Crozier 2000). Contrary to white students, as perceived by them, one-third of the respondents reported to be the first in the households they grew up in to attend university. It was mainly mothers, followed by fathers, who helped their kids perform well at school, attended teacher-parent conferences, gave them the most encouragement towards achieving their goals, supported them financially and emotionally, and encouraged their progression at university.

On the other hand, the kind of familial assistance that requires prior knowledge or familiarity with the education system seemed to be missing in interviewees’ upbringing. It was often from teachers (28 per cent), rather than from their parents (25 per cent), that students received the main guidance they needed to apply for university. Similarly, it was not the parents who had the biggest influence on the jobs children saw themselves doing at the age of 30, but were mentors in business, teachers, friends and/or extended family members. Moreover, more than half of the respondents reported that they had no help with their homework and only one-quarter reported having received help from their mothers with their homework when they were growing up.

²⁵ Bourdieu (1977a, 1984, 1990) presents the concept of cultural capital as a social resource that is gained in the family setting by learning how to behave in a particular way that would reflect social standing. He argues that schools only recognize elite groups’ taste for certain products, manners, speech, style of dress and consumption patterns as legitimate.

Thus, as previous studies have shown²⁶, it can be argued that first generation black university students frequently enter university less academically prepared than their white counterparts, which leads to the experience of university “culture shock” (Cushman 2007):

“I think it is an education culture which comes from home. In their [white students’] families they have people who have been to university, who have given them sort of an advice, or maybe the case that they probably studied before what their children are studying now. So it is to them [white students] not a strange sort of an environment, relative to some black students who probably are the first in their family to have a tertiary education, who have never had someone to assist them in terms of study methods...” (Number 46).

However, even a student with university educated parents stated similar feelings, highlighting the legacy of Apartheid:

“Personally I am still heavily affected by Apartheid, not to the extreme as someone else... but there is no culture in my family about helping with homework... Even at private school [I attended], you would see that the black students performed much worse than the white students on average, all the time” (Number 70).

As noted by Glenda Wildschut – Director of the Transformation Services Office at UCT –cultural capital is often analogous with economic capital: “One of our professors was saying that – he was giving an example of cultural capital – he is able to have a conversation with his son about what aspect of the subject matter his son should be focusing on in his PHD work. This student could not have had chance to have that kind of

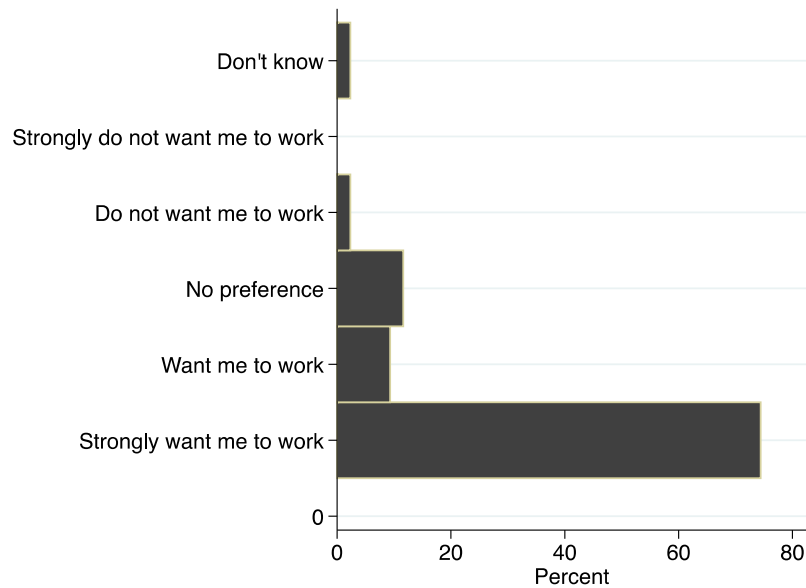
²⁶ There is a wide coverage of first generation college Latina students in the U.S. context (see Engle 2007; Hurtado et al. 2008). Similar to experience of black students in South Africa, Latina students – often the first in their families to go to university – cannot rely on their families for information needed throughout their education tenure in tertiary education (Tym et al. 2004).

conversation if his father was to be a truck driver” (Interview 2014). During the interviews, a final year female student also brought it up:

“...I would not come to a white person. Because their parents are more educated. You just do not know how to communicate. Not to communicate, but what you speak to them about. I feel they are more educated and well-rounded and confident. For example, they have so much knowledge about the economy, because their parents are business people. They know so much more than you do. Their education would have started at home, whereas my education at home with my parents would be just... well, you know” (Number 10).

Besides lack of familial support, family can frequently be perceived as a source of pressure, particularly as expectations get heightened with attendance of a member of the household at university: “...my father was the first one in his family to go to university. He had a large burden to help in educating siblings. I do not have that burden to help out the family so much because my older siblings have helped out” (Number 109). The general trend in the interviews indicates that familial understanding of higher education is often expressed in material terms; i.e. getting a good job and earning money: “I think the type of family environment we grow in... black family context, you are never encouraged to dream; I would say. You are always just told to get a job and then provide for your family, almost old school thinking” (Number 100). The **Figure 6** presents this general trend in parents’ expectations from their children regarding taking up a job as soon as they finish their studies.

Figure 6. How Strongly do Your Parents Want You to Work When You Graduate?



Source: Own calculations.

Social Capital

What is more significant here for this study is the fact that in the post-Apartheid period, rising educational mobility was not paired with increased occupational mobility, particularly for black South Africans (Louw, Van Der Berg, and Yu 2007). Seekings and Nattrass (2006, 332) argue “it might well be the case that people with identical educational qualifications have different prospects in the labour market because of the different information, attitudes and networks that they inherited or acquired from their contrasting social backgrounds.” Thus, not all the people who experienced educational mobility reap high benefits in the labour markets because of differential access to social capital, especially by race.²⁷

²⁷ The concept of social capital appears very useful for understanding and explaining the effect and consequences of human sociability and connectedness. As Bourdieu (1984) argued engaging and maintaining certain networks are profitable for the appropriation of available scarce resources. It is well established in the literature and well observed in daily life that references, job information or social networks that grant an advantage in the labour market play an important productive role in the job search (Ioannides and Loury 2004; Marsden and Gorman 2001; Topa 2011). In both developed and developing countries, it is found that most jobs are found through inherited social networks. Gaining access to parents’ social networks can be characterised as a direct way through which family background can help students succeed in the labour market.

In addition to high familial pressure, students' lack of access to useful social networks and family know-how stands as a barrier to successfully navigating their way through university into rewarding jobs and careers. The use of social networks for most black job seekers, through communicating with relatives or family acquaintances, does not often appear a robust strategy: "...Having no uncles or extended family to fall back on to because they were heavily affected by Apartheid, having no opportunity to just go to an uncle and say can I get a job somewhere? In fact, I am expecting people from my community to come to me as soon as I graduate and ask me for a job, which I do not think happens to the white as much... That puts a lot of pressure to succeed" (Number 94). Given the pervasive effects of socio-economic background, a lack of access to class-heterogeneous networks can exacerbate the initial inequities and might even have a negative impact on students' performance due to lowered motivation and engagement (see OECD 2012).

Similarly, the career advisor, reported that lack of prior knowledge of where to secure employment, the form of capital which derives from one's social connections, acts against building certainty and confidence towards one's own future:

"There is definitely a disadvantage of social capital [for some] because if someone has parents in management position in any given industry, it just opens up a lot of connections and recognition that they have a role model in their family of a certain professional job whereas many other students feel unconfident, sort of feel possibly a little bit lesser than other students in their class. Because they do not have uncles and aunts who are working for big corporations..." (Interview 2014).

Indeed, it is observed in the survey data that of all the interviewees only 56 per cent reported that their family had acquaintances or friends who they thought could help them

find a job. Half of these networks were composed of friends, while close family members only constituted 10 per cent of the total figure. When asked about the population group of the people who were part of the family network, three population categories were mentioned, as illustrated in **Table 3**. These social networks tended to be mainly intra-racial, although one would expect that wider employment of black parents in the post-Apartheid era would give rise to more interracial peers, colleagues and friends. Nevertheless, families' network circles were composed of people who came from a wide range of occupations, from accounting and financial to managerial, consulting and engineering.

Table 3. Composition of Family Network, by Population Group

Population Group	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Black SA	28	90.32
Coloured SA	2	6.45
Black Ugandan	1	3.22
Total	31	100%

Source: Own calculations.

Note: Figures must be read as number of responses, as students could report more than one person in their parents' social networks. Not all interviewees were asked about the racial background of their parents' networks, as this question was not primarily integrated in the questionnaire. Percentages are rounded and consequently might not add up to 100.

Furthermore, out of the two-thirds of interviewees who reported that their parent(s) had close relationship(s) with people in their industries, only around 20 per cent believed that they had a high or very high chance of working in the same industry or business as their parent(s) have also worked. Students, generally, did not express a great desire to continue in their parent(s)' footsteps and work in the same job or industry – only five per cent of respondents considered working for the same employer as their parent(s). The main explanation is that most students had already secured a job, as they were supposed to start working for the companies, which had provided their bursaries, once they graduated.

Overall students felt that their scholarship/bursary and friendship networks were more likely than their parents' networks to help them find a job after graduation. Alternatively, this might be explained by a mismatch between the range of job opportunities (determined by characteristics of parent(s)' sector or industry) and characteristics of the job seeker or the kind of job the students look for.

Conclusion

To summarise, although initial expectations were higher among low-income students compared to their high-income counterparts, the overall evidence suggests that students, regardless of their background, become more mature, knowledgeable and realistic in their thinking about their future careers as they progress through university. Family background, measured in material terms, therefore, becomes irrelevant to student expectations. But, lack of access to family know-how, social capital and support may still create barriers to equality of opportunity in the labour market.

On the other hand, my data seem to show that friendship networks students built at UCT comprised more than one-quarter of the personal networks that they plan to utilise in finding their first job. Can the social networks built at UCT compensate for perceived deficits or the gaps in family characteristics and life experiences discussed in this chapter? Do students cross social boundaries on campus and form relationships that fully avail of the university's academic and social resources? In the next chapter I try to answer these questions, by providing insights into the nature of social networks students join at university and by discussing the role of these social networks in education and job market expectations.

7. Social Networks: “Birds of a Feather Flock Together”

Upon discovering the importance of familial social capital, which can support students’ academic and social progress, I looked to the role of dynamics internal to UCT in bridging the social capital gap between students from different social groups. The number of black South African students participating in higher education has grown dramatically over the past two decades. According to the existing literature, having diverse peers in the learning environment results in improved education outcomes. But, at the same time, the highly compartmentalised nature of the university environment reinforces socio-economic and racial stigma (see Chavous et al. 2002; Cureton 2003; Hurtado 1998; Willie 2003). Thus, based on a study investigating the reproduction of social boundaries,²⁸ this chapter argues that identities are multiple and often interact to shape students’ social capital, which, in turn, perpetuates existing social inequalities on campus.

In this chapter I present empirical evidence from the UCT social environment. The first section explores different forms of micro-interactions among students, which can occur through their studies or through their involvement in extracurricular activities on campus. The types of relationships students build (or fail to build) may have an impact on perceptions of success probability, first as a student, and later in the job market. Thus, the second section explores the association between social interaction, and the resulting social networks built on campus, with the quality of ‘education as experience’ and, consequently, the job market prospects.

²⁸ Sociologists Lamont and Molnar (2002, 168) define social boundaries as “objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and non-material) and social opportunities.” “Social boundaries emerge from the groupings of individuals into social categories and may be national, racial, cultural, socioeconomic and religious, and/or gendered in nature” (Carter 2010, 1531).

7.1 Into the Nature of Relationships at UCT

Previous research investigating networks and relationships between individuals has largely documented that people are more likely to have social ties with people similar to themselves on social attributes such as race, sex, education and age (see Ibarra 1992, 1995; Marsden 1990; Zenger and Lawrence 1989). In a society deeply marked by its racialised past, race remains the primary identifier by which people choose their friends. Most individuals make complicated and more or less unconscious investments when choosing some friendship networks over others. One of the most striking findings in post-Apartheid research was by Gibson (2004) in his 2001 survey. He found that a very low percentage of South Africans have interracial contact in their daily lives with two out of every three South Africans reporting that they had little or no contact with out-group members.²⁹ This macro-social dynamic, observed in society at large, is also reflected at the institutional level. UCT is a campus somewhat mired by unarticulated divisions, many of them revolving around race. A high number of interviewees stated that they feel uncomfortable around white people and interactions with white people were often described as ‘intimidating.’

Likewise, my survey data suggest that black students are four times more likely to report feeling a sense of connection with other black students, around 60 per cent, compared to with white students, only around 15 per cent. Three in four respondents said that they speak openly with other black students about their experience as a black university student, while only one in four interviewees agreed that they speak openly with white students about their university experiences as black university students. The number of respondents who think their fellow classmates have important knowledge to share about

²⁹ In this survey, white, coloured and Indian respondents were asked a series of questions about black people, and black people the same questions about white people. Only 16 per cent of the respondents, reported having a great deal of contact at work with members of the designated group, whilst only 6 per cent reported having a great deal of such contact outside work.

their university experience is higher when these classmates are black than white. These figures demonstrate the overall salience of same-race relationships, cutting across socio-economic and cultural boundaries.

A large majority of respondents said that all or most of their closest friends were from the same racial group and my data suggest that most students move in entirely racially homogenous circles. As illustrated in **Table 4**, black South African students chose other black students as their closest friends 76 per cent of the time. Broadly speaking black South African students chose non-white students (black, coloured and Indian South Africans as well as black students from other African countries) as their close friends eleven times more often than they would choose a white student (in my data, white students were either from South Africa or Zimbabwe). More strikingly, non-South African students were almost twice as likely to be chosen by the respondents as a close friend compared to their white South African peers. Overall, my respondents only reported having non-South Africans among their closest friends 10 per cent of the time.

Table 4. Peer Network Structure, by Population Group

Population Group of the Closest Friends	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Black SA	69	76
White SA	6	6.59
Coloured SA	4	4.40
Indian SA	3	3.30
Black Zimbabwean	4	4.40
Black Ghanaian	3	3.30
Black Ugandan	1	1.10
White Zimbabwean	1	1.10
Total	91	100%

Source: Own calculations.

Note: Figures must be read as number of responses, as the students were asked to talk about three of their closest friends, and this question was not asked of all students. Percentages are rounded and consequently might not add up to 100.

Reflected in my survey data is the fact that black students' friendship networks demonstrate great racial homophily both over time and in the early stages of friendship network formation. There does not appear to be a significant change in the racial composition of students' social networks between first and final year. The process of interracial socialisation, where it does occur, is predominantly the result of black students' work and effort to assimilate:

“This institution is culturally white and a black man cannot find his feet on the ground... but I was also entering a world that is full of possibilities that would certainly change my life forever... so, I was willing wholeheartedly to adjust; willing to do whatever it takes to be part of this new world. I fairly did a good job. I have got white friends, black friends, blue friends...” (Number 116).

Another student highlighted the one-way direction of effort in forming interracial friendships:

“I know [black] friends who have tried to put an effort in becoming friends with white people, but white people were not putting enough effort. In some cases, some become friends with white people but there's like still... they don't like similar stuff. It's difficult to maintain those kinds of relationships” (Number 102).

When I asked black students from relatively advantaged backgrounds if they find it more challenging to make black friends from lower income backgrounds, or white friends from similar backgrounds, some students said they struggle more forming cross-race relationships than cross-class ones: “I think if it is blacks it is easy to become friends regardless of being rich or not” (Number 102). What, then, are the mechanisms underlying the association between students' race and their friendship networks' racial composition on

UCT campus? Or are there other mechanism(s)³⁰, which affect(s) the racial composition of these friendship networks?

One explanation for such a pattern is that for most of the students, insulated in-group interactions play a protective role in the formation of explicit and/or implicit judgements of out-group members, as the idea of contact with out-group members creates fear of the ‘unknown.’ Generally, students seem to seek out social groups that provide them with a sense of belonging, solidarity and comfort in their environment. Thus, there seems to be a racial ‘self-segregation’ tendency among students across a variety of situations, from eating dinner at residence dining halls and sitting on the ‘Jammie stairs’ to participating in extracurricular activities (See **Figure 7**). Students, for example, adopt seating patterns in the cafeteria such that there are marked divisions across racial lines. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given such limited interaction between racial groups, it is possible to observe entrenchment of interracial suspicion and distrust on campus.

Another reason behind the prevalence of same-race relationships on campus arises from feelings of class alienation. A final year female student pointed to how the middle class tastes of the dominant social group on campus isolate the others: “the white people at UCT will say “let’s go for a coffee” in Vida e Caffè, and it costs R50, and you are thinking about buying butter and bread with R50... and things like going for Chinese food or sushi, where white people do things we cannot...” (Number 10). This statement also shows that differences in distribution of material resources can affect social interaction and that such material resources are associated with ‘whiteness’ by black South African students.

³⁰ Other factors such as common language, similar cultural norms or shared life experiences among others, which are not as visible as race, might also contribute to intra-racial friendship formation.



Figure 7. Students take a breather on ‘Jammie stairs’ outside Jameson Hall. I took this picture during the election campaign for the Student Representatives Council. The ‘BLVCK movement’, indicating “unity” and “the absence of colour”, hung its banners on the pillars of Jameson Hall as part of its pre-election propaganda. Photograph: the author, 2014.

Similarly, some black students found interactions with white students on campus ‘depressing’ as, with each interaction, they become more aware of white people’s relative privilege in terms of upbringing, social connections and financial stability: “...white people have a chance to do other things; they have networks, as their family members own a business, their uncle is with business. Whereas for me, I have to start from the beginning, if I do not get any job outside I will be unemployed. For white people, the chances of being unemployed are very slim” (Number 112). This viewpoint, reflecting a feeling of marginalisation, was not evident across all black students but, rather, was mainly expressed by poor black students.

Indeed, in response to the question regarding whether or not they feel the shadow of Apartheid in their social interactions in university, black students from relatively advantaged backgrounds often saw race more as an ideological than a material issue: “You only start feeling the shadow of Apartheid once you have discussions on race then race comes up, but if race is not bothered, no I do not feel it” (Number 100). Thus, one can argue that it is not race per se that matters for social interactions on campus nor is the social class but an interaction between the two, as socio-economic disadvantage is often reinforced by racial identity.

In addition, the well known similarities, which form the bases of interpersonal attraction, such as lifestyle, moral values and cultural norms, also appear to be important determinants of both cross-race and same-race friendship choices on campus. Students often reported that there is even self-segregation, along ethnic identity lines, among the black community on UCT’s campus:

“We have got conflicts with Zulu people; Zulu people and Swati people in the residence when we eat. That goes with cultural stuff. They would like teasing other cultures and they also do the same to us [Xhosa people]... So now I am feeling like I am Xhosa and that guy is Zulu, so I will just leave him alone, put him off my world you know” (Number 22).

Existing divisions even within the same race prove that social identity is multifaceted and one must refrain from reaching quick conclusions about the dominance of race or class per se in friendship formation. For some students race itself does not constitute the basis of similarity, at all. Although such networks are not uniformly accessed and experienced, some students transgressed conventional racial boundaries and formed interracial friendship networks. In such cases, people associate themselves with what

interests them more than whom they identify with as a group. A final year male student draws attention to other factors that matter beyond race: “So a black student won’t come and say, I want to hang out with you because you are black, therefore I would gravitate towards you... What you find is that blacks from private school would interact with each other and blacks from government school or ‘former Model C³¹ schools’ would interact with each other but they would never all interact together. So I think students are attracted strongly to people with similar interests and it is not solely racial...” (Number 94). This case also demonstrates the interaction between race and socio-economic background, as those who attended private schools are both richer and more likely to have white or black friends with appropriable social and economic resources than those who did not attend these schools.

What is clear here is that most of the students’ lives are marked, more or less, by racialised subjectivities. Despite this, racial compartmentalisation in society as well as in university is seen as the elephant in the room that no one wants to talk about. And although racially homophilous ties provide valuable sources of mutual support, they might limit racial minorities’ further access to resources and information in organisations (Mollica, Gray, and Trevino 2003). For example, in line with the literature (see Braddock and McPartland 1982, 1987; Braddock 1980, 1985), students with interracial social networks are likely to earn more than those who do not. Consequently, the demographic composition of networks might even affect who secures a stable employment and becomes upwardly mobile and who does not.

³¹ ‘Former Model C schools’ are government schools that used to describe former whites-only government schools under the Apartheid state. Currently, some of the country’s best schools fall into this category, and fees are somewhere between private and regular government school fees. So they can be classified as middle-class, formerly white but now racially mixed schools. Yet, white students vacated some of the model C schools in the post-Apartheid period.

7.2 Social Capital and Job Market Expectations

The concept of social capital includes actual and perceived resources embedded in social networks, which may be converted into other forms of capital, including economic capital (Bourdieu 1984). As discussed in the previous chapter, benefits from social networks are numerous and close-knit relationships particularly can significantly influence students' achievement and satisfaction, independent of their course work and instruction (R. T. Johnson and Johnson 1985; Ream 2005, 205).³² Such close-knit relationships can also be quite useful for acquiring valuable social support and information (see Burt 1992; Granovetter 1973). In this section, I discuss the extent to which these benefits can be appropriated³³ for the job search and I assess the perceived effect of social capital on job market expectations.

To the question concerning available avenues through which they, black South African students, can improve their social class and standing in society, a number of respondents noted the importance of mobilising of informal contacts to successfully navigate their way into rewarding jobs and careers: "People who know people can get jobs easier than the people who apply for jobs" (Number 31). Similarly, another student held the belief that his long-term goals could be helped by the friendships he formed at UCT:

"I do not have personal resource(s), but I have got access to resources. I have got friends at UCT who are always ready to give me [support]" (Number 116).

Specifically, involvement in extracurricular activities on campus may extend supportive friend networks (see Kahne et al. 2001; McNeal 1999; Patrick et al. 1999) and enhance students' educational and occupational aspirations, regardless of socio-economic background (see Feldman and Matjasko 2005 for a review). However, as is illustrated in

³² See Laal et al. (2013) for a further discussion of potential advantages of learning in collaboration.

³³ Coleman (1988, 108) calls into question the 'appropriability' of social capital.

Table 5, analysis of the data does not provide evidence of high participation levels in extra-curricular activities among black students. One explanation for this could be the fact that some black students do not have the time to participate in societies and/or sports teams outside of classes, as they are constantly busy catching up with their studies to compensate for the deficit in their academic preparation: “Getting involved in so many things would be an expense to me. Because that means I will have more social life than an academic life” (Number 22).

Table 5. Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Type of Extracurricular Activity	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
A religious group	22	27.85
A sports group or team	12	15.20
A study group	12	15.20
A dancing, music or choir group	6	7.60
A political party	3	3.80
Student representative council (SRC)	1	1.30
Other clubs, groups or societies	23	29.11
Total	79	100%

Source: Own calculations.

Note: Figures must be read as number of responses, as some respondents are part of more than one social group. Percentages are rounded and consequently might not add up to 100.

Black students might not be aware of that soft skills gained through extra-curricular involvement can be important for obtaining gainful employment after graduation. Although 88 per cent of interviewees reported that they took part in at least one activity, only 14 per cent of these took up leadership roles in student societies, clubs and groups. Once these students are faced with job advertisements requiring specific soft-skills, they may begin to doubt their own skill-set and their employability. A final year female student noted the frustration she felt due to feeling incompetent upon learning that she does not have the right soft skills: “leadership skills... they want team work, they want

communication, they want you to be technologically advanced. They want you to be a problem solver, they want you to be everything you are not” (Number 34).

Participation in extracurricular activities is therefore no less important than test scores for predicting educational attainment and accumulated earnings in the long-term (for the U.S. context, see Lleras 2008; Snellman et al. 2014). Participation in extracurricular activities is therefore closely correlated with young people’s future earnings. But at UCT, as one student put it: “There are still certain societies or clubs where you do not even see a single black person at all” (Number 34). It is therefore fair to argue that low participation rates in extracurricular activities among black students (illustrated in **Table 4**) may result in missed soft skill-building opportunities important to future labour market successes.

Moreover, among the groups, clubs or teams to which students might belong, ‘a religious group’ was the most chosen response among black South African students. More than half of the respondents belonged to a religious organisation and they found a similar sense of community and belonging within these organisations (see Bangeni and Kapp 2005, for similar observations). Some students also expected to utilise, in their future job search, the social networks they built within these (mainly evangelical) Christian communities. Only one student was actively involved in student politics, in stark contrast to the past – closer to the end of Apartheid, “political organisations served as a refuge and site for social solidarity for black students” (Bangeni and Kapp 2005, 9). This shift away from political activism has been well documented in the South African media, but “it is not yet clear whether or not this has resulted in a shift toward religious communities as new solidarity networks” (*Ibid.*).

A sizeable number of the respondents emphasised their excitement at being exposed to a variety of people and views. They saw the university’s diversity as a means to

achieve their long-term career goals because of social networks. Thus, despite the lack of first-hand experience or friendship networks that could be mobilised for future job placements, there are definitely some indirect benefits black students accrue simply by being physically present at UCT:

“Being here makes you feel like that there is a lot of people that you meet who are from the same background but have done a lot of things. There is a girl who has been to this Washington Programme, and they did an internship, like at UN offices and World Bank... And they come from, like, townships. That inspires me and makes me think I can achieve things like that” (Number 10).

Similarly, another student stressed that learning and living in such a different and diverse environment considerably widened his perception of future possibilities:

“When you come here you get exposed to a variety of people and opinions compared to other universities that are dominantly very localised, whereas here [UCT] you get perspectives from people from all around the world. It changes your perspective; gives you a broader view. You appreciate future possibilities” (Number 74).

On the other hand, when students attend university their comparison groups and environment change, which might affect their sense of self and others, particularly as some black students begin to realise that they are not as prepared as other students for the requirements of higher education. A sizable number of interviewees arrived at UCT having only lived before in culturally and racially homogenous neighbourhoods where everyone looked the same and spoke the same language. But even among students who grew up in mixed neighbourhoods and schools, the UCT environment had affected their self-

confidence levels and often in a negative way: “Everything that I thought I was good at I realised that there are other people who are just as good and smart” (Number 25). Jean Luyt, psychological counsellor at the FoC, summarises well the changes that she observed mainly in black students:

“...when they first come to university, they see getting into UCT like a ticket to their future. And they may be a little naïve, in fact, they are very naïve. They do not know that it is just the beginning. And so, within weeks of arriving, they are already completely confused and devastated, and like what they came here for is being shattered and they are not sure of what they came here for anymore... It is almost like their former self has vanished. And what is left in its place is like a second rated version of that person... Later on, we observe a drop in expectations” (Interview 2014).

A final year female student expressed how her self-confidence had similarly been affected in the UCT environment:

“...My self-confidence has gone down... Especially at school I was always toward the top of the class, and here, I won’t say I am at the bottom, but compared to other people I am at the bottom. Other people, different from where I come from, they are extremely smart and have all this knowledge. So I think my self-confidence has gone down in that regard” (Number 10).

The systemic effects of Apartheid are ingrained in every aspect of the institution from the administration and teaching to the composition of class performance. The top performing 5 per cent of a class, for example, tends to be predominantly white, while the

bottom 5 per cent tends to be predominantly black, observed a lecturer at the Department of Information Systems:

“A part of these differential education outcomes can be explained by self-fulfilling prophecy that enforces perceived inferiority on the side of black students...Such self-blame can be traced back to historical inferiority, attached to their social identities. As one of the students once said, ‘You know what? I am a failure. I do not see white students failing. This is probably something to do with my skin’ ” (Number 113).

Thus, lower aspirations often become a logical response to the message that they are underachieving. However, black students are generally more likely than white students to come from disadvantaged social backgrounds. This affects the quality of schooling they have received before entering university and, therefore, creates an unequal baseline between black and white students. While these very real-world inequalities can be perceived in terms of racial inferiority due to the legacy of apartheid, one cannot suggest that differences in performance are attributed only to self-fulfilling prophecy.

This lowered perception of one’s abilities in presence of other races, as shown in the ‘stereotype threat’ literature, may constrain educational choices and eventual career paths as beliefs play a highly influential role in both the career aspirations and pursuits of young people (see Bandura 1997; Bandura et al. 2001). Socially constructed boundaries, based on widely held stereotypes prevent black students from building a number of useful social connections on campus because of the feelings of inferiority they encourage among black students:

“You might think that you need to start up a company and then your white classmate has contacts with many different people, but because you feel inferior,

you will not team up with him. He might have the same idea but because he feels he cannot talk to you either, then you alone might not come up with something worthwhile” (Number 109).

Lack of access to well-connected individuals might therefore further exacerbate the impact of low self-confidence on job attainment. 47 per cent of respondents agreed that interactions with other black students from more advantaged backgrounds are beneficial for future job opportunities, while 40 per cent thought this to be true of interactions with more advantaged white students. Although black students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds overall interact and connect more with students from their own racial group, their perceived utility regarding interactions with more socio-economically advantaged black students remains low. Black students from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds mainly lack access to such well-connected individuals regardless of their racial group. It is rarely encountered, as came up during the interviews, that black students from advantaged backgrounds inform their disadvantaged counterparts about labour market strategies:

“A lot of black people hate the fact that they are black. They hate that their skin colour comes with so much baggage, because you are seen as incompetent, and you are seen as incapable, and all of these... So black people who are rich always try to move away from their skin colour, so they will hang out with either white people and other rich black [people]” (Number 112).

Provided that they are present and accessible, however, socio-economic diversity in friendship networks can be academically supportive without wreaking havoc on self-esteem:

“First day at university... We had to prepare an assignment in Excel. My friend pulled me inside and said that he did not know how to use Excel – never used it in his entire life. He came to me; he did not ask the lecturer. His English was ok but not brilliant. So I started sitting down and working with him, I realised he was very smart. You taught him something and he caught it really quickly and, within a week, he mastered everything that he needed. He only needed someone to sit down with him and listen to what he needed, otherwise, the questions he was asking were no different than the questions other people would ask” (Number 94).

Social and cultural distance between students of different races, however, makes it unlikely that black students form such diverse study groups. One lecturer pointed out the evident gap in educational outcomes between racially homogenous study groups:

“In group projects, when I finish marking, I see that the groups with the highest grades are the ones which have only white kids in it and the bottom ones are the groups, which have only black kids in it. And it bothers me. How can I correct this? As you will ask, is this a symptom of a bigger problem, or is this a random thing that happened? Should I intervene, and if I do, how should I intervene? Should I push one of the black groups up front so that I can show them that they have a good chance? Is that ethical? Is that even legal? Is that correcting anything? Is that helping anyone? Those questions play in my mind” (Number 113).

More importantly the perceived ‘whiteness’ of the job market might cause a reduction in aspirations. Students may believe that their hard work will not be rewarded equally due to both overt and subtle racism in the labour market, which, in turn, may affect their expectations about potential pathways from university to work. But there is an

evident trust in that the South African government's affirmative action policies can equalise labour market outcomes, which motivates black students further to work hard and prove their potential:

“...because the job market itself still has a dominant culture, which is white, when I come in I face first the stereotypes of being black, – that I may not be as good as a white person, that stereotype is still there. I have to be watched. I have to be monitored. I have to be given maybe probation periods, and so on. I may face that. The advantage of course is that if I then end up being good, then I'm likely to be fast tracked. Because ultimately the company wants two things: it wants to meet the B-BBEE scores, but it also wants to have someone that everyone can have confidence in. If you get a very good black person he is likely to climb faster, because he is a double-edged sword; he meets the B-BBEE codes the government wants and at the same time employees, and investors will have confidence in him (Number 116).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that race in South Africa still holds enormous power and it continues to be a critical determinant of voluntary and involuntary social capital formation on campus. Same-race friendships constituted the main source of socio-psychological support. I also demonstrated that identities were neither stable nor singular and there are crossovers in friendship preferences. Although black students from more disadvantaged backgrounds were aware of the limits of their social networks, the friendship networks with appropriable resources were not accessible to them. Disadvantaged black students lacked self-confidence to initiate such relationships and

respondents' perception was that white students did not show sufficient willingness to integrate black peers into their social circles.

Students who arrive at UCT rich in cultural, social and economic capital join social networks with more appropriable resources than those perceived as lacking. The impact of socio-economic background was thus augmented by on-campus relationships, particularly given that there seemed to be almost no cross-class exchange of information regarding job opportunities. Cross-race exchanges only appeared to be available to those already equipped with cultural, social and economic resources.

In this chapter, I examined the (in)ability of social networks to compensate for background factors. In the next chapter I will discuss the university's roles and responsibilities as an institution when such patterns do emerge. Did the university take necessary measures to incentivise students to be flexible crossing social and cultural boundaries? What can be done to ensure all students receive the multiple benefits of diverse social bonds – social, cultural and psychological?

8. Institutional Context of Case Study: A ‘White’ ‘Elitist’ University

On March 12, 2015 a movement defined by the slogan ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ sparked conversations at UCT. Students demanded the removal of a statue of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes, which stood in the university’s upper campus. This movement, however, was about much more than a statue. It was an outcry from students calling attention to realities in the current education system, which does not align with post-Apartheid South Africa’s apparent principles. It was a movement that sought to put an end to all policies and practices that disenfranchise black students on campus. On March 27th 2015 the university administration passed a motion and on April 9th of the same year the statue was removed.



Figure 8. The removal of the Rhodes Statue. Students surrounded the statue of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes, which was seen as the symbol of white oppression, as it was removed from the campus at the University of Cape Town. Photograph: Schalk Van Zuydam/ AP.

In this chapter I investigate the formal and informal institutional mechanisms that can either sustain or transform the existing system the students were criticising. Thus, the actions of UCT students and the demands of this movement are useful to contextualise the chapter. Drawing on this event, I first examine the nature of the informal institutional setting by focusing on the reflexive nature of the relationship between students and the dominant institutional culture. I, then, discuss policies and strategies adopted by UCT to mitigate the gap in academic achievement and incorporation between white and black students. I then look at how this, in turn, shaped the institution's approach to social and cultural boundaries. Finally I discuss how the university prepares students for successful career transitions. By doing this, I argue students both absorb and resist the institutional structures and discourses as they struggle to launch their careers.

8.1 Changing Spaces, Shifting Boundaries

“The national discourse is completely preoccupied with access. Nobody worries very much about UCT students because they think of them as the fortunate ones who are all going to get jobs – good jobs. So nobody pays any attention to their well being, the emphasis is on people who cannot get into university in the first place. So government's push is all about broadening the number of people the university system as a whole can take in...”

Don Ross, *Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, UCT* (Interview 2014)

The socio-cultural context of the university, with a clearly defined system of meanings, might maintain and reproduce social and cultural boundaries. The university context therefore influences the degree to which students are fully incorporated into the academic setting. Students' propensity to expand and move across social and cultural boundaries is highly dependent on the university's own organisational 'habitus.' Bourdieu

defines the concept of ‘habitus’ as follows: “cumulative exposure to certain social conditions instils in individuals an ensemble of durable and transposable dispositions... collectively referred to as ‘habitus’, which structures new experiences in accordance with those existing structures produced in an individual’s past experiences” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 13). Thus, although ‘habitus’ is a product of socialisation within the family, “it is continually modified by individuals’ encounters with the outside world” (DiMaggio 1979 cited in Reay, David, and Ball 2005, 26). However, as Reay et al. (2005) argue, when ‘habitus’ encounters a scenario in which it is not familiar (i.e. organisational ‘habitus’) the resulting mismatch can generate a transformation, but also provoke disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty in the individual.

A sizeable black student population of UCT, by coming to UCT, do not only cross spatial boundaries but also find themselves where their racial identity often has less cultural and social power. A majority of respondents – although some were from affluent backgrounds – reported struggling to find a place for their culture and themselves in the institution’s ‘white’, ‘elitist’ cultural context (see Kapp 1998; for similar observations): “UCT is not welcoming enough to black students because walking up those stairs, climbing up to upper campus, and seeing the statue of Cecil Rhodes does not welcome the black” (Number 81). One of the first things one notices on campus was the centrality of the Rhodes statue, marking the institution’s colonial history. This statue has been the target of harsh criticism because it was viewed as a display of painful history for various marginalised groups (See **Figure 9**).



Figure 9. The Rhodes Statue during the fieldwork at UCT. Students used to walk past the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, which had occupied a central position on UCT's upper campus before its removal on April 9, 2015. Photograph: the author, 2014.

The Director of the Transformation Services Office pointed to the alienating institutional culture as one of the greatest barriers to institutional transformation: “UCT has a very strong British culture. Subtle but strong... How do you get into this culture? The kind of cultural activities on offer maybe alien to students who come from a rural or township context... Even the staff who are quite articulate and highly functioning find this culture and this environment difficult” (Interview 2014). Likewise, one black South African professor asserted that one reason black academics leave “culturally white institutions” is because “the culture of the institutions that have been shaped by colonialism and Apartheid system is by very nature exclusionary; the culture where black people generally feel unwelcome. Thus, the loyalty and buy-in tend to be low on the side of black academics” (Number 32).

Students also widely noted that in order to be successful at UCT one has to meet certain standards but they are standards defined by white people in a culturally white institution. That is, not only must they cross-spatial boundaries, they must also learn to navigate and negotiate different social and cultural norms and practices. But maintaining the self-esteem required to excel in a space defined with white culture has been a challenge for many students: “At first UCT environment was intimidating because I did not know how to behave... You can come with your own culture from your background, but once you get here it is like a different culture you adapt to; it is just a different culture UCT carries in its own way... but then as I met people who came from the same background as me, they like boosted my confidence again” (Number 47).

Moreover, actual teaching practice in classroom setting and educators’ approaches to inclusion may be alienating as well: “You know I had a student here last week, who is doing civil engineering and drawing is a big component of civil engineering but he talks about how professors assume that they have all been exposed to drawings before. They have not. So lecturers just assume a lot of things and that is one of the biggest threats for students’ success...” said Ferial Parker, the 100UP Programme Project Manager (Interview 2014). One student voiced his frustration about these predetermined assumptions regarding students’ knowledge and abilities:

“I do Information Systems but I have never been exposed to computers before. I did not live my life using laptops or computers as I am expected to do now... And a lot of things when you get here, they take for granted... For example when they give us assignments, for some of us all they have to do is to go research for them. For me, I first have to learn how to use Words; I first have to learn line spacing... So, it takes much longer for me to figure it out” (Number 98).

Acclimatising to a new institutional environment poses challenges to academics as well. Specifically, facilitating learning in such a diverse student body, containing such a wide range of abilities, often proves difficult: "... you are confronted with a big class, at one end of which there is a well-educated cohort that frankly are going to be bored by whatever you are going to expose them to, and at the other end a group who are really struggling to follow what you are saying... you are trying to teach in such a way that you do not lose either group" (Number 36). Alternatively, some lecturers make a conscious effort to correct the imbalances in their own subjective justice mechanism: "As I am marking the exams, I have to consciously try and understand if this person is really not good at the subject matter, or he is just not good at communicating what they know. I need to be able to find a way to work around that, and it is a very subjective decision; it is not an easy one" (Number 113).

In the class context, however, certain actions may trigger feelings of inherent inferiority among black students whose racial group had been oppressed in the past. A final year female student expressed acute awareness of the effect of her racial identity on attitudes of white tutors:

"Last year I did a politics course and I had a white tutor and it was not just me actually a lot of black students in the class felt that she was discriminating against us, in terms of the way she graded us, if we asked for help she would not really help us that much she would maybe say one thing and would not really help, whereas with the white students in the class they always got better marks than us, they always got a lot more attention, the tutor was always willing to stay and help them until they understood and they solved their problem, and again it is something that we could not prove it, there was nothing we could do but literally all the black students in that group felt the exact same way and I do not know sometimes you do

not want to seem like you are seeing too much into something or you are reading too much into that is not there, but there is a feeling sometimes; you just have that feeling...” (Number 79).

Despite general insecurity for the reasons discussed in this section, students generally expressed a strong sense of themselves as individuals, with the potential to rise above their circumstances: “When I came to varsity, I got that mentality that “you know what, we can still do good for ourselves even though we have limited resources” (Number 107). Even though they struggled at the beginning, almost all respondents maintained the conviction that they had made the right decision in coming to UCT. Some of the students identified UCT as the place where they had learned to dream and aspire to greater opportunities (Number 100).

High-hopes of social mobility associated with studying at UCT can further explain black students’ elevated aspirations and expectations despite lower performance levels. Sean Abrahams – Senior Coordinator at the Department of Student Affairs – noted, based on his survey findings, that UCT students generally hold high levels of hope for their own future but that this hope is not correlated with academic performance (Interview 2014). Students seemed to have the ability to dream of a better future regardless of their level of academic achievement at university. What has been done at the university level, then, to address the perceived ‘alienating’ and ‘intimidating’ institutional culture? What opportunities have been made available on campus for students’ successful career transition? Can black students fully utilise the perceived opportunities available to them?

8.2 Personal, Academic and Career Development

“Assimilation of students into university is something not to be taken for granted.

Crain Soudien, *Deputy Vice-Chancellor, UCT* (Interview 2014)

It is agreed by all actors, from students to administrators that universities as learning settings have to think constantly about how to accommodate and work with people from a wide variety of racial, socio-economical and cultural backgrounds. Yet UCT administration sometimes differs in its beliefs and attitudes and further in how it perceives the level of transformation. Crain Soudien – Deputy Vice-Chancellor on Transformation and Social Responsiveness – asserted that “the UCT environment can only get better from now on. As faculty level interventions begin to bear fruit, we are seeing more black students emerging and competing at the very top level of the classes and it is changing fast” (Interview 2014). On the other hand, Ian Scott – the former Director of the Academic Development Programme at UCT and Professor at the CHED – highlighted the persistence of deep, systemic problems in South Africa’s higher education system: “after all this time higher education still has not come to terms with the realities of this country due to sustained inequalities within the system” (Interview 2014).

The CHED was established in 1999 in order to address all matters concerning the quality of education across faculty boundaries: widening access, promoting equity, developing curricula and enhancing the competence of graduates. Under this new academic organisational unit, UCT mainly aims to change the institutional climate in departments’ ‘micro-environments’. The EDU, established at the FoC, aimed to mitigate gaps and disparities, in both education and life experiences between black³⁴ and white students, through a variety of supports from mentorships, language assistance, talks and

³⁴ Here, black is used in a broad sense, i.e. African, Chinese, Coloured and Indian South African.

quantitative skills development to workshops and regular performance monitoring. In this way, black students from the townships, rural areas or distant suburbs have been given the option to complete their degrees over a three or four year period with extended social, academic and career support (Munene Interview 2014).

Most interviewees attested to the highly constructive role EDU plays in easing the transition process from high school to university, as well as in creating a familial environment, a home away from home. Reduced academic pressure, close relationships with lecturers, time-flexibility provided by the extended course of studies and slower teaching pace were reported as reasons for enrolling in EDU over a mainstream programme. Students who study in regular programmes agreed that these programmes are quite challenging and that there is not much support available. Similarly, the career advisor, stressed the importance of the existence of such a program, in each faculty, to “jumping from high-school to diversity and pace of university (level of work and culture shock) is just very overwhelming for many students – especially those coming from rural areas – and many of them struggle” (Interview 2014).

Social, emotional and personal support provided by EDU (constituting 22 per cent of the responses) was cited by the respondents as the most positive element of the programme. Interviewees conveyed a sense that the personal attention they received under this programme made them feel valued and recognised, something that was really important to them in this environment (see Bangeni and Kapp 2005, for similar observations), as was expressed by a final year male student: “First I felt like I was being undermined, did not get to use my full potential. As time passed by I realised it is more like a family, they seemed interested in you, treated you as an individual rather than a number” (Number 106).

Alternatively, as was argued by Daniel Munene – EDU Programme Coordinator – this perception is mainly due to the mono-racial structure of the programme: “EDU creates a familial atmosphere where students can feel comfortable and identify with through forming close social networks” (Interview 2014). For example, EDU organises free or subsidised in-group events and activities, which contribute to a sense of shared identity among students, where “adjustment to institutional culture remains to be a personal choice and students have freedom to stick to their own cultures and identities” (Munene Interview 2014). That way, as Bangeni and Kapp (2005, 6) argue, “students can achieve proficiency in ‘Western’ knowledge while preserving a traditional Zulu, Xhosa or Sotho identity among others.”

Munene noted that sometimes other students’ stereotyped views about the academic capacity of those studying in EDU (because they are dominantly black, from disadvantaged backgrounds and enrolled in the same degree with lower grades than mainstream students) impact individual choices about whether to enrol in mainstream or EDU programme (Interview 2014). Secondly, reintegration back into the mainstream, after the first year of foundational preparation, often poses a challenge. A final year male student stated his disapproval of EDU as it allegedly entrenched self-segregation within the university: “The way it [EDU] is administered entrenches inferiority in students. When black students join the mainstream students in the second year, their levels of classroom participation, in terms of their willingness to express themselves, remains low compared to blacks who are in the mainstream programme from the beginning” (Number 89).

The perception of employers and students of the EDU programme, however, has been changing remarkably quickly: “Some of our corporate partners would say they have internships for which the first preference will be given to EDU students. Or some of our partners would say because of our career talks, classes and workshops, they are better

trained than others [students in mainstream programme] for work so career opportunities are a lot better for our students”, said Munene (Interview 2014). Similarly, the career advisor highlighted the importance of collaboration with various faculties in delivering customised talks and workshops, under the academic development programme, to students’ personal development. This teaches students “to reflect on their learning, and the opportunities available to them and to take responsibility for their own career journeys” (Van Der Merwe Interview 2014). “Such an early engagement with students results in more matured and sophisticated recognition of opportunities and potential pathways from university to work”, she added (*Ibid.*).

However, “the skill of articulating what they have to offer is often what is lacking in students, especially in those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which often goes hand in hand with self-confidence” (Van Der Merwe Interview 2014). To fill this confidence gap “students have to ask for help and that is often the problem – that students sometimes lack the maturity to recognise that they need help” – said Van Der Merwe (Interview 2014). Parker, from DHET, similarly noted: “students often do not ask for help because they do not know if they can... Nobody tells them [that they can]” (Interview 2014). Therefore black students’ perceived incompetence, combined with limited institutional support, results in a pessimistic future outlook: “UCT is a place where a lot of dreams are made. A lot of dreams... A lot of dreams die here and a lot of dreams are born here and, it is said, really you know some make it and some [do not]” (Number 10).

Drawing on these observations, in order to better delineate the effect of counselling and exposure to career opportunities on black students’ career choices, I gauged the degree to which university learners received appropriate career guidance, including information on internship and work placement opportunities. Four-fifths of the students reported having received career guidance from the university at some point. Although there is not

much difference between first to final year students on whether or nor they had received prior career counselling, EDU programme students were much more likely to have received such counselling when compared to their mainstream counterparts. According to respondents, the EDU has been running aptitude tests and organising career talks, provided by companies and career advisors, for first year students with a mandatory attendance requirement. Those who did not utilise career services simply had no need for them due to their access to social networks, such as scholarship/bursary networks or networks from high schools. My data also show that career expos on campus, personal discussions with career counsellors and talks by private companies on campus are the most common forms of job search method utilised by respondents, 27%, 23% and 20% respectively. But, overall, respondents' uptake of these opportunities was low (See **Table 6**).

Table 6. Specific Items of Career Guidance Most Often Utilised by Students

Type of Career Guidance Received	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Visits to career expos	20	26.67
Personal discussion with a career counsellor	17	22.67
Visits to talks by private companies	15	20.00
Information for further studies	6	8.00
Informative lectures by career service	5	6.67
Work experience with companies	5	6.67
Aptitude tests	3	4.00
Personal discussion with a lecturer	3	4.00
Other	1	1.33
Total	75	100%

Source: Own calculations.

Note: Figures must be read as number of responses, not number of respondents, as some people chose more than one category.

The value of work experience for young people is undisputed. In particular, a “work placement can further students’ confidence and aspiration through first hand experience of the adult workplace” (Hatcher and Le Gallais 2008 cited in Francis and

Wong 2013, 24). But respondents with work experience via internships only represented around 35 per cent of my sample. Interviewees in their final year who had no previous internship experience mainly explained that this was due to personal reasons such as having no interest in doing an internship or not feeling ready to apply for one. After personal reasons the second most common explanation among final year students with no internship experience was a lack of time and financial resources. Surprisingly, however, parents were not the main source of financial support during student internships. My data show that, of the respondents with previous internship experience, two-thirds had their internship financed by an employer. These figures could be a warning, signalling that UCT should consider interventions that improve the dissemination of information about paid internship opportunities for students. While UCT career services constituted students' main source of assistance in finding an internship, family and friend networks were the second most cited source. This again indicates the importance of social capital and thus reinforces the main point I have made in previous chapters regarding the utility of students' social networks to the job search.

Another possible reason for low internship take-up rates among black South African students is a need to work for money during university vacations. Three-quarters of interviewees had worked before or were currently holding a job (usually part-time tutoring work within the university). These student employment figures are higher than their internship take-up rate. Students who had held a job recently or who were currently working earned, on average, R467 per month. This figure represents a major contribution to their expenses as the monthly stipend they get from the NSFAS totals at only R100 per month, which is insufficient to meet expenses if they do not receive a prestigious scholarship or bursary. Indeed when students were asked if they have had any painful events or experiences during university, which might affect their studies, the most common

response (36 per cent of the responses) was financial stress. This was followed by family problems, constituting 21 per cent of the responses.

In order to get a better grasp of the channels through which their aspirations could be achieved, students were asked about their planned method of finding a job after they graduate. My survey data show (illustrated in **Table 7**) that the university's career office was, by far, students' principal job search technique (or the principal technique they planned to use in the future). This was followed by 'being asked to apply for a post' but this response was only common among students who were bound by funding agreements (i.e. a condition of their bursary being that they have to work for the funding organisation/business/institution upon graduation). Finding a job 'through help of a lecturer' is the least chosen response, which reflects the very low level of academic staff's involvement in students' university to labour market transitions. Professors, if students approach them and ask, occasionally talk to them about the next steps they could take. But over the years some academic staff have noticed that, even though support by professors is put in place, the take-up rate by students remains exceptionally low.

One explanation for low take-up is the slow pace of transformation in the racial composition of the academic body. Some students, primarily those who have had white teachers at primary and high school, are less affected by the racial demographics of the university's academic staff. On the other hand, and particularly for black students from rural areas or the townships, professors' white skin colour can be a barrier to class engagement and may make these students less likely to approach their professor for any kind of inquiry. In interactions with professors, it therefore still seems difficult for students to "step out of their skins" and cross social boundaries marked by race. As one student pointed out: "... most of our professors are white and sometimes approaching them just feels like, no, I cannot go... it is a white person. I feel like I am still below that person"

(Number 33). As a result of this barrier black students are often present in class but are seen and not heard (Number 112).

Given that professors only give advice to those who ask, some black students' relative low confidence affects the chances that they will ever ask a professor for such advice. There is an argument to be made here that these informal institutional structures (i.e. professors offering advice but only to those who approach them to ask) actually exacerbate inequalities in employment opportunities. Highlighting, then, the importance of formal institutional structures, where such advice is openly advertised to be available to all, to mitigating race-based inequality in access to important labour market information.

Table 7. Primary Job Search Method of Finding a Job

Primary Job Search Method	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Through university's career office	33	27.73
Through being asked to apply for a post	20	16.81
Through responding to a job in the printed media	16	13.45
Through sending CV or asking for a job	14	11.76
Through family or friends	12	10.08
Through a previously held holiday job or internship	8	6.72
Through one of the Department of Labour's Employment Centres	2	1.68
Through help of a lecturer	1	0.84
Through walking from door to door	1	0.84
Other	12	10.08
Total	119	100%

Source: Own calculations.

Note: Figures must be read as number of responses, as some people chose more than one category. The analysis is made by focusing on how many times each category was selected rather than how many respondents chose each category; the former is more accurate as it considers the relative importance of each method among other methods of finding a job.

It can be seen from the interviewees that shared experiences can make some lecturers more approachable than others. One white lecturer pointed out that students often see their lecturers as role models who “they can identify with, that they can look up to, that they think they can be like that person who can empathise with them” (Number 36). A black Tanzanian lecturer also argued in favour of this point:

“I always tell them [students] in class that I realise there are challenges, and there is potential. I struggled myself. I struggled with English, when I was in my undergrad. I was one of those who couldn’t write in proper English. I would fail, and I would wonder if I’m failing in English, or if I’m failing in information systems or computer science. When I tell that story to students they realise, “He’s actually like us. He also struggled. He also had these kinds of problems.” Then that opens up the door; they come and chat with me, and tell me, “I struggle with this; I struggle with that. Can you assist me with that?” (Number 98).

However, there are insufficient structures in place for lecturers to intervene and support students who are struggling or who need help with career decisions. Due to large class sizes, and the multiple tasks lecturers have to fulfil as part of their job, additional support is mainly provided outside of the classroom. This support takes the form of tutorials with senior students or guidance by mentors. In this sense UCT inadequately engages with struggling students in a way that will help them to catch up academically and set themselves up for jobs.

Despite issues regarding the availability and approachability of academic and support staff high expectations, as illustrated in the previous section, are still observed among students. This, however, may be the result of UCT’s strong reputation as an institution. Career centre staff claimed, based on their own experiences, that employers rate

UCT students higher than graduates from other national and regional universities (Van der Merwe Interview 2014). Almost all interviewees cited reputation, name and popularity as the principal reasons they chose UCT after being accepted at other universities. David Copper – Emeritus Associate Professor in the field of Higher Education at UCT – labelled this trend ‘reputation myth’ – people who study at UCT believe that they have much higher chances of getting a job (Interview 2014). None of the interviewees expected their friends who did not go to university to earn as much as they expected to earn themselves after graduation. Only 7 per cent felt they were unlikely to get a more well paying job than their friends attending other universities while more than half expected highly to earn more than these friends. Students’ high salary expectations were based on their perceived skillset and educational history rather than identity or background (See **Table 8**).

Table 8. Justification for the Expected Reasonable Salary

Justification for hoped-for salary	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Because of the skills required	37	40.22
Because of the job	18	19.57
Because of own educational history	30	32.61
Because of own identity and background	5	5.43
Other	2	2.17
Total	92	100 %

Source: Own calculations.

Note: Figures must be read as number of responses, as some people chose more than one category.

To better understand the trend in expectations, Professor Don Ross – Dean of the FoC – drew attention to the nature of the South African economy:

“South Africa has a highly sophisticated financial sector – to finance its incredibly capital-intensive mining and forestry industries – which is by far the biggest sector in the economy. So the large finance companies need very sophisticated accounting

systems. That need justifies the high demand for high numbers of accountants and the resources poured into the education of accountants in the form of bursaries and explains the reason why the majority of black students are enrolled in a commerce programme” (Interview 2014).

This is also related to very low levels of optimism regarding continued economic progress, Ross argued: “Indeed the more educated a young South African is, particularly in business, the more clearly he/she will see that the economic policies of the government are basically dead-locked” (Interview 2014). Also, the majority of interviewees felt that the job search may get more difficult and competition tougher, which naturally militates against risk taking or intellectual adventurousness.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that black students’ low-level of affiliation, or sense of belonging, to the ‘white’, ‘elitist’ institutional culture of the university was often cloaked by the high reputation of the institution. That is, students’ job market expectations seem to be intrinsically linked, both to their emotional reactions to the institutional ‘habitus’ of UCT, and to their expectation of success due to UCT’s good reputation. Despite changes in students’ identities and fluctuating self-confidence, high hopes for the future were also sustained by the high chances of employability in their field of study due to high and consistent demand for commerce graduates in the labour market. Although the university provided high quality academic structures and career guidance, the take-up rate among black students remained low. UCT therefore has a long way to go in terms of critically engaging with the effect of institutional ‘habitus’ on students’ socio-psychological adjustment, and personal and career development.

9. Conclusion

At the University of Cape Town, although all respondents perceived education as a great social leveller, “education as experience” was experienced differentially by people from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, which resulted in different mobility expectations. I demonstrated how black students must navigate their multiple identities in a ‘white’, ‘elitist’ university. I also presented the ways in which these identities were challenged or rewarded by peer groups and the university’s socio-cultural realm. The idea that education is not simply one abstract force mediating the effect of family background on occupation destinations, as perceived by students, is central to the argument of this thesis. I argue that the social mobility literature must incorporate social and institutional processes at the tertiary level into its analysis of intergenerational mobility. Without a detailed consideration of how students interact with the socio-cultural climate of the university the vast majority of the scholarship will not understand the contested processes of ‘education as experience’.

My case study, in a historically white South African university – UCT – revealed important insights into the role of third-level educational institutions, their socio-cultural and material structures, in enabling young black people to make successful employment transitions. My case further demonstrated how common family background indicators used in intergenerational mobility studies, such as parents’ education, occupation and earnings, cloak the importance of subtler, less quantifiable background indicators, such as family’s cultural and social capital, on mobility expectations. In order to untangle the effects of family background and learning setting on students’ perceptions of mobility, an interactive model was derived from a review of the existing literature. How do these, and other findings regarding the association between university experience and future job

expectations, be situated within the wider debate on the effect of education on social mobility?

As previously discussed, one major point of disagreement in the social mobility literature regards whether education acts as a social leveller or if it reproduces inequality. Sen, on the one hand, has emphasized the role of ‘education as transformation’ in expanding human capabilities. Bourdieu and other structuralist sociologists have argued, however, that cultural and material background constraints are reproduced in the institutions of higher education, determining the chances of young people’s social mobility prospects. In relation to the theoretical debate, the empirical literature has mainly highlighted the persistent effect of socio-economic background on mobility patterns and mobility expectations. More specifically, as argued by Appadurai (2004), although aspirations are evenly held across social groups, the capacity to realise them are principally enjoyed by more privileged groups in society.

The empirical evidence drawn from my case study affirms that hard work and education are perceived by students as the principal determinants of upward social mobility, despite a perceived strong relationship between race and class. Nevertheless, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds lack information about potential pathways from university to gainful employment, their initial future expectations and their perceived ability to realise them are highly elevated compared to their wealthier counterparts. This observation provides support for Appadurai’s argument that students located in less powerful social positions are often unaware of the relationships that exist between “specific goods and outcomes, often material and proximate” and the “pathways through which bundles of goods and services are actually tied to wider social scenes and contexts” (Appadurai 2004, 68). Evidence shows that, once low-income students progress at UCT,

their expectations get lower and disconnect from families' material capital but families' cultural and social capital plays a more important role in their 'capacity to aspire.'

Evidence regarding the significance of families' social capital on mobility expectations raises a question regarding the role of university experience in bridging information and support gaps between black students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The benefits of social capital are undisputed and respondents in my study firmly believed that the friendship networks they form at UCT would help them achieve long-term goals. Campus life offers students the opportunity to meet and to get to know people different from themselves. Yet, with time, black students realise they are not as academically and/or socio-psychologically prepared as other students, particularly their white peers, to cope with the requirements of an elite institution such as UCT. Poor academic performance, discussed in the 'stereotype threat' literature, leads some black students to develop a negative perception of themselves, which acts as a barrier to fully utilising all available social, academic and cultural resources on campus. In this sense, multiple dimensions of identity – race, ethnicity and social class –intersect and shape the nature of both social networks and the university experience. Consequently, the heterogeneous friendship circles with appropriable social and economic resources remain accessible only to those who already in possession of these resources, adding to the compartmentalised nature of university.

Although economists and anthropologists have suggested that individuals with stigmatised identities apply less effort in their studies, as they expect the reward system to be biased against them due to the lessons of history (Hoff and Pandey 2011; Loury 2002), perceptions of black UCT students do not support this claim. The perceived 'whiteness' of the job market is generally acknowledged and discussed widely among black students but rather than disheartening them, thanks to affirmative actions policies such as B-BBEE, it

further motivates them to work harder and prove that they are just as good as others. Readjustments in job market aspirations are therefore mainly due to lowered self-confidence rather than just lowered expectations.

Furthermore, the UCT case sheds light on the fact that another set of challenges facing black South African students relate to characteristics of the educational institution itself. Entering into public spaces from which all non-white people were once banned can make black people conscious of their cultural distinctiveness. My evidence shows that the 'white', 'elitist' institutional 'habitus' of UCT can be quite 'intimidating' and 'alienating' for black students, that it breeds low self-confidence and insecurity. The career advisory team offers a series of workshops and career consulting services to mitigate the effect of this confidence deficit on black students' ability to launch successful careers. It appears in this study, however, that students mainly receive career guidance when it is provided in the form of mandatory courses or workshops. When up-take of such services is voluntary participation rates remain very low. Despite fluctuating self-confidence and alienation experienced within such a culturally white institution, students hold high expectations because of UCT's strong reputation and high demand for commerce graduates in the labour market. The nature of students' university experience is therefore more complex than simple alienation from, or uncritical assimilation to the institutional 'habitus.'

Three areas of further study could provide valuable insights into the political economy of education at the micro-level. First, developing an understanding of how personal characteristics of students can influence mobility expectations can be useful in order to avoid overestimating the impact of higher education on expectations. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) show that individual ambition and high levels of commitment to general career goals might even neutralize the impact of institutional quality on earnings. A larger and more representative sample would help describe more general trends in black

students' educational experiences. Second, although beyond the scope of this thesis, a longitudinal case study where it is possible to track students' "felt" experiences over time as they pursue their undergraduate degrees, would certainly provide a better opportunity to trace shifts in perceptions. In addition, in this study, I did not address the extent to which students' major field of study affected their job prospects. Rather, I examined how fields of study impacted students' expectations. Further research should therefore aim to tease out faculty effects on expectations by analysing the "habitus" of at least two completely independent faculties.

Overall, by telling the story of black South African students in one 'white', 'elite' university in Cape Town (UCT), this thesis has begun to open the almighty 'black box' of mechanisms that link tertiary education with future job prospects. Both the 'capability approach' and 'reproduction theory' fail to recognise the ways in which different individuals and social groups experience the education system. I have shown that education can be both "the main vehicle for intergenerational reproduction and the main avenue for mobility" (Hout and DiPrete 2006). But which of these roles education adopts depends on how the educational institutions are structured and how students, with diverse identities and family backgrounds, navigate and negotiate social and cultural norms and practices. This thesis has therefore addressed a gap in the existing literature by presenting an argument for "education as experience", in relation to labour market expectations. "Education as experience", therefore, is an important explanatory factor underlying the processes behind both the educational attainment and the politics of education within universities' micro-environments.

Bibliography

A. Primary Sources

Interviews with Students and Academics

The interviews with students and academic staff are assigned a number according to the order of interviews in the records. Thus, the record numbers only represent the order of interviews but not the number of the respondents. ‘Record numbers’ were used to identify each student or academic throughout this paper.

*Student Interviews and Surveys*³⁵

Number of the interview	Sex	Year at University	Date of the Interview	Record Number ³⁶
1	F	Final	9 th August 2014	10
2	M	First	12 th August 2014	19
3	M	First	12 th August 2014	21
4	M	First	12 th August 2014	22
5	M	First	22 nd August 2014	25
6	M	First	24 th August 2014	28
7	M	First	24 th August 2014	29
8	M	Final	26 th August 2014	31
9	M	First	27 th August 2014	33
10	F	Final	27 th August 2014	34
11	M	Final	28 th August 2014	37
12	F	First	28 th August 2014	38
13	F	Final	28 th August 2014	42
14	M	First	29 th August 2014	43
15	M	First	29 th August 2014	44
16	M	First	29 th August 2014	45
17	M	Final	30 th August 2014	46
18	F	Final	31 st August 2014	47
19	M	First	1 st September 2014	49
20	M	First	5 th September 2014	65

³⁵ I conducted both the interview and survey with 43 black South African students.

³⁶ Although audio-records are arranged in ascending order, there are missing numbers in between some interviews, signifying that those numbers pertain to audio-records of non-student interviews or conversations.

21	M	First	5 th September 2014	69
22	F	First	7 th September 2014	70
23	M	First	8 th September 2014	74
24	F	First	8 th September 2014	76
25	F	Final	9 th September 2014	79
26	F	First	11 th September 2014	81
27	F	Final	11 th September 2014	83
28	F	First	11 th September 2014	84
29	M	First	14 th September 2014	88
30	M	Final	14 th September 2014	89
31	F	Final	14 th September 2014	91
32	F	First	15 th September 2014	93
33	M	Final	15 th September 2014	94
34	F	First	16 th September 2014	98
35	M	Final	17 th September 2014	100
36	M	Final	17 th September 2014	102
37	M	Final	18 th September 2014	103
38	M	Final	19 th September 2014	106
39	F	Final	21 st September 2014	107
40	M	Final	22 nd September 2014	108
41	F	Final	22 nd September 2014	109
42	F	Final	23 rd September 2014	112
43	M	First	25 th September 2014	115

Student Interviews Only³⁷

Number of the interview	Sex	Population Group	Year at University	Date of the Interview	Record Number
1	F	Coloured SA	First	1 st August 2014	6
2	F	Coloured SA	Final	11 th August 2014	14
3	M	Black Zambian	Final	12 th September 2014	85
4	F	White SA	Final	16 th September 2014	96
5	M	White SA	Final	19 th September 2014	105
6	M	White SA	Final	23 rd September 2014	110
7	F	White SA	Final	25 th September 2014	114
8	M	Black SA	Final	25 th September 2014	116

³⁷ With some students I only conducted semi-structured interviews and so they were not given the questionnaire. In order to have an understanding of the experiences of other population groups on campus, a small sample of non-black students were interviewed.

*Interviews with Academics*³⁸

Number of the interview	Population Group	Department of Affiliation	Date of the Interview	Record Number
1	Black SA	Centre for Film and Media Studies	26 th August 2014	32
2	White SA	Department of Actuarial Science	28 th August 2014	36
3	White SA	Department of Economics	28 th August 2014	41
4	Black SA	Department of Economics	29 th August 2014	51
5	Coloured SA	Department of Economics	23 rd September 2014	111
6	Black Tanzanian	Department of Information Systems	24 th September 2014	113

³⁸ Some semi-structured interviewees were conducted with the lecturers, who were all affiliated with the Faculty of Commerce, UCT, except one case, where the lecturer was part of the Centre for Film and Media Studies. Academics from various population groups were interviewed in order to represent a diverse range of views.

Elite Interviews³⁹

Cape Town

Lwazi Somya, Vice-President External, Student Representative Council, UCT (30th July 2014).

Nasima Badsha, Chief Executive Officer, Cape Higher Education Consortium (31st July 2014).

Glenda Wildschut, Director of the Transformation Services Office, UCT (1st August 2014).

Ian Scott*, Former Director of Academic Development Programme and Professor, Centre for Higher Education Development, UCT (1st August 2014).

Ferial Parker, 100UP Project Manager, UCT (1st August 2014).

Bongi Bangeni, Coordinator of the Language Development Group, UCT (7th August 2014).

Ingrid Van Der Merwe, Career Advisor, UCT (8th August 2014).

Kathy Erasmus, Co-ordinator of 100UP+ Project (8th August 2014).

Daniel Munene*, Commerce Education Development Unit Programme Co-ordinator, UCT (11th August 2014).

Crain Soudien, Deputy Vice-Chancellor on Transformation and Social Responsiveness, UCT (26th August 2014).

Jean Luyt, Psychological Counsellor, Faculty of Commerce, UCT (28th August 2014).

Sean Abrahams, Senior Co-ordinator at the Department of Student Affairs, UCT (1st September 2014).

Jessica Breakey, Chair of Transformation and Social Responsiveness, UCT (8th September 2014).

Don Ross, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce (9th September 2014).

Terri Grant, Professional Communication Unit (10th September 2014).

Pretoria

Jeffrey Mabelebele, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Higher Education South Africa (2nd September 2014).

³⁹ I have categorized these interviews by location, and then provided information on the name of the organisation with which each respondent is affiliated and the position they hold in the organisation, and the date of the interview. A * stands for a second interview with the same individual.

Genevieve Lynette Simpson*, Research Manager, Council on Higher Education, South Africa (3rd September 2014).

Diane Parker, Acting Deputy Director General: Universities, Department of Higher Education and Training, Republic of South Africa (4th September 2014).

Mahlubi Mabizela, Chief Director of University Education Policy, Department of Higher Education and Training (4th September 2014).

Tendani Ramulongo, Executive Manager: Research Policy, Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa (4th September 2014).

Conversations⁴⁰

Jeremy Seekings, Director of Centre for Social Science Research and Professor of Political Studies and Sociology, UCT (4th August 2014).

David Cooper, Emeritus Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, UCT (11th August 2014).

⁴⁰ ‘Conversations’ indicate those people I spoke to during the fieldwork who provided useful information for identifying the subjects of the study and data collection. They were not considered as formal interviews, and so were not recorded.

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Appendix 1

Equity Indices (EIs) for South African Student Enrolment and Graduation at South African Universities

Source: Govinder, Zondo and Makgoba (2013)

Institution	Enrolment EI	Rank	Graduation EI	Rank	Equity efficiency index
Central University of Technology	10.2	1	7.7	1	2.5
University of Johannesburg	10.6	2	21	5	-10.4
Tshwane University of Technology	13.9	3	12	2	1.9
Durban University of Technology	16	4	18.7	4	-2.7
Vaal University of Technology	19.1	5	17.8	3	1.3
University of Fort Hare	19.9	6	21.6	6	-1.7
University of South Africa	21.5	7	33.8	12	-12.3
University of Limpopo	22.1	8	23	7	-0.9
Mangosuthu University of Technology	24	9	24.1	8	-0.1
University of Venda	24.4	10	25.3	9	-0.9
Walter Sisulu University	24.5	11	25.6	10	-1.1
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	27.5	12	35.8	13	-8.3
University of Zululand	29.7	13	30.8	11	-1.1
University of the Free State	30.2	14	54.3	19	-24.1
University of KwaZulu-Natal	33.7	15	38.2	15	-4.5
North-West University	33.8	16	37.2	14	-3.4
University of the Witwatersrand	34.6	17	42.4	16	-7.8
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	40.5	18	47	17	-6.5
University of Pretoria	46.3	19	51.2	18	-4.9
Rhodes University	55	20	59.4	20	-4.4
University of the Western Cape	61.9	21	62.7	21	-0.8
University of Cape Town	63.4	22	74	22	-10.6
University of Stellenbosch	93.1	23	93.4	23	-0.3

Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is composed of sub-sections with questions about personal characteristics, previous schooling, family background, household characteristics, social involvement, social networks and connection with peers on campus, and job research and prospects in the future.

Most of these questions are adapted from the 2002-2006 Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS) questionnaire.

A. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Sex of the respondent:	1. Male 2. Female
Name of the program enrolled:	
What year did you start this program?	
What year are you at university?	1. First 2. Final
Are you the first in the household you grew up to attend university?	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know
What is your date of birth?	/ /
Where were you born?	1. Cape Town 2. Outside Cape Town, Western Cape 3. Eastern Cape
	4. Northern Cape 5. Free State 6. KwaZulu-Natal
	7. North West 8. Gauteng 9. Mpumalanga
	10. Northern Province 11. Outside South Africa 12. Don't know
In what type of place did you spend most of your life before coming to university?	1. Urban area, formal housing 2. Urban area, informal or squatter settlement 3. Commercial farm
	4. Rural area under the authority of a

	chief 5. Other rural 6. Township 7. Other (specify):
Do you still live in the same house that you did before coming to university?	1. Yes 2. No
IF NO , where do you live now?	1. University Residence 2. Private Accommodation 3. Other (specify):
Who do you live with?	1. Family 2. Friends 3. Alone 4. Other (specify):
What is your population group?	1. Black African 2. Coloured 3. Indian
	4. White 5. Other 6. Don't know
What is the language that you speak most often at home?	1. English 2. Xhosa 3. Afrikaans
	4. Sotho 5. Zulu 6. Tswana
	7. Other (specify):
What is your religion?	1. Christian 2. Jewish 3. Muslim 4. Zionist 5. None 6. Other 7. Don't know

B. SCHOOLING

What type of primary school did you attend?	1. Government Primary School 2. Semi-Private Primary School 3. Private Primary School 4. Home Schooling 5. Other (specify):
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Name of the primary school:	
What is the location of the school?	
Was it a historically white school?	1. Yes 2. No
We know that there are sometimes problems in schools. Think now about your primary school you attended. What were the five biggest problems at your primary school?	1. Not enough textbooks 2. Dirty classrooms 3. Crowded classrooms 4. Teachers often absent from class 5. Teachers drunk 6. Teachers being threatened by students 7. Noisy classrooms 8. Drug dealing 9. School environment unsafe 10. Sexual harassment by students 11. Sexual harassment by teacher/staff 12. Bullying by students 13. Violent teachers 14. None of the above 15. Other (specify):
Now, think about the positive aspects of your primary school you attended. What were the three best things about your primary school?	1. 2. 3.
Overall, during your primary schooling, what type of student do you think you were?	1. Toward the bottom of the class 2. Below average 3. Average 4. Toward the top of the class 5. Don't know
What type of secondary school did you attend?	1. Government Secondary School 2. Semi-Private Secondary School 3. Private Secondary School 4. Home Schooling 5. Other College 6. Other (specify):
Name of the secondary school:	
What is the location of the school?	
Was it a historically white school?	1. Yes 2. No
We know that there are sometimes problems in schools. Think now about your secondary school you attended. What were the five biggest problems at your secondary school?	1. Not enough textbooks 2. Dirty classrooms 3. Crowded classrooms 4. Teachers often absent from class

	5. Teachers drunk 6. Teachers being threatened by students 7. Noisy classrooms 8. Drug dealing 9. School environment unsafe 10. Sexual harassment by students 11. Sexual harassment by teacher/staff 12. Bullying by students 13. Violent teachers 14. None of the above
Now, think about the positive aspects of your secondary school you attended. What were the three best things about your secondary school?	1. 2. 3.
Overall, during your secondary schooling, what type of student do you think you were?	1. Toward the bottom of the class 2. Below average 3. Average
	4. Toward the top of the class 5. Don't know
Have you taken an entrance exam for UCT?	1. Yes (please specify): 2. No 3. Don't know
What was your overall matric exam score?	
What are the other universities and programs you have applied?	
Why did not you go to that university or program?	
How often do you come to class without your assignments done; in other words with no preparation?	1. Always 2. Usually 3. Often 4. Seldom 5. Never 6. Don't know 7. Do not receive homework
How often do you come to school late?	1. Always 2. Usually 3. Often 4. Seldom 5. Never 6. Don't know
In a typical week during the school term, how much time do you spend on homework?	1. Hours in a typical week during term: 2. Did not receive homework

	3. Do not know
What is the estimated average of your completed course marks?	
Are you satisfied with your academic performance so far? Why and why not?	
Have there been any painful events or experiences this past year, which may have affected you negatively at university?	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know
If YES, which one?	1. Death of parent(s), family members or friends 2. Illness of parent(s), family members or friends 3. Breakups of relationships 4. Discord or conflict in relationships 5. Family problems 6. Financial stresses 7. Other (specify):
As it stands now, how much education do you think you will complete?	1. Undergraduate Diploma 2. Postgraduate degree or Diploma 3. Other (specify): 4. Don't know
How old do you think will you be when you get your undergraduate degree?	1. YEARS: 2. Don't know
How old do you think will you be when you finish all of your education?	1. YEARS: 2. Don't know
How do you usually get to school in the morning?	1. Bus 2. Taxi 3. Train 4. Bicycle 5. Car/Motorcycle 6. Walk 7. School owned shuttle 8. Other (specify):
How much time does it usually take you to get to school in the morning? (One direction only. Not round trip)	
Are you in EDU program?	1. Yes 2. No
If YES, how do you feel about being in EDU	

as opposed to mainstream? If NO, how do you feel about being in mainstream as opposed to EDU?	
What are the 3 universities the people from your neighbourhood mostly go to?	1. Pretoria 2. Cape Town 3. Kwazulu-Natal 4. Stellenbosch 5. Witwatersrand
	6. North West 7. Johannesburg 8. South Africa 9. Free State 10. Nelson Mandela 11. Western Cape 12. Rhodes
	13. Limpopo 14. Cape Peninsula UT 15. Tshwane UT 16. Zululand 17. Forth Hare 18. Central UT 19. Durban UT 20. Vaal UT 21. Venda 22. Walter Sisulu 23. Mangosuthu UT
What are the 3 universities the people from your high school mostly go to?	1. Pretoria 2. Cape Town 3. Kwazulu-Natal 4. Stellenbosch 5. Witwatersrand
	6. North West 7. Johannesburg 8. South Africa 9. Free State 10. Nelson Mandela 11. Western Cape 12. Rhodes
	13. Limpopo 14. Cape Peninsula UT 15. Tshwane UT 16. Zululand 17. Forth Hare

	18. Central UT 19. Durban UT 20. Vaal UT 21. Venda 22. Walter Sisulu 23. Mangosuthu UT
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Now I will ask you some questions about household members you have lived with during your life. By “live with” I mean living with them for 6 months or more.											
List the persons that correspond to the aforementioned criteria. Indicate the relationship with the respondent. (ex. biological mom, step dad, etc.)	What age did you first start living with this parent(s) for 6 months or more?	At what age did you stop living with this parent(s) for 6 months or more?	What is the highest level of education that this parent(s) completed?	What kind of work did this parent(s) do as a job most of the time you were growing up?	Who was the main person who helped you with your homework?	Who was the main person who attended teacher/parent conferences at school?	Is this parent(s) still alive today?	What kind of work does this parent(s) do in their current job?	What is the average monthly income of this parent(s) now?	Where does this parent(s) currently live?	Who is financially supporting you now?

	When you were growing up, who was the most important influence on how well you performed in school?	When you were growing up who gave the most encouragement towards achieving your personal goals?	When you were growing up who has been primary means of financial support for you?	When you were growing up who has been primary means of social and emotional support for you?	Who has been the main person who has encouraged your attendance to a university?	Who has provided you the main guidance you needed in your application to university?	When you were growing up who has been the most important influence on the job you see yourself doing at the age of 30?	Who do you think can help you or already helping you to find a job after graduation?
Biological Mother								
Biological father								
Sister(s)								
Brother(s)								
Grandmother(s)								
Grandfather(s)								
Aunt(s)								
Uncle(s)								
Step mother								
Step father								
Teacher								
Other family member(s)								
Friend(s)								
Church or religious leader								
Other unrelated individual								
No one								

C. FAMILY BACKGROUND

Were your biological parents ever married to each other?	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know			
Excluding yourself , how many brothers and sisters do you have that have both the same biological mother and the same biological father as you?	Brother(s): Sister(s): None			
If your biological mother/father/sister/brother was/is not a member of the household in which you grew up, please fill in the following section.				
	BIOLOGICAL MOTHER	BIOLOGICAL FATHER	SISTER	BROTHER
What is the highest level of education that this parent completed?				
Is this parent alive?	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
If NO, how old were you, or in what year was it, when he/she passed away?	1. AGE: 2. YEAR: 3. Don't know	1. AGE: 2. YEAR: 3. Don't know	1. AGE: 2. YEAR: 3. Don't know	1. AGE: 2. YEAR: 3. Don't know
If alive, where does this parent currently live?				
What kind of work does he/she do in his/her current job?				
Have the person who raised you up received a maintenance grant from the government?	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know			
	If YES, what type of grant?			
Have you received any grant/support	1. Yes 2. No			

from the government or other person/institution?	If YES , from where/whom?
If NO , how do you financially support yourself now?	
In the current school year did you contribute money that you earned yourself to your school fees/expenses?	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know
Approximately how much money do you receive per month?	
Is it enough for you expenses or do you have additional financial support?	

D. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

a. Now, we will talk about the characteristics of household where your parent(s) (you have lived with during your childhood) lives now.

What is the main material used for the walls of the residence?	1. Traditional materials (mud, brick, duka) 2. Temporary shack (plastic, cardboard, plywood) 3. Permanent shack (corrugated iron, mixed brick) 4. Permanent building (brick, block) 5. Other (specify):
How many rooms are there in this residence? Include bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens, lounges, dining rooms as well as backyard shacks if they are part of the household. Exclude bathrooms, toilets and passages.	In number: -----Rooms
Does the family own or rent this residence?	1. Own 2. Rent 3. Other 4. Don't know

Who specifically owns the residence?	
Did anyone borrow money to buy or build this residence (this includes bank loans)?	1. Yes 2. No
	If YES , from where/whom?
Is the debt still being repaid?	
Did anyone receive a government subsidy to buy the land or build this residence?	
What is the most often used source of drinking water in this residence?	1. Piped- Internal 2. Piped- Yard tap 3. Water- Career/tanker 4. Piped- Public Tap/Kiosk (free) 5. Piped- Public Tap/ Kiosk (paid for) 6. Borehole 7. Rainwater Tank 8. Flowing water/ stream 9. Dam/ stagnant water 10. Well (non-borehole) 11. Protected spring 12. Other (specify):
What kind of toilets does this residence have?	1. Flush toilet 2. Improved pit latrine with ventilation (VIP) 3. Other pit latrine 4. Bucket toilet 5. Chemical toilet 6. None
Is this residence connected to an electricity supply?	1. Yes 2. No
Is this residence connected to internet?	1. Yes 2. No
Does anyone buy paraffin for lighting, heating or cooking in this residence?	1. Yes 2. No

b. I would now like to ask you some questions about the things household members own. Some of these things may not apply to you, but I need to ask these questions to all people whom I interview.

		YES	If YES, how many?	NO
Radio, stereo or cassette recorder				
Television	Widescreen			
If so, what kind?	Older model			
Video, VCR				
DVD player				
Telephone (not cellular)				
Cellular phone	Smartphone			
	Older model			

Refrigerator/freezer			
Gas stove			
Electric stove			
Microwave			
Washing machine			
Bicycle			
Motorcycle			
Car			
Computer			
Laptop			
More than 5 books			
Mattress			

E. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Now I would like to ask you some questions about the groups, clubs or teams to which you might belong (DO NOT count the same club in more than ONE CATEGORY). In your university, do you belong to...

		In a typical school week (including weekends), how many hours in total, do you spend on this particular activity?	What is your position/role/responsibility in this particular group?
A sports group or team? _____	1. Yes 2. No		
A study group? _____	1. Yes 2. No		
A religious group? _____	1. Yes 2. No		
A dancing, music or choir group? _____	1. Yes 2. No		
The youth league of any political parties? _____	1. Yes 2. No		
The Student Representative Council (SRC)? _____	1. Yes 2. No		
Any other student club or youth group NOT mentioned previously? _____	1. Yes 2. No		
If YES, can you please indicate what type of group it is? _____			

F. SOCIAL NETWORK

What is the main economic activity/ main industry/ business of your parent(s)'s place of work?						
Does your parent(s) have close relationships with other people working in the same business/ industry?				1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know		
What do you think are the chances that you will be working in the same industry/ business in which your parent(s) has also worked?				1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50		
				4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know 7. Already secured a job through family		
Would you want to continue your parent(s) job and work in the same industry?				1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know		
What do you think are the chances that you will be working for the very same employer for which your parent(s) has also worked?				1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50		
				4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know 7. Already secured a job through family		
Does your family have acquaintances or friends whom do you think can help you find a job?				1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know		
If YES, please answer the following questions	What is your family's relationship to that person?	What is the occupation of that person?	How frequently do your family/you contact with him/her?	How he/she will help you to find a job?	What is the population group of this person?	Where does he/she live?
Person 1						
Person 2						
Do you have any acquaintances or friends whom do you think can help you find a job?				1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know		

If YES, please answer the following questions	What is your relationship to that person?	What is the occupation of that person?	How frequently do you contact with him/her?	How he/she will help you to find a job?	What is the racial/ethnic group of this person?	Where does he/she live?
Person 1						
Person 2						

G. JOB SEARCH

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about your future achievement expectations.

Have you ever done any work/do you currently have a job or do anything for money?	1. Yes 2. No
If YES , what kind of work did/do you do in your current or most recent job or business?	
What is/was the main business of your place of work?	
How long have you been working at your current job, business/ how long did you work at your most recent job or business?	
About how many hours do/did you work in a typical week?	
How much money do/did you earn from this work in a typical month?	
From this work, how much money are you able to take away and spend or save after paying expenses?	
Have you ever felt discriminated at work?	
If YES , according to you what are the cause(s) of this discrimination?	
We know that internships/vacation work can be very beneficial in developing of on-the-job-training and firm or sector specific human capital. Have you ever had access to (paid/unpaid) internship(s)?	1. Yes 2. No
If NO , why not?	
If YES , who did finance you during your internship?	

Who did become the main help for you to find your internship(s)?	
Have you received any form of career guidance, by university?	1. Yes 2. No 3. I am not sure
If YES , what type of career guidance you have received from university?	1. Aptitude tests 2. Personal discussions with a lecturer 3. Personal discussions with a career counsellor 4. Visits to career expos 5. Visits to or talks by private companies 6. Work experience with companies 7. Information of further studies 8. Other
If NO , what is the main reason for that?	
What could be your primary job search method of finding a job?	1. Through a previous holiday job or internship held 2. Through help of a lecturer 3. Through my university's career office 4. Through responding to a job in the printed media 5. Through sending my CV or asking for work 6. Through walking from door-to-door 7. Through one of the Department of Labour's employment centres 8. Through a recruitment agency 9. Through family or friends 10. Through being asked to apply for a post 11. Other (specify):
What do you think is a reasonable take-home monthly wage for a full-time job for a person of your age, with your education, and skills when you graduate?	
Why should that be an adequate salary?	1. Because of the skills required 2. Because of the job 3. Because of your educational history 4. Because of my identity and background 5. Other (specify):
What do you think are the chances that you will be working as soon as you finish the	1. Very low 2. Low

school?	3. About 50/50
	4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know
How long do you think you will be looking for a job before finding your first job after graduation?	1. 0-3 months 2. 3-6 months 3. 6 months-1 year 4. More than 1 year
What do you think are the chances that you will ever get a job that pays equal or higher than the aforementioned reasonable wage?	1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50
	4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know
What do you think are the chances that you will ever get a job you enjoy?	1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50
	4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know 7. Already secured a job that I enjoy
What do you think are the chances that you will get a job that pays more compared to your fellow friends from your neighbourhood who went to other universities?	1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50
	4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know
What do you think are the chances that your fellow friends from your neighbourhood who went to other universities will earn as much as you do at the age of 30?	1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50
	4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know
What do you think are the chances that you will get a job that pays more compared to your fellow friends from your neighbourhood who did not go to university?	1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50
	4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know
What do you think are the chances that your fellow friends from your neighbourhood who did not go to university will earn as much as you do at the age of 30?	1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50
	4. High

	5. Very high 6. Don't know
What is the absolute lowest monthly take-home wage that you would accept for any full-time work?	
How strongly do you want to work as soon as you finish university?	1. Strongly want to work 2. Want to work 3. No preference
	4. Do not want to work 5. Strongly don't want to work 6. Don't know
How strongly do your parents or guardians expect you to find work as soon as you finish the school?	1. Strongly want me to work 2. Want me to work 3. No preference
	4. Do not want me to work 5. Strongly don't want me to work 6. Don't know
What kind of work as job do you think you will be doing at the age of 30?	
What do you think is realistic for you to get in the future as an occupation?	
What are the chances that you will be working as at the age of 30 (given the situation of South African society)?	1. Low 2. Very low 3. About 50/50
	4. High 5. Very High 6. Don't know
(If the probability is around or under the average), why do you think it would be hard for you to reach this objective?	
Where do you think you will be living three years from now/ after you graduate?	1. Cape Town 2. Johannesburg 3. Durban
	4. Western Cape outside of Cape Town 5. Eastern Cape 6. Some other part of South Africa
	7. An African country outside South Africa 8. Outside Africa 9. Don't know
What do you think are the chances that you will still be living in Cape Town three years from now/ after you graduate?	1. Very low 2. Low 3. About 50/50

	4. High 5. Very high 6. Don't know
--	--

H. CONNECTION WITH PEERS ON CAMPUS (In order to see if black students interact with other students regardless of race)

Now, I will read through some statements please tell me the number that represents how you feel for each statement (**1: strongly disagree; 7: strongly agree**)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel a sense of connection with other black students.							
I feel a sense of connection with white students.							
Other black students have important knowledge to share about their college experiences.							
White students have important knowledge to share about their college experiences.							
I speak openly with other black students about my experiences as a black college student.							
I speak openly with white students about my experiences as a black college student.							

I talk with my black friends about society's impact on educational equity and job opportunities for black individuals.							
I talk with my white friends about society's impact on educational equity and job opportunities for black individuals.							
Interactions with other black individuals from more disadvantaged/advantaged backgrounds are beneficial for future job opportunities.							
Interactions with white individuals from more advantaged backgrounds are beneficial for future job opportunities.							
I interact with other black individuals from more disadvantaged/advantaged backgrounds to inform them/to be informed about strategies to be							

better prepared for the job market							
I interact with white individuals from more advantaged backgrounds to be informed about strategies to be better prepared for the job market							

I. We know that family resources/connections or personal acquaintances affect access to good schools and jobs. Regarding to this, now, I would like to ask you some questions about the **3 closest people** to you outside of your close family.

	Sex	Age	Relationship to you	Population group of the person	Years of relationship	Schooling		Occupation	Married ?	Frequency of contact	Where does he/she live?
						Highest level attended	Highest grade in that level				
Person 1	F M								1.Yes 2. No 3. Don't know	1. Daily or almost daily 2. About once a week 3. Several times a month 4. Once a month 5. Every few months 6. Once or twice a year	
Person 2	F M								1.Yes 2. No 3. Don't know	1. Daily or almost daily 2. About once a week 3. Several times a month 4. Once a month 5. Every few	

										months 6. Once or twice a year	
Person 3	F M								1.Yes 2. No 3. Don't know	1. Daily or almost daily 2. About once a week 3. Several times a month 4. Once a month 5. Every few months 6. Once or twice a year	

STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Respondent Group: First and final year Black South African university students at the Faculty of Commerce, University of Cape Town (UCT)

Approach: Individual Interview after the Questionnaire

Obtained Informed Consent:

- Explanation of the study and the kinds of questions this will cover.
- Confidentiality and not sharing names
- How the information will be used
- Audio-recording or note-taking

1. DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

1. In order to facilitate discussion about the distribution of income in South African society, respondents will be given a copy of **Figure 1**, which was used in the 2005 Cape Areas Study, and read a version of the following:

These four pictures show different types of society. The first picture represents a society with a small elite of rich people at the top, a few people in the middle, and a large number of poor people at the bottom. The second picture represents a society that is like a pyramid, with a small elite at the top, more people in the middle, and a lot of poor people at the bottom. The third picture shows a society in which most people are in the middle. The fourth picture shows a society with lots of people at the top, some in the middle, and very few at the bottom.

Which of these pictures, in your view, describes South Africa today?

2. In order to further facilitate discussion about the distribution of income in South African society, respondents will be given a copy of **Figure 2** and read a version of the following:

This picture shows a society divided into ten income-bracket deciles. Individuals are sorted, from lowest to highest, according to income. Starting on the left hand side, the first decile represents the poorest 10 per cent of South African wage earners, that is, at the bottom of the income distribution. The next represents the second lowest 10 per cent of wage earners, and so on, until the wealthiest decile.

Within which decile, in your view, does your family fall? Where do you think you will fall 15-20 years from now?

Figure 1: Pictures depicting different models of the economic stratification of South African society

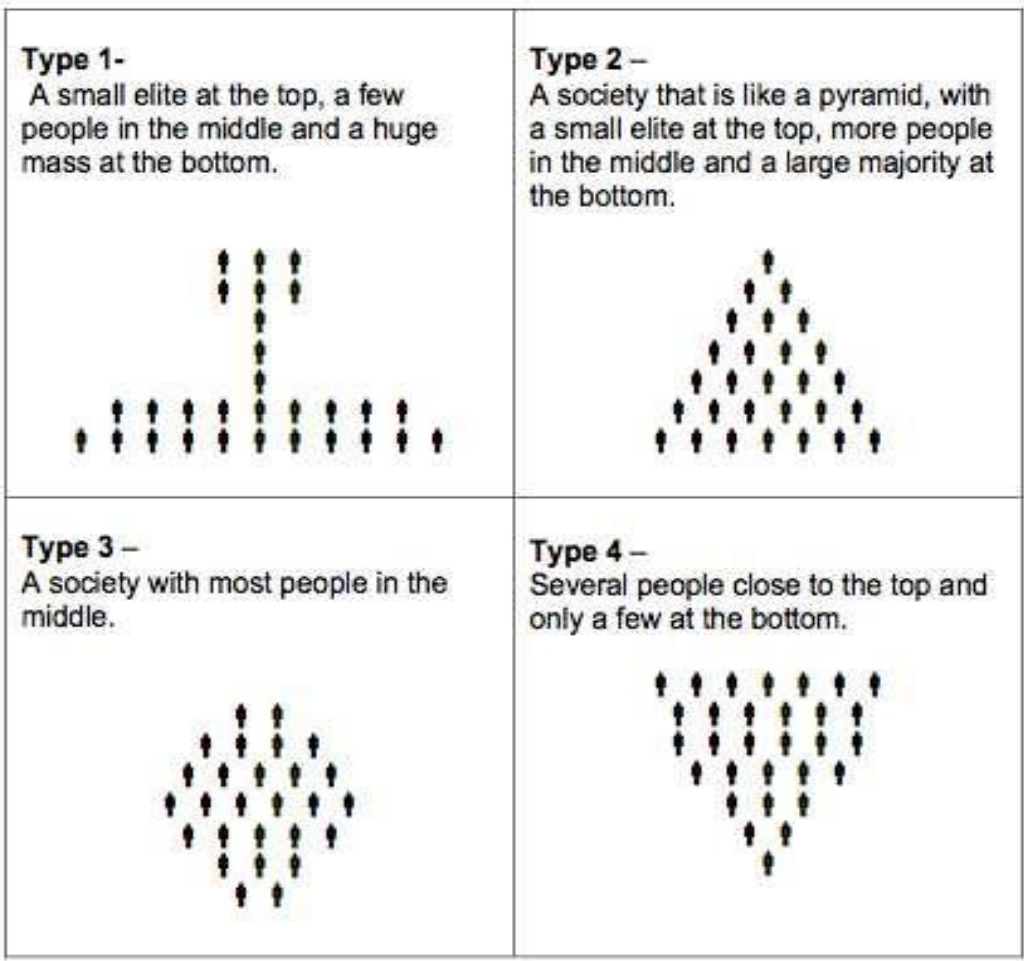
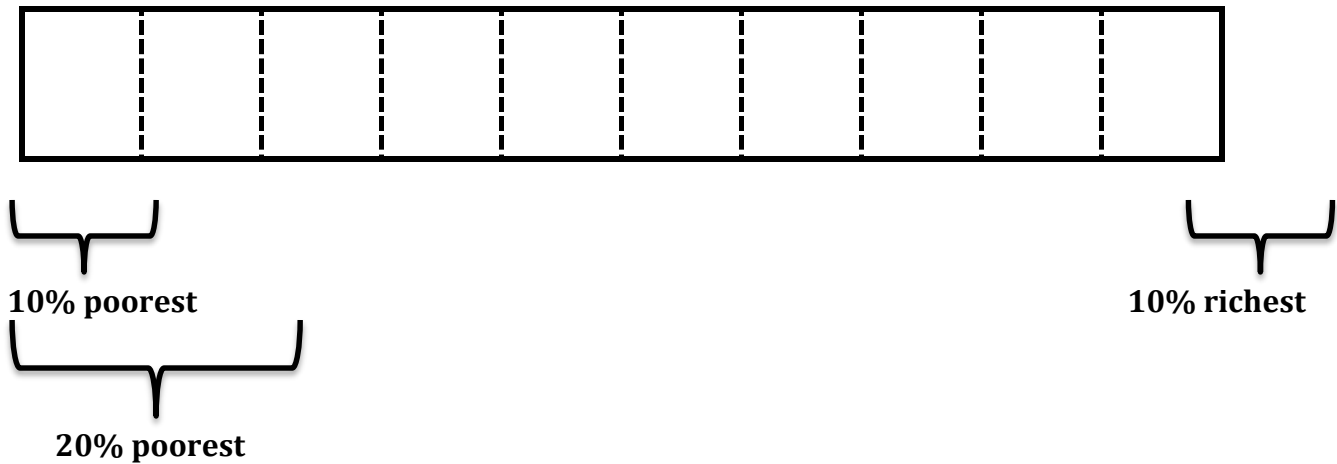


Figure 2: Picture depicting Income Distribution in Deciles



2. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY (based on Figure 1 & 2)

- Tell me about South African society. Who is the middle class in South Africa today? And, what are their characteristics? What about people at the top? (or richest 10 per cent) What about the people at the bottom?
 - How large do you think the differences between those at the bottom and top are? Have these differences got bigger or smaller in the last 5/10 years?
 - How will the society look like 10 years from now? Will it get richer, poorer or stay the same?
 - Do you think that the number of poor people in 5/10 years time is going to be larger, the same or smaller than it is now?
 - Describe to me your family's socio-economic situation?
- Is it possible for you to improve your social class? How? What are the most successful channels through which one can improve one's social class?
- What are the barriers to achieving upward social mobility in South African society today?
 - Who is responsible for someone's lack of social mobility?

Economic situation of Black South Africans

- Do you feel that the number of black middle class and rich people has increased, decreased, or remained the same in the last 10 years?
- How do some black people become middle class or rich? Why did others remain poor?

3. SOCIAL MOBILITY EXPERIENCE

- Describe to me the neighbourhood you come from? How long have you lived there? What type of families live there? Which picture best represents the neighbourhood you are coming from? Where would you put them in the model South African society you chose earlier? (see **Figure 1**)
 - Does only one group of people live there or is a bit of a mix? If it is mixed, is there any contact between the different types of families?
 - Have you had opportunities in your childhood to choose/make friends from across racial/class boundaries? How? Why not?
 - How do you relate and identify with the neighbourhood you grew up in? Do you feel like you fit in there? Did you like it there? Would you say it is a good place for young people to grow up? Why and why not?
 - Would you prefer to have grown up somewhere else, and if so where?
 - Have you had role models in your neighbourhood? Why were they your role models? Other role models outside of neighbourhood and if so, how did you meet and get to know them?
- Where would you put your family in the model South African society you chose earlier both in the **Figure 1&2**?
 - Is your family's overall financial situation today better, the same or worse than it was five years ago?

- Why has it gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the last five years?
- If your neighbourhood has changed since you started university, how do you relate and identify with your current neighbourhood?
 - Is this neighbourhood poorer, the same or richer than the neighbourhood of your childhood? Where would you place most of the families of this neighbourhood in the **Figure 1 & 2**?
- How do people relate to each other here at UCT? How do you describe the institutional culture at UCT?
 - Do you feel you belong at UCT? Why or why not? Have you ever felt like you are not supposed to be at UCT?

Ask ONLY students who are in their final year

- Where would you put yourself today in the model South African society you chose earlier in the **Figure 1 & 2**?
- Do you perceive any change in your relative socio-economic position compared to when you first came to university? How?
 - Who is responsible for this change?
 - What is the role of government's equity minded policies in your current socio-economic position?

4. SOCIAL MOBILITY EXPECTATIONS

- When you first came to the university (or before coming to university), what did you think you could become when you finish university and why? Did what you thought you would become after graduating change through time? Did it change for the better or did your expectations get lower? And if so, why?
- What are your career aspirations now? How is it possible for you to reach those aspirations do you think? Do you think you can reach them through UCT? If yes, how? If not, why?
 - In which sector do you want to work? Do you want to work for the government? Why or why not?
 - Has there been any time when you felt like dropping out of university? Why? What has validated your experience to stay?
 - What are the barriers to completion of a degree at UCT?
 - Who are the top students? Who stays and who drops out?
 - Are you considering post-graduate study? Why or why not?
 - What would your parents think about that?
- What does higher education mean to you?
- What does higher education mean to your parents? What are your parents' expectations about you attending a university?

Equality in the job market

- How equal do you think the opportunities in the labour market are? How does race play itself out in the labour market? Do you think your identity will affect your opportunities in getting jobs?
 - Who are the most advantaged in finding a job?
- Who do you think you will compete with in your job applications?
 - What are the traits/characteristics valued by the jobs you will apply for? How does one gain those characteristics? Transmitted from parents to their kids? Through education?
 - What do you think your chance of getting jobs is compared to your classmates? Is it the same? Why and why not?

Government Policies

- Do you think the government is doing too much, enough or too little for poor people to get jobs?
 - What do you think is the role of equity minded policies in your expectations on your future achievements/social mobility?
 - How do you feel about this kind of policies?

5. CAMPUS CLIMATE

Demographic composition

- What was your perception of university like before coming here? How is it different than what you expected? What were your greatest fears before starting? What was the biggest surprise to you when you came to UCT?
 - What do you like most about UCT?
 - What do you find most challenging or problematic at UCT?
- In your understanding of the economic makeup of the university, where would you place most of the white people? What about the black and coloured South Africans? Have you considered the racial demographics of your current university while you were doing your application? Why or why not?
- Have you considered the socio-economic background of the students already studying here while you were doing your application? Why or why not?
- Do you think the university environment is a good representative of South African society? If not, how would it be more representative?
 - Is your background advantaged or disadvantaged to you? (If it is the case, do you feel coming from poor background is affecting you in any way?)
 - Have you ever felt the Apartheid history is affecting you in any way? Your relationship with your friends etc.?

Contacts and Support

- What do you think about the visibility of Black African students in activities such as student governance?
- How has your experience of professor-student relationships been so far?

- Does the racial demographics of professors lecturing you affect you? How?

Peer groups

- Tell me about your relationship with your peers? Are you engaged in any kind of community/friendship at university that goes beyond the people you know from your previous neighbourhood? If yes, who are they? If no, why is it so difficult to develop friendship across race/class?
 - Do students have tendencies to self-segregate into ethno-racial groups? If yes, what is it to do with?
 - Do you think (from your or friends' experiences) social interactions across class/race are beneficial or challenging to manage for students coming from disadvantaged background? How are you benefiting from them?
 - Do you interact with black students from upper/lower social class at UCT? Why and why not? Do you think social interactions with black people coming from advantaged backgrounds are beneficial or challenging for you? How do they inform you about strategies to be better prepared for the job market? Is there any such kind of exchange?

Perception of Self

- Tell me about yourself. How do you define/describe yourself? What does it mean to be a black African college student on this campus? What are the challenges that only Black people face at UCT?
- I am interested in how your ideas about your "self" have changed since attending university. How would describe the change in you, if there is any?
- How has your self-confidence been affected in this environment?
 - Do you feel comfortable in taking full advantage of both social and academic opportunities offered in this university environment? Why and why not?
- Has your university experience changed the way you see your own population group and/or other population groups so far? How?
- Has your university experience changed the way you see your hometown and the people living there so far? How?
- Has your university experience changed the way you see South African society? How?

Appendix 3

Table 1. Profile of Student Respondents		
Total number of respondents		43
Age range of the respondents		18-27
Sex of the respondents	Female	17
	Male	26
Place of birth of the respondents	Cape Town	4
	Eastern Cape	12
	Free State	1
	Kwazulu-Natal	8
	Gauteng	11
	Mpumalanga	2
	Limpopo	5
Type of place respondents spent most of their life	Urban area, formal housing	21
	Urban area, informal settlement or squatter settlement	4
	Rural area under the authority of a chief	6
	Township	12
Religious Affiliation	Christian	40
	None	3
Language spoken at home	English	13
	Xhosa	12
	Zulu	6
	Sotho	3
	Tshivenda	3
	Schona	2
	Tswana	2
	Sepedi	1
	Siswati	1
Name of the programme enrolled	B Com Financial Accounting	12
	B Bus Sci Actuarial Science	8
	B Bus Sci Finance and Accounting	3
	B Com Philosophy, Politics and Economics	3
	B Bus Sci Quantitative Management	3
	B Com Economics and Statistics	2
	B Bus Sci Finance	2
	B Com General Accounting	2
	B Com Information Systems	2
	B Bus Sci Marketing	2
	B Com Economics	1
	B Com Economics and Public Policy	1
	B Com Management Studies	1
	B Bus Sci Mathematics and Statistics	1

Table 2. Family Background of the Respondents			
		Mother	Father
Total number of parents at most with a:	Primary school degree or less	7	6
	High school degree	9	4
	Undergraduate degree	17	10
	Honours degree	2	3
	Masters degree	4	3
Total number of parents who are:	Public sector employee	9	6
	Private sector employee	11	6
	Self-emoloyed	7	5
	Unemployed	7	4
	Not in employment	2	3
Total number of parents whose occupations fall under:	Group 1 ¹	21	19
	Group 2 ¹	6	9
	Group 3 ¹	12	1
Percentage of the family residences made out of:	Traditional materials (mud, brick, duka)		16%
	Permanent shack (corrugated iron, mixed brick)		5%
	Permanent building (brick, block)		79%
Percentage of households with a source of drinking water:	Piped-Internal		84%
	Piped-Public tap/kiosk (free)		5%
	Rainwater tank		2%
	Other		9%
Percentage of households with a type of toilet:	Flush Toilet		81%
	Bucket Toilet		19%
Percentage of households connected to electricity:			98%
Percentage of households connected to internet:			48%
Percentage of households that use paraffin for lighting, heating or cooking			26%
Percentage of households with at least one:	Radio		88%
	Widescreen TV		65%
	VCR/DVD Player		93%
	Smartphone		98%
	Refrigerator		100%
	Gas stove/Electric stove		98%
	Microwave		88%
	Washing Machine		63%
	Bicycles		28%
	Car		70%
	Computer		95%
	More than five books		81%
(1) Classification according to SASCO and Seekings (2011).			

Table 3. Schooling Background of the Respondents		
Type of Primary School attended:	Government Primary	32
	Semi-Private Primary	4
	Private Primary	7
Number of students who attended a historically white primary school		20
Type of Secondary School attended:	Government Secondary	33
	Semi-Private Secondary	4
	Private Secondary	6
Number of students who attended a historically white secondary school		25
Average matric exam score		79%
Biggest problems with secondary school attended: (percentage of responses)	Noisy classrooms	16%
	Bullying by students	15%
	Crowded classrooms	12%
	Drug dealing	11%
	Not Enough Textbooks	10%
	Teachers being threatened by the students	8%
	Teachers often absent from class	7%
Best things about secondary school attended: (percentage of responses)	Experienced and qualified teachers	18%
	Academically competitive environment	14%
	Wide range of extracurricular activities	13%
	Facilities and resources	9%
	Encouragement for success	6%
The universities friends from high school mostly attend: (percentage of responses)	University of Witwatersrand	18%
	University of Johannesburg	11%
	University of Pretoria	10%
Estimated Average of Completed Course Marks (on average) at University		62%

Table 4. Work Experience and Funding		
Number of students with work experience		32
Number of students with paid/unpaid internship experience		15
Number of students who contributed money to their studies		21
Number of students with a scholarship, funding or bursary		32
Type of funding	NSFAS	14
	Bursary	13
	Scholarship	5
	Self-funded	11

Appendix 4

Code for Level of Schooling	Highest Level of Education Completed
0	Never/Grade 0
1	Grade 1/Sub A
2	Grade 2/Sub B
3	Grade 3/Standard 1
4	Grade 4/Standard 2
5	Grade 5/Standard 3
6	Grade 6/Standard 4
7	Grade 7/Standard 5
8	Grade 8/Standard 6
9	Grade 9/Standard 7
10	Grade 10/Standard 8
11	Grade 11/Standard 9
12	Grade 12/Standard 10/Matric
13	Technikon (Undergraduate)
14	University (Undergraduate)
15	Other institution (not Technikon or University (Undergraduate))
16	Honours
17	Masters
18	Doctorate
19	Other

Category for Occupation Group (sorted by highest to lowest skills level)	Major Occupation Groups
Group 1	1. Legislators, senior officials and managers
	2. Professionals
Group 2	3. Technicians and associate professionals
	4. Clerical and administrative workers
	5. Service workers and shop and market sales workers
	6. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers
	7. Crafts and related trades workers
	8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers
Group 3	9. Elementary occupations
	0. Not economically active persons or other
Source: Classification according to SASCO and Seekings (2011).	