CULTURAL CAPITAL OF LEARNERS IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES: TOWARDS IMPROVED LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT

by

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, sincerely declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the degree:

Philosophiae Doctor

is original and entirely my own work, except where other sources have been acknowledged. I also certify that this dissertation has not previously been submitted at this or any other faculty or institution.

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to consider how school practices can mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners with the existing cultural capital of schools in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities towards learner achievement. The study was informed by Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, Critical Race Theory and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory (CRT and LatCrit), and the Generative Theory of Rurality. Bourdieu's insight was used to offer an account of why the culture of the working class is, in effect, out of alignment with the middle-class cultural or knowledge capital that guarantees school success. Additionally, CRT and LatCrit theory was not only used to obtain an understanding of the educational subjectivity of learners in historically disadvantaged communities in the South African context, but also to provide insight into their everyday life struggles in relation to their educational endeavours. Lastly, the thesis draws on the Generative Theory of Rurality, which is based on concepts such as forces, agencies and resources, and how people in historically disadvantaged rural environments could make use of resources available to them. It is understood that the relational nature of these concepts has a determining effect on rural people, including the subjectivities of learners attending semi-urban schools far from their home environments.

Framed within the South African context, I explored the school knowledge codes embedded in the theoretical underpinnings of recent and current South African school curriculum statements. A literature review was conducted in order to offer the theoretical underpinnings of Outcomes Based Education (1998) and the National Curriculum Statement: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (2011). To further the democratic debate in curriculum development, options for alternative curriculum mandates for the current curriculum statements were also foregrounded as a key focus in the pursuit of social justice for marginalised learners.

Following a critical qualitative methodology driven by the apparatus of bricolage, data was generated through semi-structured interviews to advance a critical and interpretive understanding of the perspectives of various role players regarding schooling in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities. The data revealed that various existing school practices in historically disadvantaged environments incorporate the life world knowledge of these learners, in other words these learners' particular ways of being. It was through the

lens of understanding those factors which reinforce the reproduction of inequalities that the findings of this study opened up new possibilities for school practices that could bring about a more just environment for improved learner achievement by marginalised children.

This study concludes by advocating for the strengthening and extending of community initiatives at the school, establishing renewed relations between the child, parents and the school, and embracing transformational role models and mentors in schools and the community as examples of school practices for the integration of the life world knowledges of marginalised learners along with scientific forms of knowledges. Such an integration should serve as part of an attempt to universalise different types of knowledge. Although suggestions with regards to particular practices have the potential to improve learner achievement, it remains important that curriculum debates should consider a different kind of curriculum that acknowledges and incorporates the assets of rural areas and communities, and the life experiences of historically disadvantaged and marginalised people. The contention is that when diverse knowledge in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities is linked to scientifically powerful knowledge, a focus on ethics could bring about social justice in society.

Key words: Critical Race Theory and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory, cultural capital, *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements*, Generative Theory of Rurality, historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities, life world knowledge, Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, school practices

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om ondersoek in te stel na die maniere waarop skoolpraktyke die leefwêreldkennis van leerders kan fasiliteer en integreer met die bestaande kulturele kapitaal van skole, spesifiek binne voorheen benadeelde landelike bruin gemeenskappe. Die studie word ondersteun deur Pierre Bourdieu se sosiale teorie, "Critical Race Theory" en "Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory" ("CRT" en "LatCrit"), en die "Generative Theory of Rurality". Bourdieu se idees verduidelik waarom die werkersklaskultuur buite die kulturele kapitaal van die middelklaskultuur val, en hoe dit daartoe bydra dat werkersklasleerders akademies minder suksesvol op skool is. "CRT" en "LatCrit" is gebruik om 'n begrip te vorm van die opvoedkundige subjektiwiteit van leerders in vooorheen benadeelde gemeenskappe binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, en ook om dieper insigte te verskaf rakende hierdie leerders se daaglikse stryd romdom hulle skoolopvoeding. Laastens benut die tesis die

"Generative Theory of Rurality", wat steun op konsepte soos magte, keuses / opsies en hulpbronne, en hoe mense in voorheen benadeelde landelike gebiede die hulpbronne tot hulle beskikking kan aanwend. Dit is duidelik dat die verbandelike aard van hierdie konsepte 'n bepalende invloed het op landelike gemeenskappe, en ook op die subjektiewe idees van leerders wat semi-landelike skole, ver van hulle ouerhuise, bywoon.

Die studie het verder die kenniskodes van skole, soos geïntegreer in die teoretiese onderbou van vorige en huidige skoolkurrikula in die Suid-Afrikaanse omgewing, ondersoek. 'n Literatuurstudie is onderneem om die teoretiese onderbou van Uitkomsgebaseerde Leer (1998) en die Nasionale Kurrikulumverklaring: Kurrikulum- en Assesseringsbeleidsverklaring ("CAPS" 2011) aan te bied. In 'n poging om verdere demokratiese debatvoering oor kurrikulumontwikkeling te stimuleer, is opsies vir alternatiewe kurrikulummandate ook ondersoek as 'n sleutelpunt in die soeke na sosiale geregtigheid vir gemarginaliseerde leerders.

Vanuit 'n kwalitatiewe raamwerk en deur 'n sintese van hierdie teorieë is data met behulp van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude ingesamel om 'n kritiese en interpretatiewe begrip vanuit die perspektief van verskeie rolspelers aangaande skoolonderrig in voorheen benadeelde landelike bruin gemeenskappe te vorm. Uit die data is dit duidelik dat verskeie bestaande skoolgebruike in voorheen benadeelde omgewings die leefwêreldkennis, met ander woorde die spesifieke lewenswyses, van hierdie leerders inkorporeer. Deur die lens van begrip vir die kwessies wat die voortsetting van ongelykhede versterk, bied die bevindinge van hierdie studie nuwe moontlikhede vir skoolpraktyke wat 'n meer regverdige omgewing vir verbeterde akademiese prestasie deur gemarginaliseerde leerders kan bied.

Hierdie studie sluit af met 'n oproep om die uitbreiding en versterking van gemeenskapsinisiatiewe by skole, die totstandkoming van hernude verhoudings tussen die kind, ouers en die skool, en die omarming van transformerende rolmodelle en mentors by skole en in die gemeenskap. Hulle kan dien as voorbeelde van die suksesvolle integrasie van die leefwêreldkennis van gemarginaliseerde leerders met wetenskaplike vorme van kennis. Hierdie integrasie kan 'n rol speel as deel van 'n poging tot die universalisering van alle tipes kennis. Alhoewel aanbevelings rakende spesifieke praktyke die potensiaal het om leerderprestasie te verbeter, bly dit steeds belangrik dat debatvoering rondom 'n ander tipe kurrikulum voortgaan, een wat die bates van die landerlike lewenservaring van voorheen benadeelde en gemarginaliseerde mense sal erken en inkorporeer. Die aanname is dat

wanneer diverse modaliteite van kennis in voorheen benadeelde landelike bruin gemeenskappe geskakel word met wetenskaplike kennis, hierdie, tesame met 'n fokus op etiek, kan bydra tot sosiale geregtigheid.

Sleutelwoorde: Critical Race Theory en Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory, kulturele kapitaal, Kurrikulum- en Assesseringsbeleidsverklaring, Generative Theory of Rurality, voorheen benadeelde landelike bruin gemeenskappe, leefwêreldkennis, Pierre Bourdieu se sosiale teorie, skoolpraktyke

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a country rich in cultural and ethnic diversity, a diversity which is often expressed in terms of "constructions of a past social structure in which a hierarchical ordering based on race was inscribed into the fabric of everyday life" (Badroodien 2011:9). Blacks make up 79,2% of the total population, while whites constitute 8,9% and Indians 2,5% of the population (Statistics South Africa 2011:2). In addition, De Wit, Delport, Rugamika, Meintjes, Möller, Van Helden, Seoighe & Hoal (2010:512) note that "[p]eople of mixed ancestry in South Africa are identified as 'Coloureds', they comprise 9% of the population and they remain marginalised, separated, and discriminated against". Although racialised concepts such as black, white, Coloured and Indian were historically used to define different communities in South African, the same categorisations are still used by the government today, albeit to fulfil goals of redress and equity in terms of the *Employment Equity Act* of 1998. However, despite the motivation for the use of racialised concepts, the South African society remains saturated with histories of oppression and privilege.

The different racial groups all made their unique contribution to South African society. During the apartheid era (from 1948 to 1994), the white minority had the political, economic and social capital to rule the country at the cost of non-whites. Blacks, Coloureds and Indians worked in low-paying jobs, attended poor schools, and had to live in severe poverty (Adhikari 1994:109; Christie & Collins 1984:162). In order to uphold this inequality, the apartheid government introduced a segregated education system for the different racial groups under centralised white government control (Case & Deaton 1999:1049). Christie & Collins (1984:167) underscore how these segregated systems were aimed to reinforce a society that positioned Blacks, Coloureds and Indians as the working class. This inequality was also evident in the per capita expenditure on pupils. In this regard, Bhorat & Oosthuizen (2008:634-635) note that "at the height of apartheid, for every R1.00 spent on White pupils, per capita expenditure on Indian pupils was 76 cents, for Coloured pupils it was 48 cents, while expenditure on each African [Black] pupil stood at 19 cents". The long-term consequence of unequal funding was *inter alia*, that white state schools (previously referred to as Model C schools) not only underwent a process of semi-privatisation in the early 1990s to control their own admissions and to charge fees (Kallaway 1997:46), but still averaged a 90% graduation rate compared to 50% in Coloured schools and 20% in black schools (Brown 2006:516).

Although the abolishment of apartheid in 1994 heralded an age of hope for a new democracy, the newly elected government not only inherited a deeply unequal society, but was also challenged by this segregated education system. While the segregated system permitted the preservation of a privileged schooling system, black and Coloured pupils were educated in conditions of deprivation and extreme neglect (Fataar 1997:80; Lemon 1999:98).

To give effect to democratic ideals, Chisholm (1997:56) maintains that the newly elected ANC government of 1994 proposed policies which placed the emphasis on the "financing, management and organisation of education". Kruss (1997:88) indicates that the *White Paper on Education and Training* (1995) stresses that there is no "free education" and that financing has to be drawn from either public or community funds in order to reduce state expenditure. Education policies subsequently encouraged the devolution of control and responsibility (including financial) from national to local government level. Chisholm (in Kruss 1997:87) argued that the most significant feature of the new educational order was human resource development and fiscal constraint discourses on the one hand, and expansion (of mass black education), redistribution and structural reform discourses on the other. To kick-start developments in the "new" educational order, discourses and politics of redistributive educational change, social democracy and neo-liberalism were introduced (Kallaway 1997:36).

To galvanise the democratic political development in the country and bring about a more equitable education system, the establishment of a unified national department of education (Carrim 1998:305) was followed by the passing of the *South African Schools Act 84* (hereafter SASA) in 1996. Karlsson (2002:327) asserts that 1996 was the period when the new democratically elected government presented a new system of governance for all public schools through which power, financial management and governance were devolved to individual schools. In effect this meant that the introduction of the Model C school option forced parental communities to take full responsibility for the upkeep, finances and governance of their local schools (Kallaway 1997:46). While this imperative could be linked to a broader international pattern of the relationship between education, economic growth and international competitiveness (human capital theory), it also served as a fundamental impetus for South African educational reforms which emphasised values such as redress, access and equity (Lemon 1999:96). The decentralisation of power not only required participation by all role players in South African education, but also required managers "to work in democratic

and participative ways to build relationships, share decision-making, balance local concerns with broader societal issues, and ensure efficient and effective instructional delivery" (Brown 2006:514).

Nevertheless, despite these fundamental reforms, inequality still continues in South African education. Nicholas Spaull's analysis (2013:6) of educational achievements shows that there are in effect two very different public school systems in South Africa. These are "the smaller, better performing system that accommodates the wealthiest 20–25% of learners who achieve much higher scores, and the larger system which caters to the poorest 75–80% of learners". The reference to the poorest 75–80% of learners is, by implication, a reference to schools in historically disadvantaged communities, namely black and Coloured communities. Brown (2006:514) claims that educational leaders in these historically disadvantaged schools lack personal and professional competency. In addition, it has been indicated that the lack of instructional capability to increase learner achievement and the incapacity of the state to deal with the impact of the socio-economic context on learner achievement, are also some key issues influencing the education of black and Coloured learners (Brown 2006:514; Lemon 1999:96; Spaull 2013:8-9).

Dillabough, Kennelly and Wang (in Fataar 2010b:8) indicate how underperforming disadvantaged schools are projected in the media and in political and policy discourse as "demonised schools". In South Africa these are schools where the working-class youth, who are overwhelmingly black and Coloured, receive their education. This state of affairs is, however, in stark contrast with the former Model C schools who flourish because of their economic and social capital. They are better able to form associations, share decisions and deliver effective instruction. In this regard, Karlsson (2002:330) states that "governing bodies for schools serving largely white, middle-class communities, are able to garner fees far in excess of their counterparts at schools in black working-class townships where there are high levels of unemployment, employment in the informal sector and single income female-headed families". To add to the accomplishments of former Model C schools, Kallaway (1997:47) asserts that white education manages to take "full advantage of the opportunity to innovate and develop local managerial structures that are extremely adaptive to the changing political and economic context". Although educational redistributive policies steer educational resources away from white communities in favour of the majority of the population (Kallaway

1989:274), Joubert & Bray (2007:12) affirm that "[u]nfortunately only partial success has been achieved in areas such as quality of school performance".

There is little doubt that after more than two decades of democracy, vast discrepancies are easily noticeable in the South African education system – there are indeed two very different public school systems in South Africa (Spaull 2013). Despite various changes in the education landscape, such as *inter alia* the devolving of powers and the redistribution of resources, policy intentions and actual policy outcomes remain a huge concern in the educational arena (Fataar 2007:611). The state´s ability to institute an equitable education system remains a persisting challenge.

Of interest for my particular study is an ethnographic study undertaken by Fataar (2007) in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities. One of the reasons for the struggle to deliver quality education to certain South African communities apparently lies with the gap between government policy's intent to bring quality education through local representation and participation, and the non-realisation thereof. Fataar's study (2007) not only alludes to this gap (between intended policy and the policy on the ground), but also to the conclusion that "policy effects can best be understood in the complex ways in which policies are recreated in their own environment" (Fataar 2007:611). Local communities in historically Coloured areas reworked national policies of governance by projecting their own interpretation of these policies in order to fit their own interests at school level. It is within this context that the phenomenon of low achievement by learners in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities emerged, whilst simultaneously foregrounding the continued struggle of learners with working-class backgrounds to achieve academically.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In this study I wanted to grapple with the question why learners and their parents in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities do not have the knowledge to achieve academic success (Larey[1] 2016:4). In this regard Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses & Seekings (2010:45) claim that "[m]ost parents make real sacrifices to enable their children to attend

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[1]   During the undertaking of this study various sections were presented at conferences for critical comments, hence the reference to a publication in the *ATINER´S Conference Paper Series* in 2016.

better schools. But most adolescents in poor neighbourhoods fail to achieve their own and their parents´ aspirations, partly because they do not understand what is required to do so".

My research interest subsequently centres on issues related to poor learner achievement in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities. Although often regarded as a contensious term, the concept "historically disadvantaged communities" refers to the apartheid legacy and subsequent consequences in what was historically referred to as Coloured communities. Mills & Gale (2010) use the term "disadvantaged" and argue that the responsibility for the poor academic performances of marginalised children has been placed at the feet of culturally "disadvantaged" or "deprived" children and their families. Again, they proceed to argue that, in some accounts, "deviations from the cultural ideal are viewed as deficiencies and deprived; children are seen to come from a group with no cultural integrity of its own" (Mills & Gale 2010:56). This being said, I consciously make use of the concept "disadvantaged" throughout this study, although with thoughtfulness. In recognising "disadvantaged" as a belligerent term, I do not wish to contribute to the deficit descriptions of any communities (Larey 2016:4).

My research interest stems from my experience as a former teacher who worked in an environment which was typically labelled as "so-called Coloured". Based on my experience, I wanted to understand why parents and learners do not have the necessary knowledge and skills required for learners to successfully complete their school careers. As a secondary teacher with more than 20 years' experience, I came to the realisation that learners and parents put a lot of effort into their schooling, but sadly that is not enough for learners to succeed. In many cases learners fail or are unsuccessful in their aspirations to enter tertiary education. I became conscious of the fact that learners are not serious about their education, but at the end of the academic year they want to proceed to the next level. I observed learners displaying different forms of resistance regarding their education. I also experienced that learners find it difficult to engage with the curriculum when they are confronted with abstract knowledge. It seemed that these learners lack critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and that they tend to close down when they are challenged in higher thinking activities. McFadden & Munns (2002:359) claim that "the persistence of culturally supported school resistance intensifies the challenge for educators committed to opening up pathways so that students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds have greater chances of educational opportunity and success". This contributes further to learners' adverse situation.

To add to the deterioration of the situation, learners do not really have role models in their communities who can emphasise the significance and value of education. The working-class parents also do not know how to assist their children with their academic work. It seems as if they leave it all up to the school. Adversely, Delpit (1988:286) is of the opinion that "what the school personnel fail to understand is that if the parents were members of the culture of power and lived by its rules and codes, then they would transmit those codes to their children".

At the same time, school buildings and resources are mostly unchanged from the apartheid era. Van der Berg (in Chisholm 2011:51-52) refers to a "double burden that learners from poor communities in South Africa face – the burden of poverty and the burden of attending a school that still bears the scars of neglect and underfunding under the apartheid dispensation". Persisting inequalities in terms of resources, instruction and governance, compared to historically advantaged white communities, lingers on. The *Annual National Assessment* results first conducted in 2009 and again in 2011 confirm the deterioration of education, especially in lower socio-economic contexts (DBE 2011b:5). In a somewhat comparable vein, Chisholm (2011:50) notes that one of the most influential findings is the connection between household poverty and academic achievement. Here, even more so than in the UNESCO analysis, children from the wealthiest households in South Africa are multiple times more inclined to score well on reading than children from the poorest households (UNESCO 2011:6). This underscores the significance of the socio-economic background of learners in educational achievement in South Africa.

According to Lewin (2007:2) "[i]n most societies, and especially those that are developing rapidly, households and individuals value participation in education and invest substantially in pursuing the benefits it can confer. The rich have few doubts that the investments pay off; the poor generally share the belief and recognise that increasingly mobility out of poverty is education-related, albeit that their aspirations and expectations are less frequently realised". Lewin (2007:3) further claims that governments try to limit inherited advantages and strive towards increased equal opportunity, but greater equality in results will always prove elusive. To accomplish social justice, education has a specific obligation towards disadvantaged communities to work towards improved educational achievement.

After 23 years of democracy, it is time to level educational inequalities in order to enhance quality, access and equity for historically disadvantaged communities. My interest is to

understand why the aspiration and expectations of learners and their parents in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities are "less frequently realised". I anticipate that by pursuing this research interest, this study can contribute to a better understanding of the apparent lack of social justice for historically disadvantaged Coloured learners. I also work from the assumption that my research findings might be extrapolated to other similar contexts**.**

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

My interest to understand why the aspirations and expectations of learners and their parents in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities are less frequently realised is centred on the incompatibilities between the cultural capital of historically disadvantaged learners (with working-class backgrounds) and the middle-class cultural capital embodied in schools. According to Bourdieu (in Hattam, Brennan, Zipin & Comber 2009:304), people start their schooling from different social positions, with different social habitats, in which – through practical involvement from early childhood – they accumulate distinction qualities of disposition in life, or "habitus". These standpoints in turn, function selectively in schools as the "cultural capital" of the stronger or weaker species. In a similar vein, Delpit (1988:283) asserts that children from middle-class families tend to perform better in school than those from working-class families because the culture of the school correlates perfectly with the culture of the upper and middle classes – thus, the culture of the dominant in society.

In South Africa the gap between the rich and the poor is substantial, also in terms of the consequences for educational performance. Seekings (2008:2) compares the unequal income distribution within the African [black] population with that of the income distribution of the South African population as a whole. Although a small proportion of Africans have moved into better paid occupations, many still languish in poverty because of poor schooling and chronic unemployment. Of particular significance in this respect is that quantitative studies conducted in the country constantly find that the socio-economic status of learners´ families or the area in which the school is situated, correlates considerably with educational outcomes, even while the government invests significantly in these schools (Bray *et al.* 2010:202). The implication is that the South African education system fails most of the children in realising their full potential. Furthermore, Bray *et al.* (2010:171) claim that "many children fail to acquire skills and qualifications despite investing many years of effort, and despite the sacrifices made by their families to keep them in school".

In fact, the problem is that in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities, "the cultural habits brought to school by significant proportions of students are not utilised or scaffolded to traditional school learning methods and contents" (Hattam *et al.* 2009:304). In other words, the school culture is persistently working against the life world knowledge of these learners. In this case, middle-class school knowledge further disadvantages historically disadvantaged learners (especially the lower socio-economic layers) due to social stratification and these learners' subsequent lack of the culture of power.

Needless to say, Seekings (2008:2) notes that despite the abolition of the racial legislation of the apartheid era, race does indeed remain ever present in contemporary South Africa. Against this background and contrary to what traditional social theorists claim, critical race theorists validate the experiences of people of colour by acknowledging that "community cultural wealth or life world knowledge is an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (Yosso 2005:77). Coloured learners in historically disadvantaged communities have experiential knowledge which they use as "inspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital to navigate their ways in the educational arena" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal in Yosso 2005:77). The assumption is therefore that schools should acknowledge this capital, and adapt the culture of the school to build on this capital to assist historically disadvantaged rural learners to perform better academically (Larey 2016:9).

More to the point, the educational inequality due to a lack of collaboration between the cultural wealth from the life world contexts of disadvantaged learners and their schools´ educational arrangements will be under scrutiny. Of great significance here is the gap between life world knowledge (experiential knowledge) and cultural knowledge codes embodied in schools. The essence is what Fataar (2012:56) points to, as "[t]he task here is to develop a conceptual grounding for a responsive and inclusive pedagogical approach, on the one hand, and academic immersion into the school´s knowledge code, on the other". In the South African context, schools therefore have to attend to the nature of learners' subjectivities. In so doing, Fataar (2012) opens the way for the construction of educational subjectivities of learners and their schools´ institutional platforms as the basis on which pedagogical processes can connect the life world knowledge of learners and the knowledge codes of the school. Fataar (2012) proceeds to suggest that "the cultural capital misalignment that schools and teachers normally operate within has to be addressed and challenged by the

incorporation of the life world contexts of their learners". The contention is that there should be a larger connection between the experiential knowledge of learners, the school´s curriculum and pedagogies (Fataar 2012:56). In this regard, Hattam *et al.* (2009:304) claim that

> [t]he lifeworld contexts of schools become a key focus for research and innovation; any project that hopes to address the problem of cultural capital must focus on pedagogies that start to connect school-based learning with students´ own lifeworlds in their communities. Only when schooling is organised to make this link can the experience of intrinsic value in education become established, and enable scaffolding to success in the mainstream curriculum, leading to extrinsic rewards from schooling.

It is within the context of the above exposition that the following research question emerges: ***How can school practices in historically disadvantaged communities mediate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school towards learner achievement?***

In order to pursue and answer this question, the following subsidiary questions have to be answered:

1.3.1   How can Bourdieu´s social theory, as well as the work of other theorists in the Critical Race Theory tradition and Generative Theory of Rurality be understood in the context of school education?

1.3.2   What comments can be provided on the theoretical underpinnings of knowledge production through selected South African school curricula?

1.3.3   Which school practices in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities could mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school, towards learner achievement?

1.3.4   What critical comments can be made regarding the mediation of learners' life world knowledge and the existing school cultural capital towards learner achievement?

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to explain how school practices can mediate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of schools in historically disadvantage rural communities towards learner achievement. The focus of this study is therefore to establish educational avenues to mediate equitable educational opportunities for learners to succeed academically. The focus will be "more [on] radical and democratic approaches to running

classrooms and schools that have challenged and changed existing power relations through, for example, the way teachers and pupils interact" (Raffo, Dyson, Gunter, Hall, Jones & Kalambouka 2007:xi).

In order to pursue and answer the overarching research question, the study unfolds in terms of the following objectives:

1.4.1   to conceptualise how Bourdieu´s social theory, as well as the work of theorists in the tradition of Critical Race Theory and Generative Theory of Rurality can be understood in the context of school education;

1.4.2   to comment on the theoretical underpinnings of knowledge production through selected South African school curricula;

1.4.3   to uncover school practices in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities that could mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school, towards learner achievement; and

1.4.4   to offer critical comments regarding the mediation of learners' life world knowledge and the existing school cultural capital towards learner achievement.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.5.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, I use Bourdieu's Social Theory, Critical Race Theory and Latina/o Critical Theory, and the Generative Theory of Rurality as a theoretical framework to take part in the discourse of inequality, including educational achievement that follows from such inequality (Larey 2016:5). I assume in this study that this theoretical framework can assist me in gaining insight into the multiple layers of the social reality in which I participate. By using these theories, I present a systematic view of the phenomenon of low achievement of historically disadvantaged rural learners. In addition, these theories will also assist in obtaining new knowledge, insight and discovery as an explicit platform for the development and advancement of knowledge about education, culture and educational achievement (Kerlinger in Balfour 2012a:3).

1.5.1.1 BOURDIEU'S SOCIAL THEORY OF CULTURAL CAPITAL AND HABITUS

In this section, I introduce Bourdieu´s concepts of cultural capital, field and habitus as a preliminary introduction to his insight that while people enter schooling from different

structural positions, associated with different social habitats, wherein – through early-life practical immersion – they embody distinctive qualities of cultural disposition, or ´habitus´ (Hattam *et al.* 2009:304).

In the editor´s introduction to *The Field of Cultural Production,* Johnson (Bourdieu 1993:7) defines Bourdieu's account of cultural capital as "forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions". Johnson (in Bourdieu 1993:7) furthermore maintains that for Bourdieu, "cultural capital is a form of knowledge, an internalised code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artefacts". As perceived, only a particular section of society obtains this kind of accumulated capital. While the middle class cultivates a habitus in line with the cultural capital they own, schools embody cultural capital that is aligned with middle-class cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990).

Bourdieu (2003:19) suggests that in a subjective social reality, agents own their habitus which is "both a system of schemes of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices". This "habit-forming" force is cultivated in educational institutes in that

> the school provides those who have been subjected directly or indirectly to its influence not so much with particular and particularised patterns of thought as with that general disposition, generating particular patterns that can be applied in different areas of thought and action, which may be termed cultural habitus [emphasis in original] (Bourdieu 2003:344).

The owners of this general standpoint are in an excellent position to produce cultural objects and classified representations in social reality. By implication, these owners are upper middle-class and middle-class families who are advantaged by the school system's contribution in reproducing social and cultural inequalities (Bourdieu in Mills & Gale 2010:2). In a similar vein, Ladwig and Gore (in Mills & Gale 2010:10) claim that "historically, schools have tended to connect best with, and work best for students of middle-class, Anglo, male backgrounds". Mills & Gale (2010:10) comment that the culture of these privileged groups are perceived as universal. The cultural capital of the middle class is referred to as a selective "gold standard" in school curricula (Zipin, Fataar & Brennan 2015a:28) and becomes, by implication, the particular standard which is cultured in social agents as habitus. The social reality where these agents play their "game" is denoted by Bourdieu as a field of forces (Bourdieu & Passeron

2014:203-204). Bourdieu (1993:39) maintains that the more autonomous the field becomes, the more favourable the symbolic power leans towards the most autonomous producers, and the larger the distance between the different fields of production becomes. Of particular significance here is that Bourdieu assumes that social groups and other opposed social collectives are constantly involved to put forward their own interests. In other words, the more symbolic power certain social groups accumulate, the more dominant they become.

In this study, I use Bourdieu's concepts *cultural capital*, *field* and especially *habitus* to conceptualise the education research field and to contextualise the subjects of my research. This is done in order to explore the extent of compatibility between the working-class knowledge of historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners and school knowledge codes. Of particular significance is the life world knowledge that learners possess, and the measures that can be implemented for learners to increase their chances to better their position in social spaces.

Bourdieu´s theory has however been criticised as a mere theory of the reproduction of social conditions. Calhoun (1998:142) claims that "Bourdieu´s sociology provides for effective accounts of the influences which objective circumstances, historical patterns of distribution of various resources, and the trajectories of different actors through social fields all have on power relations". Critics, however, are of the opinion that there is very little room for radical thinking in order to bring about change in society. Due to this "limitation", this study takes on notions of other theorists in the critical social tradition in order to reflect on modern/postmodern society. In this study I do not want to merely provide accounts of the reproduction of social conditions, but I attempt to provide ways of generative agency to create a new and better world. In this regard, Benhabib (in Mills & Gale 2010:15) postulates that "in order to be of practical and emancipatory value, research must do more than assist in understanding the human condition; it must also offer some vision of an alternative to the present arrangements".

1.5.1.2   CRITICAL RACE THEORY

As befits the interdisciplinary nature of this research, I also draw on Critical Race Theory (CRT) which "goes beyond disciplinary boundaries to analyse race and racism within both historical and contemporary contexts" (Delgado in Yosso 2005:74). Ellison (as quoted by Yosso 2005:73) asserts that CRT contributes to continued efforts "to recognise the ways in which our struggles for social justice are limited by discourses that omit and thereby silence the multiple

experiences of People of Color". Ladson-Billings (1998) maintains that the main tenets of CRT are the interaction between citizenship and race, the reality of a racialised society, and how these influence the everyday lives of people. The purpose of CRT is to give a description of how people live in a racialised society, and to give voice to their desires, expectations and their battles in life to improve their position in society. As such, the theory is not only aimed at uncovering various forms of racial oppression, but also at highlighting how knowledge of racial oppression can assist in rebuilding structures for equality. The relevance of CRT for this study resides with the attempt to give an account of rural learners´ everyday life struggles (in historically disadvantaged communities) in order to understand their educational subjectivity in a historically racialised society.

With regard to the field of education, Solòrzano (in Yosso 2005:73) identifies five tenets of CRT that inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum and policy. These tenets are "the inter-centricity of race and racism; the challenge to dominant ideology; the commitment to social justice; the centrality of experiential knowledge; and the utilisation of interdisciplinary approaches" (Yosso 2005:73). As mentioned, Critical Race theorists demonstrate, through the validation of the experiences of people of colour, that "community cultural wealth is an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (Yosso 2005:77).

Of relevance to this particular study is that racism is a constant condition with which historically disadvantaged learners have to live. They are exposed to the unjust structures of society. In this regard, Ladson-Billings (1998:13) makes the argument that the use of voice or "naming your reality" is one way that CRT links practices and constituents in scholarship. The use of stories in the naming of people's own realities has the potential to serve as interpretative structures by which marginalised people can free themselves. Larey (2016:9) suggests that "the practice of naming one´s own reality is the first step in understanding the complexities of racism - the voices of the marginalised are required for a deep understanding of the educational system". However, learners in historically disadvantaged communities have experiential knowledge, that is a source of cultural wealth ("cultural capital" in the traditional westernised sense) which they could use to navigate pathways in education. The assumption is that in order for schools to assist disadvantaged learners to achieve academic success, they should be aware of this cultural wealth and link it with school knowledge codes in order to build on capital (Fataar 2012:53).

Framed within CRT, it can be assumed that for the historically disadvantaged people in the Western Cape, "there is a need for their untold stories to be captured and a need to mediate ways to define pointers towards increased chances of success" (Larey 2016:10). It is through this theoretical lens that I examine systematic aspects which reproduce cultural inequalities for learners from marginalised backgrounds. Through this interdisciplinary theoretical approach, I try to make meaning of the complex social reality of the historically disadvantaged people in the Western Cape and how this impacts on their educational endeavours. In this study I therefore explore and reflect on school practices in working-class environments. In practice this means that schools should make the connection with the life world knowledge of historically disadvantaged rural learners for better engagement and increased enthusiasm.

1.5.1.3 GENERATIVE THEORY OF RURALITY

The Generative Theory of Rurality is part of the theoretical framework which will be utilised in this study to account for disadvantaged learners´ subjectivities and lived experiences in their rural home areas. This theory focuses on "rurality as lived experience worthy of scholarly reflection regarding how rurality influences social or specific education issues" (Nkambule, Balfour, Pillay & Moletsane 2011:341). It can account to a large degree for how learners' experiences of their social realities influence their schooling in semi-urban schools within historically disadvantaged communities.

According to Balfour (2012a:1), a Generative Theory of Rurality provides an alternative understanding of subjectivities and perceptions that have been constructed as being true or the norm. The theory informs a collective imaginary through the provision of evidence of rural existence and nature. This enables the realisation of imaginaries hitherto excluded, or unknown by the collective or the communal. The endeavour is to interrogate the normative of rural existence, and the subjective experience of their people and narratives. This social theory aims to analyse assumptions about rurality and education in rural contexts. It is premised on the assumption that people make use of time, space and resources differently in rural spaces than in urban spaces, in order to transform the rural environment rather than be subjected to it (Balfour 2012b:9).

In the conceptualisation of this theory, three broad areas are taken into consideration by Balfour, Mitchell and Moletsane (2008:98). These areas include rurality as a context of forces (space, place, and time); agencies (movement, system, and will) and resources (situated, material, and psychosocial). The authors point out that rurality as a context, where poor

people live, remains unaffected, despite interventions from national governments. In a similar vein, Moore (in Balfour *et al.* 2008:97) suggests that "ideas of rurality are concerned with space, isolation, community, poverty, disease, neglect, backwardness, marginalization, depopulation, conservatism, racism, resettlement, corruption, entropy, and exclusion".

For this reason, Balfour *et al.* (2008:99) advocate that these damaging notions of rurality should change. These authors assert that historically a robust connection between the rural and the urban exists. Balfour *et al*. (2008:99) further claim that although links to rural communities remain strong in South Africa, "adults who have moved from rural areas into urban centres pursue, or at least share in, the idea of the cosmopolitan". According to Balfour *et al.* (2008) many South Africans do not experience this transition as a clash between modernity and traditional beliefs. This supports the fact that any theory of rurality must also take theories of urbanisation, modernity and identity in account (Larey 2016:11). Finally, Balfour *et al.* (2008:99) note that movement between the rural and urban is also adaptable and vigorous. These authors feel that the rural is rural due to its dispersion from three dynamic variables available to address its challenges, namely forces, agencies, and resources. They proceed and claim (borrowed from Budge 2005) that "the very isolation of the rural makes for the intensity of lived experience more or less proportional to the forces, agencies, and resources available for intervening in the experience".

In this study the critical social theories of Bourdieu, Critical Race Theory and the Generative Theory of Rurality are employed as a theoretical framework to account for the educational endeavours of historically disadvantaged rural learners. According to critical social theories, all role players in the community should play their part to create a better world. Everyone should be engaged in their communities and their educational worlds to negotiate school practices for transformation so as to enable historically disadvantaged rural learners to succeed in life.

1.5.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study I follow a qualitative research approach. According to Merriam (2002:xv; 2010:5), qualitative research is about "[u]nderstanding a phenomenon from the participants' perspectives – the meanings people derive from a situation or understanding a process – requires asking important questions, questions that lend themselves to qualitative inquiry". Similarly, Charmaz (in Gray 2009:166) asserts that qualitative research (giving prominence to

people's context in a natural "real life" setting, collecting information often over long periods of time and taking people´s stories and subjectivities in account) reflects on their lives. In addition, Merriam (2002:4) qualifies a qualitative approach as interpretive in nature as it is not only concerned with how people experience and participate in their social world, but also with the meaning the social world has for them. Whilst interpretivism entails the understanding of the lived experiences of humans (Willis 2007:6-7), a qualitative research approach can also infuse a critical attempt when it is aimed at confronting injustices in society (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg 2011:164).

Merriam (2009:23) alludes to how critical social theory can be incorporated into qualitative research. In this regard that author not only highlights how the social and political aspects of a situation can have an impact on reality, but also indicates how larger contextual factors can affect the manner in which individuals construct their reality. Social arrangements are often structured in such a way that the interests of dominant groups in society are served and prolonged at the cost of others. For Merriam (2002:4; 2010:36), critical qualitative inquiry will subsequently engage in questions such as: *How do power and domination play out in our social context?* and *Who has the power, how does this impact on you and how do you experience this domination?*

Also framed within the context of a qualitative approach is the paradigmatic orientation of *Phenomenology*, which uses "the concept 'phenomenon' as a general term, to refer to the actual grasp that one has of the real things and events that exist in the world … When one begins to specify 'phenomena', one begins to articulate objects such as precepts, memories, images, cognitions, etc." (Giorgi in Willis 2007:172). Although this study is not a phenomenological study *per se*, I use the concept of the phenomenon to obtain an understanding of the essence of low academic achievement of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners. Although I draw on phenomenology, I further consider a critically qualitative approach, namely a critical interpretative approach, as most appropriate for my research. Given the infusion of both a critical and an interpretive approach in the qualitative research methodology, the latter is indeed most significant in gaining an understanding of not only how the education system reinforces the reproduction of inequalities (*cf*. Bourdieu 1998), but also to contemplate the possibilities for the mediation of school practices to enhance the learner achievement of historically disadvantaged rural learners.

In summary I want to state that my decision to adopt a critical qualitative methodology in this research project was primarily informed by Lincoln and Denzil's comment (in Willis 2007:161) that "qualitative research seems to be moving further and further away from grand narratives and from single overarching ontological, epistemological and methodological paradigms". Within the scope of my study, I agree with the perception that "a politics of liberation must always begin with the perspectives, desires and dreams of those individuals and groups who have been oppressed by the larger ideological, economic, and political forces of a society, or a historical moment" (Lincoln & Denzil in Willis 2007:161). As such, the use of a critical qualitative methodology not only implies the rejection of a neutral and objective stance, but strengthens the acceptance that research becomes a truly multicultural process through the inquiry of matters of *inter alia* class, race, gender and ethnicity.

1.5.3 RESEARCH METHODS

In this section I define the methods I used in this study and explain why I considered these methods as most appropriate to answer the main research question, namely *How can school practices in historically disadvantaged communities mediate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school towards learner achievement?*

The role of the researcher is to gain a complete or cohesive overview of the study, and this includes the opinions and sentiments of participants (Gray 2009:166). Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (as quoted by Gray 2009:186) state that "researchers need to adopt a stance of ´theoretical sensitivity´, which means being ´insightful´ in demonstrating the capacity to understand and the ability to differentiate between what is important and what is not". My role in this particular study is to describe and analyse people´s single and communal actions, perceptions and perspectives, and to interpret the phenomenon of low achievement of learners in historically disadvantaged rural communities in terms of the significance people attribute to them (*cf*. McMillan & Schumacher 2001:444). In this regard, Flick (2011:12) maintains that the collective practices and life world of the participants are defined in order to discover new aspects of the phenomenon and to develop new theories from these discoveries.

1.5.3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

At the start of the research process, and throughout the research, the reading and reviewing of relevant literature is critical. Gray (2009:99) comments that a

> [l]iterature review is not something you complete early in the project and then put to one side ... It is likely to continue almost to the writing up stage, especially since your own research may generate new issues and ideas that you will want to investigate through the literature.

Gray (2009:99) further clarifies the idea of a literature review by pointing out that it actually entails two literature reviews, namely one that describes the focus of the study and another that strongly alludes to the research methods.

In this particular study my literature review first entailed a comprehensive study of Bourdieu's social theory, with particular emphasis on his analysis of various forms of capital and the conversion strategies associated with them (Ferrare & Apple 2012a:344) in the context of the reproduction of inequalities in education (class issues). Additionally, I embarked on a comprehensive literature review in order to theorise on Critical Race Theory in combination of Latina/Latino Critical Theory, and the Generative Theory of Rurality in order to understand racial and rural issues in the context of school education.

Gray (2009:99) also highlights the importance of engaging with literature when writing the methodology chapter. In this regard, it is not only about the discussion of which research design, approaches and tools to use in a research project, but it is also about the use of academic sources to motivate and justify the decisions for the particular research design and subsequent research methods. It can also guide the researcher through the process of data generation and analysis. I made use of a literature review in combination with interviews to attend to subjectivities in (and between) rural and semi-urban spaces. This was done to account for learners' lived experiences in their social worlds, and to search for school practices in historically disadvantaged schools in order to integrate life world knowledge and scientific world knowledge towards learner achievement.

1.5.3.2   BRICOLAGE

I employed the method of *bricolage* in an attempt to understand the complexity of social reality. Kincheloe (2005:327) maintains that the world is a subjective reality and that the use of multiple methods is therefore required to meaningfully engage with the world. Although the method of bricolage entails the use of various methods, it is important to take note of Denzil and Lincoln's distinction (2011:5) between the methodological bricoleur and the theoretical bricoleur. A methodological bricoleur refers to acquired skilfulness in executing a large number of various tasks. Such tasks could range from interviewing to intensive self-

reflection and self-analysis. The theoretical bricoleur, however, not only reads extensively, but is also knowledgeable about various interpretive paradigms such as feminism, Marxism, cultural studies, constructivism and queer theory - all of which can shed light on any given problem. With regard to the latter, Kincheloe and McLaren (2005:318) suggest that in order to gain understanding from people living in the margins, bricoleurs display "the blurred boundary between the hermeneutical search for understanding and the critical concern with social change for social justice". It is within the critical hermeneutical breadth of bricolage that "the act of understanding power and its effects is merely one part of the truth, albeit an inseparable part, of counterhegemonic *action* [emphasis in original]" (Kincheloe & McLaren 2005:318). Steinberg (in Kincheloe & McLaren 2005:318) points out that the critical and hermeneutical orientations are not simply in conflict, as they are also synergistic with each other. In effect, bricolage is an infusion of understanding social action, and in the case of my study it is about understanding class, race and rural issues with a particular emphasis on social justice for historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities.

In this study I used a theoretical bricolage because I employed the social theory of Bourdieu, Critical Race Theory and the Generative Theory of Rurality to

> seek multiple perspectives not to provide the truth about reality but to avoid the monological knowledge that emerges from unquestioned frames of reference and the dismissal of the numerous relationships and connections that link various forms of knowledge together (Kincheloe 2005:327).

My decision to utilise the interdisciplinary approach of bricolage was premised on my attempt to elucidate how the phenomenon of low educational achievement of the historically disadvantaged plays out in the rural. In this regard, Kincheloe (2001:687) notes that "a complex understanding of research and knowledge production prepares bricoleurs to address the complexities of the social, cultural, psychological, and educational domains". Of importance in this regard is Mcleod's claim (in Kincheloe 2001:687) that bricolage explores the diverse viewpoints of the socially privileged and the marginalised in relation to constructions of race, class, gender, and sexuality (in this study, particularly the work of Bourdieu). However, in this research the opinions and perspectives of individuals and social groups who have been oppressed by the larger forces of society are explored. The assumption is that the politics of liberation starts with the perspectives and experiences of the marginalised.

By way of summarising this section, I draw on Kincheloe and McLaren's assertion (2005:320) that "[a]s parts of complex systems and intricate processes, objects of inquiry are far too mercurial to be viewed by a single way of seeing or as a snapshot of a particular phenomenon at a specific moment in time". I was prompted to make use of this multi-dimensional tool to get a critical hermeneutical understanding of the ontological complexity that I wanted to engage in.

1.5.3.3   Empirical research

According to Nieuwenhuis (2016:51) "there are three major sources of data for a qualitative research study, that is interviews, observations, and documents". For this study, I mainly used interviews.

a)   Data generation

Lichtman (2013:205) maintains that qualitative interviewing opens new doors to learn what others (the participants) think and feel, and the researcher has to listen and be attentive to how participants speak in their own words. Although the method of interviewing appears so modest, it needs skill to obtain good results (Willis 2007:247).

Willis (2007:244) claims that much of qualitative research involves asking questions, and it can often elicit stories that can inspire and enlighten others. In this regard, I conducted interviews to probe participants for insight through their stories in order to get an interpretive and critical understanding of their perspectives.

Flick (2011:113) adds "narrative interviews to the discussion and asserts that these interviews are invited to present longer, coherent accounts in the form of a narrative". In the case of Critical Race Theory, if the researcher´s aim is to draw a narrative that is relevant to the research question, the narrative question should be articulated broadly, yet at the same time appropriately specific, in order to produce the desired focus (Flick 2011:114). In this regard, Willis (2007:295) argues that:

> [s]torytelling has much in common with hermeneutic research, but it puts more emphasis on representing the perspectives of the participants in a context of details about the setting or situation ... [in this case] meaning must be derived for a contextual reading of the data rather than the extraction of data segments for detailed analysis.

The interviews in this study were all semi-structured with scheduled interview procedures. Flick (2011:112) maintains that "[f]or semi-structured interviews, a number of questions are prepared that between them cover the intended scope of the interview". In this regard, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:444) propose that the

> [s]election of the interview strategy depends on the context and purpose of the study, namely (1) to obtain the present perceptions of activities, roles, feelings, motivations, concerns, and thoughts; (2) to obtain future expectations or anticipated experiences; (3) to verify and extend information obtained from other sources; and (4) to verify or extend hunches and ideas developed by the participants or researcher.

In view of these guidelines I conducted interviews at times convenient to the participants, probing through pre-set questions, but allowing them to tell their stories freely. I led all the interviews and recorded them on a voice tape recorder. The interviews with the various participants took between 30 and 60 minutes to complete.

b)   *Participants*

The study presents the reader to the research sites (schools) and to the different types of participants who spoke about their schools. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of all schools and participants.

The study concentrated on five schools, located in smaller to larger towns within the Boland and West Coast regions of the Western Cape. These towns have small-town or semi-urban economies and are not far from a large city where many inhabitants work, commuting there and back on a daily basis. All five of the schools are in historically disadvantaged areas of the towns, where the residents are mostly Coloured. The schools serve various Coloured communities, including communities from neighbouring smaller towns and farms.

The selection of the participants is an essential aspect of research and needs careful consideration. Cohen *et al.* (2007:100) point out that "factors such as expense, time and accessibility prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population, therefore they frequently need to be able to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population". The researcher must choose to use a probability sample (a random sample) or a non-probability sample (a purposive sample) (Cohen *et al.* 2007:100). In this case, the schools and participants from schools were purposively selected, in line with tendencies in qualitative research. Patton (in Merriam 2002:12) contends that it is essential to select "*information-rich cases* ... Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great

deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" [emphasis in original]. I purposefully and deliberately selected the five schools because of their working-class nature and their academic performance. I selected these on the basis of their typicality or the presence of the characteristics being searched for (Cohen *at al.* 2007:114-115). At each school, I invited the principal and two educators to take part in the study. In some instances, where I was familiar with the schools, I selected the teachers whom I perceived as knowledgeable regarding these learners and their home circumstances. In the other cases the principals introduced me to the staff and requested teachers who were interested to assist me with the research. I was fortunate to get responses from ten teachers with in-depth knowledge as participants. A total of 20 learners from working-class families (male and female) as well as 12 parents and two community workers, all associated with one or more of the selected schools, were requested to take part in the study. The learners responded to requests by the school principals after formally informing the learners about the research I intended to conduct. Again, where I was acquainted with the communities, I approached parents that I knew who had children in the selected schools. In the other cases parents responded to the letters I sent home with the learners who decided to participate in the research. The two community workers were introduced by two principals of the selected schools, and who also showed interest to assist in the research.

I obtained rich data from these participants through their combined views and stories regarding schooling in historically disadvantaged rural communities. On the whole, to attain findings that are sufficient, Rubin & Rubin (in Flick 2007:81) suggest "choosing other interviewees who can extend the scope of the results, orienting on the principle of completeness and testing the results for similarity and dissimilarity until you have reached saturation, which means that more interviews would not add any new insights or perspectives".

## c)	*Data analysis*

There are clear guidelines on how to approach data analysis, and I drew from a number of them. Henning (2004:6) states that in order to answer the overall research question of the study, you have to work through the data to come to a conclusion in which you will attempt to give an answer. Nieuwenhuis (2016:109) explains that in qualitative research, data analysis is coincident with the data collection process. The coinciding of data collection and analysis allows the researcher to make changes as he/she is proceeding, redirect data collection if

necessary, and "test" emerging themes and categories. It is always a good practice to do this to save time and much frustration. Marshall & Rossman (2011:211) observe that coding is a worthwhile way of analysing data obtained from interviews. According to LeCompte & Preissle (in Cohen *et al.* 2007:462) "[t]he intention is to move from description to explanation and theory generation". I transcribed the data and worked through the interviews as I went along. I manually analysed the data, worked with theoretical constructs, identified recurring patterns and ultimately did an interpretation of the data. I employed thematic data analysis.

According to Willis (2007:302) "[a] dialectic view of truth must include the notion that there are always emerging possibilities which are not yet visible… [t]o what extent does this research present new possibilities for social action". In this study possibilities were explored pertaining to school practices in order to enhance learner achievement in historically disadvantaged rural schools.

1.5.4 THE INTEGRITY OF THE STUDY

Merriam (2009:210) explains that in qualitative research, the main underlying principle is to obtain an understanding of a specific phenomenon. The criteria for trusting the study is therefore different to that of quantitative studies, where the finding of a law or testing a hypothesis is often the objective. The author points out that qualitative research has specific approaches for instituting the authenticity and trustworthiness of a study (Merriam 2009:211). I therefore had to give serious consideration to the ethical issues and trustworthiness of the study.

1.5.4.1 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In educational research, ethical considerations are important for the research process and needs to be abided by, not only from the start to the finish of the research process, but also afterwards (Miller & Bell 2012:61). As the subjects of educational research is mostly humans, ethics are essential in order to prevent harmful situations for participants and to safeguard their wellbeing. Of particular importance in this respect is that "[y]ou have a moral and professional obligation to be ethical even when research participants are unaware of or unconcerned about ethics" (Neuman 2011:143). Israel and Hay (in Creswell 2014: 132-133) denote that if ethical considerations are not abided by, it could result in negative and fearsome consequences. The main ethical issues are "informed consent, confidentiality and privacy, risks and discomforts, and the right to withdraw from the study" (Israel & Hay in Creswell

2014:134). The researcher has the obligation to obtain consent from participants to be interviewed and to supply them with full knowledge of what the permission comprises (Creswell 2014:136). Participants should *inter alia* be reminded that the researcher is accountable for safeguarding their privacy, and that they should not be harmed in any way (Creswell 2014:138).

In terms of the ethical processes in this study, I obtained clearance to conduct the research through the Ethics Board of the Faculty of Education of the University of the Free State (Ethical clearance number: UFS-HSD2015/0503) (*cf.* Addendum B). Furthermore, permission was granted by the Western Cape Education Department (*cf.* Addendum A), as well as by the principals and governing bodies of the selected schools (*cf.* Addendum C and Addendum D). The principals, educators, parents as participants, parents of learner-participants and the community workers all completed consent forms prior to the interviews (*cf.* Addendum F; Addendum G; and Addendum H). In addition, the learners completed forms of assent, thereby agreeing to participate in the interviews (*cf.* Addendum E). In these documents, the primary aim and objectives of the study were discussed, and the participants were asked permission for the researcher to record the interviews. Participants were reminded throughout the interview process that their participation was voluntary and that they could cease their participation at any point.

I consider educational research as sensitive (as also explained by Cohen *et al.* 2007:121 amongst others) and therefore I decided from the onset that if learners´ stories called up bad memories, I would address these by reporting it to the school principal and participants' parents. The questions, however, were not constructed in ways that aimed to create discomfort in the participants (Cohen *et al.* 2007:52) (Addendum I: Interview schedules). The interviews in the study were done in Afrikaans because the participants are Afrikaans speaking.

Participators did not gain financially from the study. The information was kept safe and confidential, and all other information was stored privately on my computer (Cohen *et al.* 2007:64). Pseudonyms were used at all times.

1.5.4.2   TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Qualitative research is informed by different belief systems regarding reality, so concepts such as validity and reliability generally used in quantitative research are named differently in

qualitative research as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Merriam 2009:211).

a)   *Credibility*

Credibility deals with how the findings of the research correlates with reality (Merriam 2009:213). One measure to accomplish this is by using triangulation (Merriam 2009:234). According to Willis (2007:218) "[t]he essential idea of triangulation is to find multiple sources of confirmation when you want to draw a conclusion". For this reason, Willis (2007:219) is of the opinion that "[t]riangulation can also be done across sources of information (e.g. interviews with three different types of participants)". Gibbs (2007:94) argues that getting multiple points of view could provide a more accurate understanding of the subject matter. Nieuwenhuis (2016:122) states that the use of multiple points of view is frequently called triangulation, and it constitutes an important strategy in the synthesis of the findings of a study. In the case of this study, and guided by these authors, I attempted to obtain credibility through interviews with various types of participants such as learners, parents, teachers, principals and community workers.

b)   *Consistency*

Richards (in Merriam 2009:223) writes that "good qualitative research gets much of its claim to validity from the researcher´s ability to display persuasively how they got there, and how they built confidence that this was the best account possible". Patton (2002:570) maintains that a qualitative analyst constantly returns to the data to see if the constructs, categories, explanations and interpretations carry weight, and if they accurately reflect the nature of the phenomena. Regarding auditing of the research process, Gibbs (in Creswell 2014:203) suggests that one way to attain consistency in qualitative procedures is to check transcripts to ensure that no obvious errors were made during transcription. The researcher has to work precisely and accurately, checking the theoretical constructs, categories, explanations and interpretations contributing to the soundness of the study.

Merriam (2009:222) also maintains that the findings should be consistent with the presented data. In my study I attempted to present data that could be most congruent with reality as understood by the participants. To obtain these I give in-depth descriptions of how the data was collected, how categories were derived and decisions made throughout the research project. I also give in-depth descriptions of the participant selection, selection of the schools in historically disadvantaged rural areas and the semi-structured interviews conducted with

the participants. I will present the detailed descriptions of the findings in the form of quotes from the interview research in Afrikaans, the main medium of communication in the Western Cape. I also supply translated quotes in English in Chapter 5.

c)   Transferability

Transferability engages with "the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam 2009:223). To obtain external validity and generalisability (transferability) in qualitative studies is very different from obtaining reliability in quantitative studies. Merriam (2009:224) maintains that small, non-random samples are purposefully selected in qualitative research because the researcher needs to understand the particular phenomenon comprehensively, and not to find out what is generally true for the many. She claims that providing rich, thick descriptions is a major strategy to ensure external validity or generalisation in the qualitative sense (Merriam 2009:227). In this study, five schools were purposefully selected with the intention to attain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of low achievement of historically working-class Coloured learners in rural settings. In the next part of this chapter attention is given to the scientific and geographical demarcation of the study.

1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

In this section I describe the scientific demarcation of the study, as well as the geographical demarcation. With regards to the scientific demarcation I argue that the study is positioned in sociology and philosophy of education. In terms of the geographical demarcation, I delimit this study to two educational districts in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.

1.6.1 SCIENTIFIC DEMARCATION

In this study, I try to bring an "understandings of excluded communities and their perspectives and knowledges to academic consciousness" (Fataar 2015a:1). The combination of sociological and philosophically perspectives might add to a more comprehensive understanding of the community under inquiry. Firstly, with a sociological approach, the key concern is to contribute to learners in their educational becomings (*cf*. Fataar 2015a:xiii) in rural areas of the Western Cape. Equally important, Fataar (2015a:1-2) maintains that a sociological approach "is based on the assumption that an educational approach that directly recognises and interests youths, and connects with their youth literacies and life contexts, knowledges and social imaginaries" enables learners to better engage with their schooling.

Secondly, Waghid (2005:82) points out that "philosophy of education has to be inherently a critical and systematic inquiry involving an explanation of concepts (conceptual analysis) into the fundamental ideas or principles underlying human thought, conduct, and experience". That author (Waghid 2005:82) further claims that philosophy of education should interrelate with the (African) experience, in particular with how understanding, clarification and reflection should be used to answer back to issues and problems created by that experience. Waghid (2005:82) suggests the need for different ways of thought and action. In this particular study the (African) experience of key role players in historically disadvantaged rural communities are elicited to build on understandings centered on the relationship between rural life and schooling in semi-urban areas in the Western Cape. Differently put, the task here was to better understand the complexity of problems of rural communities and schooling, including the importance of listening to the voices of the rural poor (HSRC-EPC 2005:viii).

Communities excluded from the center (*cf*. Fataar 2015a:1) should engage in their social realities in order to shape a better future for themselves. In combination to this, we as the research community has the obligation to acknowledge the voices of members of rural communities in order to improve the quality of education of the rural population, which are informed by the powerful insights of the people in these communities (HSRC-EPC 2005: vii). It can subsequently be claimed that this research can be located within the sociology and philosophy of education.

1.6.2 GEOGRAPHICAL DEMARCATION

The research was conducted in the Western Cape, which is one of the nine provinces of South Africa, situated in the south-western part of the country (*cf*. Figure 1.1). The province is divided into rural, semi-rural and urban areas. There are four educational districts in this province, namely the Cape Winelands, Eden and Central Karoo, Overberg, and the Cape West Coast (*cf*. Figure 1.2). This study was undertaken in two educational districts, namely the Cape West Coast and the Cape Winelands.

The rationale for demarcating this research within the Western Cape was that I as the researcher, originate from the Western Cape and the majority of the country's Coloured population are inhabitants of the Western Cape. Five schools were purposefully selected, and one principal, two educators and four or five learners from each school participated in the study. Additionally, two community workers also participated in the research. As the study

was undertaken in schools in disadvantaged communities, the possibility exists that the findings could be applied to similar communities in other areas in the country.

Figure 1.1: Map of South Africa [2]
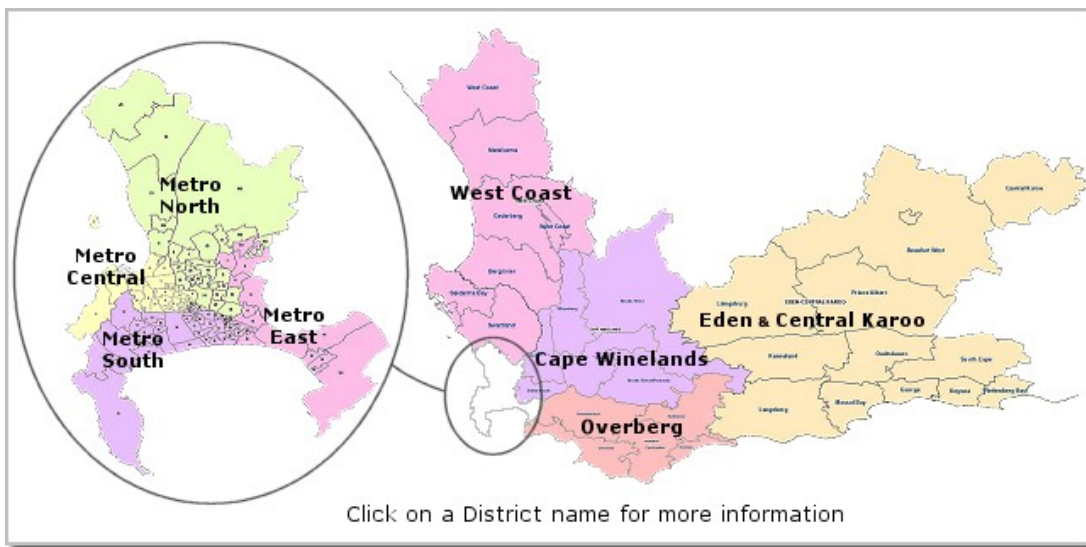
Figure 1.2: Map of the educational districts in the Western Cape [3]

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[2]   https://www.google.co.za/search?q=south+africa+map&tbm=isch&imgil=F3Juz4AG_wsHsM%253A%
253BnoL9VB

[3]   https://wced.pgwc.gov.za/branchIDC/Districts/Districts.html

1.7 RESEARCH PLAN

In addition to this chapter (Chapter 1) that serves as a general orientation of the study regarding the research problem, the rationale for the study, the research questions, methodology and the research design, the rest of this thesis unfolds in five consecutive chapters.

Chapter 2 focuses on Bourdieu´s social theory, Critical Race Theory and the Generative Theory of Rurality. The aim of this chapter is to conceptualise of how these theories can assist in offering an understanding of the context in which learning takes place (*cf*. 1.3.1).

In Chapter 3 the research focus shifts to knowledge production through school curricula. In this chapter a literature review enables critical comments on the theoretical underpinnings of recent and current curriculum provisions in South Africa (*cf*. 1.3.2). The elucidation of the theoretical underpinnings assists in highlighting the embodied school knowledge codes and in opening up new possibilities for democratic curriculum debates*.*

In Chapter 4 an exposition is given of the research methodology that was employed in this study. In addition to outlining the methodological approach and the research methods, the research design and the steps to enhance the quality, authenticity and trustworthiness of this study are explained.

The empirical study of the research follows in Chapter 5, and the aim of this chapter is to uncover school practices in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities which could integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school towards learner achievement (*cf*. 1.3.3). It is attempted to accomplish these objectives through interview research, an analysis of the data, and a discussion of the findings.

The aim of Chapter 6 is to offer critical comments regarding the mediation of learners' life world knowledge and the existing school cultural capital towards learner achievement (*cf. 1.3.4*). In essence, these comments serve as an attempt to answer the overarching research question of this study, namely *How can school practices in historically disadvantaged communities mediate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school towards learner achievement?*

1.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter an orientation of the research was given. In the introduction a background of the study was offered and the reader was introduced to the South African context, the historical trajectory of education up to the current state of education, and an explanation as to why learners in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities struggle to achieve academically. Furthermore, the significance of the problem was spelled out in the rationale and ideas were shared on how this study can contribute to new knowledge in order to address the problem of the low educational performance of learners in disadvantaged communities.

This thesis is framed within a bricolage of Bourdieu´s social theory, Critical Race Theory and the Generative Theory of Rurality, and these theories subsequently informed my attempt to explore the phenomenon of low educational performance of learners in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities. The decision to root this study in these theories was informed by their potential to give weight to socio-economic conditions, class, race and rural structures, and to contribute to emancipatory and transformative knowledge (Johnson-Bailey 2002:326). Given the adoption of a qualitative research methodology in this study, it was my contention that my understanding of the phenomenon of low learner performance in rural disadvantaged communities can further be strengthened by a literature review and interview research.

The next chapter is dedicated to a literature review of the three theoretical perspectives that inform the theoretical framework within which this study is anchored.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the study aims to conceptualise how Bourdieu's social theory, as well as the work of theorists in the tradition of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the Generative Theory of Rurality (GTR), can be understood in the context of school education. The theoretical framework as a bricolage of these three theories provides "a set of interrelated constructs, definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (Kerlinger in Balfour 2012a:3). This was done specifically to apprehend the position of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners and to offer a different understanding of "what defines ´success´ in remote education" (Guenther 2013:167). This study explored agency to mediate school practices for historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners in order to achieve academic success. In line with the interdisciplinary nature of this research, this chapter focuses on the overarching framework of Critical Social Theory by drawing on Bourdieu's social theory, CRT and GTR. I used this theoretical framework as a lens in this study to uncover power structures in order to attempt bringing about change in society. I subsequently adopted a critical social perspective in order to link power structures to class, race and rural issues.

2.2 A CRITICAL SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

Raffo, Dyson, Gunter, Hall, Jones and Kalambouka (2007:35) suggest that "[t]he socially critical position assumes that education can both challenge existing power structures and enable democratic development". These authors (Raffo *et al*. 2007:35) propose that education was never developed to educate young people in a way to challenge social structures to change. Education was rather used to create, reproduce and enhance inequality. Through a socially critical perspective, I engage in ways to critically reflect on existing domination practices and possibly begin to change society by engaging with these.

Raffo *et al.* (2007:viii) claim that "[s]ocially critical explanations tend to either focus on the meso and explore the ways in which schools systematically marginalise certain groups of learners, or focus on the macro and demonstrate how privileged groups within society sustain a whole range of social structures – including the education system – to maintain their positions of privilege". In this study I focus on both of these because in a critical social

orientation the people at the lower end of economies have to "answer back" to voice their position of marginalisation.

According to Leonardo (2004:13), the followers of the critical social tradition are not in the habit of justifying the existence of domination. They rather describe the possible forms it can take, and in doing so they critique existing notions of power and privilege. Ferrare and Apple (2012a:345) suggest that Bourdieu's social theory offers researchers a mode to describe the objective conditions of domination within the education system, while simultaneously linking these conditions to the lived experiences of the subjects. The "objectivist/subjectivist" dichotomy disappears and meanings relative to a specific field of practice and struggle come to the fore (Ferrare & Apple 2012a:345).

As indicated in the previous chapter, Bourdieu´s theory has been criticised as merely a theory of the reproduction of social conditions. Calhoun (1998:142) states that Bourdieu´s sociology affords for "more real accounts of the influences which objective circumstances, historical patterns of distribution of various forms of capital, and the trajectories of different actors have on power relations in the different fields". In a somewhat similar vein, Bhaskar in Gorski (2013:666–667) asserts that if an individual can determine a methodogical association among "inaccurate beliefs and oppressive social structures, then one has not only explained the beliefs but also supplied a motivation for changing the structures". However, in recognition of the critique of Bourdieu's social theory, I take note of the notions of other theorists who work in the critical social tradition. I find this important in the light of Calhoun's comment (1998:35) that Critical Social Theory stresses and creates critique by means of "a critical engagement with the [a] theorist´s contemporary social world, recognising that the existing state of affairs does not exhaust all possibilities, and offering positive implications for social actions". Critical Social Theory subsequently encourages social action as it seems like a "promise" for a possible better world.

Premised on the perception of Critical Social Theory, that all role players in a community should play a part to create a better world, I work with the assumption that historically disadvantaged communities should be actively involved in their struggles for the betterment of their own social conditions. They should engage in their educational world, and negotiate school practices in order for transformation to occur which will help historically disadvantaged learners to succeed. By saying this, schools have the obligation to work towards social justice in order to level the playing field. For this reason I draw on different theoretical points and

concepts such as Bourdieu's cultural capital, field and habitus, Critical Race Theory, and the Generative Theory of Rurality as a convincing conceptual outline to gain insight into the scholastic difficulties of historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners in the Western Cape, South Africa (Larey 2016:4).

2.3 BOURDIEU´S SOCIAL THEORY

My decision to work with Bourdieu's social theory was primarily informed by its potential to not only take part in the discussion of inequality and how this relates to educational achievement, but also to gain an understanding of the ambiguous position of the historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners in the Western Cape. With regards to Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, Wacquant (2007:7) suggests its usefulness

> to uncover the most profoundly buried structures of the various social worlds which constitute the social universe, as well as the 'mechanism' which tend to ensure their reproduction or their transformation.

By implication Bourdieu´s theory of knowledge entails modes of how to perceive and how to understand the social world.   Furthermore, Bourdieu´s method of inquiry of the social ontology entails a social reality that "illuminates how Bourdieu mingled Marx´s sensuous materialism, Durkheim´s teachings on classification (later extended by Cassirer), and Weber´s insights into hierarchies of honor into a sociological model of class all [sic] his own" (Wacquant in Bourdieu 2013:291). In effect, Bourdieu espouses the notion of the "double objectivity" of the social reality, "underscoring the recursive constitution of social and mental structures" (Bourdieu 2013:291). This claim is the core of Bourdieu´s thinking about the reproduction or transformation of social reality.

2.3.1 THE NOTION OF SOCIAL SPACE AND SOCIAL GROUPS

It is, however, significant to state that in building a theory of social space, Bourdieu assumes a range of interruptions with Marxist theory (Bourdieu in Larey 2016:5). In his argument on social space, especially on groups and classes, Bourdieu (1985:725) writes that one can separate classes as groups of individuals who inhabit similar positions, are exposed to similar conditionings, and have similar dispositions and interests. Such sets of agency are likely to produce similar practices and similar stances in life. Bourdieu (1985:725) further proposes "classes on paper", and indicates that these classes have a theoretical existence. Social groups, contrary to classes, are products of a descriptive cataloguing, which makes it possible

to explain and predict the practices and possessions of group-forming practices. In contrast to Marx's notion of class, Bourdieu leans more towards the idea of a group as a set of agents who mobilise themselves to advance their own interests (Bourdieu 1985:725).

According to Bourdieu (1985:723-724), certain groups own sets of properties that give them an advantage within the world. By implication, the owners of these properties are well-defined by their relative positions within such social spaces. As noted by Ferrare and Apple (2012b:8), these social spaces consist of structured spaces of position, whereas position-takings can be regarded as fields.

Bourdieu (1985:724) philosophises that a field of forces can be observed as a set of objective power relations that enforce themselves on each person who comes into the field. The field, in turn, is irreducible to the intents of the individuals or the collaborations among them. Effectively, Bourdieu (in Robbins 2002:309-310) offers a clarification of the concept of field:

> the constituting agents or systems of agents may be described as so many forces which, by their existence, opposition or combination, determine its specific structure at a given moment in time. In return, each of these is defined by its particular position within this field from which it derives *positional properties* which cannot be assimilated to intrinsic properties. Each is also defined by a specific type of participation in the *cultural field* taken as a system of relations between themes and problems; it is a determined type of *cultural unconsciousness,* while at the same time it intrinsically possesses what could be called a *functional weight,* because its own ´mass´, that is, its power (or better, its authority) in the field cannot be defined independently of its position within it [italised emphasis in original].

Bourdieu (in Larey 2016:6) recounts to the interactive or relational way of thinking about the social reality, that is support to the structuralist upheaval of modern mathematics and physics. In this regard he asserts that in sociology, objective positions and relations between these positions are taking place. Bourdieu (1989:16) calls the power relations between these positions "the field of power". By implication, the distribution of resources determines the objective relations which individuals occupy in the field. These objective relations could possibly turn into "competition for the appropriation of scarce goods of which this social universe is the site" (Larey 2016:6). One can therefore construct a simplified model of this, which can make it possible to conceptualise that each individual can take up a position of competition. Subsequently, while every field has its own rationality and its own order, the

various kinds of capital and the weight of these assets are inclined to impose their own rationality on the other fields (Bourdieu 1985:724).

Bourdieu (1989:17) notes that "fundamental powers are in reality economic capital, cultural capital (in its different forms), social capital, and symbolic capital that are observed and acknowledged as legitimate". These various kinds of capital, which may exist as material properties or in cultural capital – objectified, embodied and institutionalised – represent powers in particular fields (Larey 2016:6). Importantly, cultural capital cannot be transmitted, but it is rather attained over long periods of time. Additionally, cultural capital is fostered through intense labour, predominantly in the early childhood years. Bourdieu (1985:724) maintains that the amount of cultural capital and the given earnings from that capital determine an individual's position in a certain space. Any success that an individual achieves warrants him or her a certain position in his/her world.

On the one hand, Bourdieu and Wacquant (2013:296) suggest that social groups exist in the objectivity of the first order, according to the distribution of material properties between social groups, that is how much material properties or cultural goods an individual possesses. On the other hand, social groups exist in the objectivity of the second order, "by producing different classifications and representations on the basis of a practical knowledge of these distributions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant in Larey 2016:6). As a result, this knowledge will be reflected in the everyday lives of the various social groups. These two styles of being are the consequence of perceptions and appreciation that individuals form about their position in social space. An individual's habitus is the intermediating drive between a place in the spreading of material goods and symbolic power (objectivity I and objectivity ll) (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2013:296; Bourdieu 1985:728).

2.3.2 CONSTITUTION OF SOCIAL AND MENTAL STRUCTURES

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:12) proposes that interaction takes place between social structures and mental structures of the social world. Drawing on the insights of Durkheim and Mauss (1963), Bourdieu claims that conceptual systems functioning in primeval societies form the origins of their social system (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:12). Types of understanding are observed as shared representations of the various social groups, and the basic conceptual structures are the results of the social organisation of the group. In this regard Bourdieu spreads out Durkheim's notion of the "sociocentrism of systems of thought"

in four directions. Firstly, Bourdieu contends that the interrelations between cognitive and social structures perceived in primeval societies are also revealed in modern societies; thus also perpetuated by education systems (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:12). Bourdieu (2003:345) asserts that

> in a society where the handing on of culture is monopolised by a school, the hidden affinities uniting the works of man (and, at the same time, modes of conduct and thought) derive from the institution of the school, whose function is consciously (and also, in part, unconsciously) to transmit the unconscious or, to be more precise, to produce individuals equipped with the system of unconscious (or, deeply buried) master-patterns that constitute their culture.

Secondly, Bourdieu puts forward that social sections and mental schemes are operationally of the same kind, as they are related hereditarily: "the mental representations are nothing other than the embodiment of the social divisions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant in Larey 2016:7). Furthermore, increasing exposure to particular social circumstances embeds a collective of long-lasting and similar dispositions in individuals. These dispositions relate to the internalisation of the external social environment, which is subsequently inscribed as the social condition inside individuals. The implication is that when the assemblies of the objectivity of the second order (habitus) are the personified form of the assemblies of the objectivity of the first order (the social environment), the inquiry of objective assemblies understandably continues over into the inquiry of subjective dispositions (Bourdieu & de Saint Martin in Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:3). So,

> [a]s a habit-forming force, the school provides those who have been subjected directly or indirectly to its influence not so much with particular and particularised patterns of thought as with that general disposition, generating particular patterns that can be applied in different areas of thought and action, which may be termed cultural habitus (Bourdieu 1985:728).

For Bourdieu (1985:729) this habit-forming force consequently offers the individual a certain standpoint in life, and this standpoint in a sense determines what one is allowed to do or not. Habit-forming subsequently implies an implicit recognition of one´s place, which is to be valued or predicted. A workable science of society therefore has to include both objective predictabilities and the procedure of internalisation of objectivity, through which the trans-individual unconsciously inhabits the principles of (di)visions (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:13).

Thirdly, and most critical for Bourdieu, is how the interaction between social and mental structures lives up to a political agenda. These symbolic systems of acknowledgement are not merely systems of knowledge, but they represent the structures of dominance. Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:13-14) feels that

> [t]he conservation of the social order is decisively reinforced by … the orchestration of categories of perception of the social world which, being adjusted to the divisions of the established order (and, therefore, to the interests of those who dominate it) and common to all minds structured in accordance with those structures, impose themselves with all appearances of objective necessity.

The classificatory arrangements, which are used to constitute society, have a tendency to represent the social structures as natural and indispensable. It is therefore not merely a matter of an historical imbalance of power between classes, ethnic groups or genders. On the one hand, Bourdieu (1985:6-7) remarks that

> the profound realism that generally characterises the world view of the dominated; functioning as a sort of socially constituted instinct of conservation, it can be seen as conservative only in terms of an external, and therefore normative, representation of the 'objective interest' of those whom it helps to live, or survive"

while on the other hand he argues (in Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:14) that

> if we grant that symbolic systems are the social products that contribute to making the world, that they do not simply mirror social relations but help *constitute* them, then one can, within limits, transform the world by transforming its representation [emphasis in original].

In the fourth place Bourdieu follows from the Durkheimian problematical that structures of classification form part of the battles that individuals and groups face in their daily lives. This also manifests in the fields of cultural and political production (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007 in Larey 2016:8). Also, Bourdieu and Boltanski (in Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:14) mention that in a society that is characterised by different classes, the social classifications are constituted for example by occupations. By implication, the representation of groups is produced by the power relations between classes. In this regard, Bourdieu extends the Durkheimian organisational analysis with an instinctive selection, and the imposition of systems of classification. In reference to recursive and structurally interrelated social and mental structures, Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:14) contends that the connections that arises between these structures are responsible for one of the strongest supports of social

domination. Of particular significance here is that social groups are constantly tied up in a battle with one another to enforce their particular worldview and concurrent interest. Additionally, Bourdieu (1985:731) claims that the battle of social groups to carry out their legitimate view of the social world is also marked by the accounts of symbolic capital held by the specific collectives.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (2007:14-15) affirm that the sociology of knowledge is in reality a sociology of the political, which institutes a sociology of symbolic power. It is further believed that the core of Bourdieu´s work can be understood as "a materialist anthropology of the specific contribution that various forms of symbolic violence makes to the reproduction and transformation of structures of domination" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:14-15). As such, the cultural knowledge of the working class is not aligned with that of the middle class that almost guarantees school success. By implication, the reality of social groups has an intense influence on learners´ positions in their universe. Robbins (2002:321) comments that "praxeological knowledge is concerned with the dialectical relationship between objective structures and the structured dispositions which tend to reproduce them", that is the twofold process to internalise the externality and in turn to externalise the internality. In other words, the habitus of the working class and the habitus of the middle class continue to reproduce themselves (Larey 2016:8).

2.3.3 *SOCIAL SPACE, SYMBOLIC POWER AND THE DOMINANT WORLD VIEW*

Social groups are constantly involved in symbolic struggles over power to force their worldview on each other (Bourdieu 1989:20). These symbolic battles over the view of the social world may take on an objective or subjective form. According to the objective point of view, one can act individually or with collective representation. According to the subjective point of view, Bourdieu suggests that one can attempt to convert "categories of perception and appreciation of the social world" by changing the mental and evaluative organisations through which it is created (Bourdieu 1989:20).

Bourdieu (2013:297) continues to argue for the existence of objective differences present in material properties and in the differential profits that these provide. In this regard he refuses to agree that differences exist only because of individuals' beliefs or due to ideas forced on others. He further claims that capital is altered into recognised distinctions in and through representations formed and performed by individuals. For Bourdieu, any difference that is

recognised and accepted as valid can function as symbolic capital that offers a token of distinction. Symbolic capital exists in the relationship between distinctive and distinct properties, for instance "body proper, language, clothing, and interior furnishings". Each practice or property is valued according to its position in relation to others in the system of equivalent properties. Consequently, collectives who own the schemes of perception and appreciation to recognise these properties, place them into positions of dominance (Bourdieu 2013:297).

For a practice or material goods to function as a sign of distinction, it should be classified and categorised as such by dominant groups. Through this the practice or property is returned to the symbolic universe of classification and categorising which operates according to the rationality of symbolic systems. The perceived distance in economic differences contributes to the value of practices and properties in the form of signs of distinction. While objects are grasped as socially appropriate and valid in the symbolic classification system, such objects and properties cease to be mere material goods. They lead to exchanges. Objects which yield material profits lead to recognition that signifies and acquires worth through "the complete set of distances in relation to other properties or non-properties" (Bourdieu 2013:298).

For Bourdieu (2013:298), any distribution of goods or services that is not equal is seen as indicators of distinction in a symbolic system. A symbolic system is therefore a system of distinction as it appraises distributions such as "automobiles, places of residence, sports, parlour games", etcetera. The sum of these socially pertinent practices and non-practices portrays the lifestyles of certain social groups. This being said, Bourdieu claims that the truth of the "objectivist theory of social classes reduces the truth of social classifications". The objective truth of these classifications does not take into account the truth to which it was socially constructed. Scientific objectivity can only be achieved once the subjective experience, which impedes it, is also incorporated. For Bourdieu, the best-suited theory is that which incorporates part of the truth taken up with objective knowledge and the primary experience of the failure to recognise that truth. The primary knowledge of practices and properties could therefore never be captured, and will at all times only be a partial truth (Bourdieu 2013:298).

The recognition of distinction (once a practice or property is perceived and classified as distinct within a symbolic system) is simply capital in different forms, observed by an individual capable of the categorisation of perceptions, which arises from the embodiment of that

structures of circulation. This practice of perception and classification coincides with objective structures and the structures which have been embodied (Bourdieu 1985:731). Symbolic capital goes along with symbolic capital, and the self-sufficiency of the field of symbolic production prevents it from domination. In its operation, the dominant in the social field exerts its powers, and objective power relations subsequently have a tendency to reproduce themselves in symbolic power relations. In the battle to enforce their particular view of the social world, individuals and groups exert power in equal measure to their symbolic capital - in other words, in equal amounts to the acknowledgement they obtain from a group. The symbolic power of the views and predictions directed at enforcing principles of vision and divisions of the social world is a precipice; that is being well known and being-recognised in the power relations which enables to force a precipice on to others. Based on lifestyles, these groups are, for Bourdieu (2013:300), dominant, sublimated and therefore legitimated classes.

2.3.4 SOCIAL GROUPS AND THE EFFECT OF THE HOMOLOGIES

Those who are dominantly positioned within the field of symbolic production are those individuals and groups who exert their power in the field of political struggles. However, the dominant also has a persuading influence on the dominated. This is done through homology of position, which aims to challenge the representations which stems from their habitus and that have a tendency to secure the continued reproduction of the distribution of symbolic capital. The phenomenon that the Marxist tradition appeals to "consciousness from outside", refers to the input that certain academics make to create a view of the social world that differs from the dominant viewpoint. The homology between groups can only be comprehended sociologically if a person takes into account the homology between the dominant - producers of cultural goods - and the dominated, those most deprived of the means of economic and cultural production (Bourdieu 1985:736).

According to Bourdieu (1985:736) the insufficiencies of the Marxist theory of classes, and particularly the explanation of the set of objectively observed differences, arise from constricting the social world to the economic field alone. This tendency leads to the defining of a social world merely in terms of the interconnections of economic production. Positions in the different fields and sub-fields are consequently ignored, in particular the interconnections and antagonisms of cultural productions that structure the social field. This exposition of fields is opposed to the idea of Marx's antagonism between owners and non-

owners in the production of goods. For Bourdieu (1985) the social space is a multi-layered space - a set of fields that is moderately independent.

Most important for ending the sequence of symbolic production is that alliances can be set up according to homologies between positions within different fields (Bourdieu 1985:737). Such alliances are based on conscious misunderstanding and are mostly lasting. A concurrence of the position between intellectuals and industrial workers is the basis of a confusing alliance. These cultural producers, in other words the dominated individuals among the dominant, offer their accumulated capital in order for the dominated to strengthen their position in the world. In this way the dominated gets representation through institutionalised instruments such as trade unions and parties for mobilisation and demonstrations (Bourdieu 1985:737). The weight of the particular interests associated with the dominated among the dominant in the field inclines theoreticians and spokespeople to produce differentiated, distinctive products that are mechanically attuned to the various forms of demand. Because of the concurrence between the field of producers and the field of users of beliefs, the dominated is able to find expression. The benefits directly linked in the fight for the monopoly of the rightful expression of the truth of the social world inclines to be the definite correspondence of the interests of the inhabitants of homologous positions in the social field (Bourdieu 1985:738). Those groups who lodge dominated positions in the social world or those groups who are homologically placed within different fields, could subsequently accumulate more power by expressing their viewpoints in the social space. More powerful groups within society form alliances with working-class groups to accumulate more power in order to express their particular views and impose their particular interests in life. Contrary to this, the working class who is the dominated, also accumulates power through this process to help impose their legitimate vision of the world.

2.3.5 BOURDIEU AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

In the following section I offer an exposition of the importance of Bourdieu's social theory for education. In particular, I refer to the school's function with regard to culture, the school as a mechanism of social reproduction and inequality, and the external function of the school. My contention is that the implication of Bourdieu's social theory for education helps to shed light on why learners from working-class backgrounds usually struggle to do well academically.

2.3.5.1   THE FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL WITH REGARD TO CULTURE

As perceived through the science of Sociology, different social groups and classes within any given society must produce and reproduce culture. Societies generate culture in order to reproduce it, and in order "to manage the regulated inter-generational transmission of real and symbolic capital, societies must necessarily develop *appropriate structures* which enable successful cultural reproduction" (Nash 1990:432). Bourdieu´s early insight of the school as the most important creator and reproducer of virtually all social classes, contests the liberal view of the school as a mechanism of social transformation and equal opportunity (Nash 1990:432). In this regard, Mills & Gale (2010:14; *cf.* also Bourdieu 1998) note that Bourdieu and others who work with his ideas have made noteworthy contributions in comprehending the role that educational institutions play in reproducing social and cultural inequalities. Privileged groups manage to maintain their dominant position and thereby systematically marginalise dominated groups within the system.

With regard to the function of the school in non-traditional societies, Bourdieu (2003:340) points to it as fostering "´[p]rogrammed´ agents – able with a homogenous programme of perception, point of view and conduct – [are] the most particular creation of an educational system". He also mentions that those trained in a certain discipline or a certain school have in common a certain "mentality", for instance, the "arts" or "science" mentality or, in France, the *normalien* or *polytechnicien* mentality. Nash (1990:436) suggests that although schools in different countries are different with regard to "language of instruction, literature, music and social studies", it can be accepted that on another level, all schools have the same culture. The argument is that while "literacy, numeracy, scientific practice, the internal structuring and the ordering of knowledge" are all common as authentic school practices, maybe it is more accurate to speak of the "culture of literacy and science, instead of the culture of the school" (Nash 1990).

For Bourdieu (2003:342), however, the configurations determining the specific thought patterns at a specific time can only be entirely comprehended when referenced to the functions of the school system. These patterns are established and developed through practices and are the habits of thought common to a whole generation. The cultural field, as argued by Bourdieu (2003:342), is converted by continuous restructuring as opposed to a few drastic revolutions. Certain themes are highlighted while others take a back seat without

being completely disregarded. As such, the communication between intellectual generations continue to remain possible.

Regarding the functioning of schooling, it may be presumed that every individual possesses, according to a particular kind of education, a basic and deeply ingrained master-pattern on which the individual successively attains other patterns. The system of configurations by which thinking is prearranged, derives its definite features through the nature of the patterns by which it is constituted, its frequency and the level of consciousness at which it operates (Bourdieu 2003:343). It is first and foremost through the cultural unconscious, which a person owns to his/her academic training, that a thinker belongs to his/her society and age. As such, schools of thought can represent the union of thinkers that were similarly schooled, to a degree more than originally suspected. As a result of this essential function of the school as an institution, a habit-forming force is provided to those exposed to its influence. However, it is not so much "particular and particularised patterns of thought" that may be termed cultural *habitus.* Cultural habitus rather refers to "the general disposition, generating particular patterns that can be applied in different areas of thought and action" (Bourdieu 2003:344). Bourdieu & Passeron (2014:35) theorise that the same habitus which engenders a certain practice, can equally bring about the opposite when its principle is the logic of dissimilation. The same privileged-class habitus can create drastically opposed political or aesthetic views, which could betray the deep unity of the group. In other words, the same generative habitus can engender unity of practices or sentiments that are remarkably different or contradictory to that of the group.

2.3.5.2 The school as an instrument of social reproduction and inequality

Due to the fact that educated people owe their culture to the schooling they received, the differentiation of education threatens the cultural incorporation of the educated class. As such, the *de facto* separation, which guarantees secondary education and higher education almost entirely to the culturally most preferential classes, inclines to generate a cultural gap (Bourdieu 2003:351). The function of the school is not simply to endorse the *distinction* of the educated classes, but it is the culture that the school conveys that divides its recipients from the rest of society. The individuals whose "culture" is the academic culture transferred by the school, subsequently have "a system of categories of perception, language, thought and appreciation" that gives them an advantage over individuals whose only preparation has been

through their work and their social interactions with people from their own class (Bourdieu 2003:352).

In order to account for social and cultural inequalities, Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:9) argues that in any given social formation the cultural arbitrary of the dominant social groups or classes are the ones who always, although often indirectly, articulate their objective interests. The introduction of the traditional and therefore the dominant pedagogy action (PA) in this discourse will correlate to the objective interests of the dominant groups or classes (Bourdieu 2014:7). Because PAs relate to the symbolic interests of groups or classes that are inversely positioned within power relations, PAs always have a tendency to replicate the arrangement of the distribution of cultural capital between these groups or classes (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:11). In this way, the social structures in society are reproduced.

Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:41) explains the ambiguous position of the dominated in the following excerpt:

> [i]n any given social formation, because the PW [pedagogic work] through which the dominant PA is carried on tends to impose recognition of the legitimacy of the dominant culture on the members of the dominated groups or classes, it tends at the same time to force on them, by inculcation or exclusion, acknowledgement of the irrelevance of their own cultural subjectivity.

It would subsequently be difficult for learners outside the dominant groups or classes to achieve academically, since the precise degree of productivity of any PW other than the primary PW is "a function of the distance between the habitus it tends to inculcate and the habitus inculcated by the previous phases of PW" (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:43). Secondary PW is therefore much more useful when the amount to which the recipients of the pedagogic message hold the code of the message which is account for. Traditional PW creates the social conditions for communication more fully by methodically organising exercises designed to ensure accelerated assimilation of the code of transmission, and through it, the accelerated inculcation of the habitus (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:45).

To add to the marginalised position of the dominated, Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:53) proceeds to argue that a sort of secondary PW that considers the distance between the pre-existent habitus and the habitus to be instilled, will not remove the boundary which traditional PW acknowledges. Although the secondary PW corresponds to the primary traditional PW, the secondary PW does not collaborate with the pedagogic interests of the

dominated groups or classes. Bourdieu's reasoning subsequently supports the notion that the school reproduces inequality amongst social groups.

Henry, Knight, Lingard & Taylor (in Mills & Gale 2010:15) argue that

> [c]ultural capital refers to a way of thinking and a disposition to life where the expected behaviours, expected language competencies, the explicit and implicit values, knowledge, attitudes to and relationship with academic culture required for success in school are all competencies which one class brings with them to school.

The assumption is that despite the diverse backgrounds of learners and the richness of their life experiences, schools promote a middle-class culture and standards in every learner. All other backgrounds are seen as a burden (Henry *et al.* in Mills & Gale 2010:15).

2.3.5.3 THE EXTERNAL FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL

To comprehend the full functioning of the school system in perpetuating inequality, reference should be made to the external function of the school. Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:177) makes it clear that it is difficult to apprehend the "dual objective truth of a system defined by its capacity to employ the internal logic of its functioning in service of its external function of social conservation". Because of the regulated social formation between the schooling system and the structure of class relations, one has to recognise the relation of all the past and present characteristics of the organisation so as to reveal the complete system of relations.

Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:127) postulates that if the educational system perpetuates and consecrates a cultural privilege, then the privileged classes tend to recognise and impose the education system as legitimate, to the extent that they monopolise it. Such monopolisation follows from the education system's recognition of its relation to culture and the full mastering thereof once its inculcation has been acquired by familiarisation. As such, the mode of inculcation set up by the education system legitimates the cultures of the dominant classes. As an example the education system demands uniformly from all learners in terms of the traditional culture. This traditional culture is not given to the dominated class. In continuing a manner of inculcation differing as little as possible from the family mode, the school furthermore gives teaching and facts which can only be fully received by those learners who have had the cultural training to make sense of it (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:128).

Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:195) continues that Durkheim, in considering the relative independence of the educational system as the power to reinterpret demands from outside, utilised the benefits of historical opportunities to accomplish his internal logic of producing classical culture. Educational systems have the means of understanding the tendency to self-produce traditional culture. Traditional culture characterises schooling institutions and the historical recurrence of the practices which are linked to the demands inherent in the institution. The functions of the school are recurrent, because the historical and social conditions limit the virtual independence of the schooling system to external and internal functions. Every schooling system is characterised by a practical duplicity, which is actualised in full. An example is the traditional systems where the predisposition towards conservation of the system and of the culture that it preserves, come upon an external demand for social conservation (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:199). In reality, the school´s essential or internal function of cultural inculcation corresponds with the educational demand of the middle class for classical knowledge, which in turn, corresponds with the external function of the school. It is within the functioning of the education system that its relative independence permits the traditional educational system to make a particular impact towards the reproduction of the structure of class relationships. While the education system only needs to obey its own (traditional and classical) rules, it simultaneously lives up to its social purpose of reproducing and perpetuating existing class relations. As a result, the inherited transferal of cultural capital and its conceptual function ensures the obscuring of the reproduction of social relations by endorsing the misconception of the education system's absolute autonomy (Bourdieu 2014:199).

2.4 CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Ferrare & Apple (2012a:348) argue that Bourdieu's theoretical tools cannot act alone in dealing with the complexities of educational practice and policy. It is suggested that Bourdieu´s social theory must be subjected to a continuous discourse with other theories in order to gain a broader understanding of social reality. Ferrare & Apple (2012a) stress the integration of a race theory within Bourdieu´s field theory of class and gender. I will subsequently proceed to include CRT (and Latina/Latino Critical Theory) as the second theory in my theoretical framework in order to explore the problem of race in relation to Coloured people and their concurrent educational subjectivity.

2.4.1 ORIGINS OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY

To accomplish social justice in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities, this research explores ways to scaffold cultural capital (life world knowledge) through class *and race categories*, and not to merely assimilate culture to the idea of universalism (*cf*. Calhoun 1998:76). To categorically rethink race, this study could contribute to the discourse and highlight ways for learners in historically disadvantaged communities to perform better academically, and reach their dreams in life.

As a starting point on the discussion of CRT, I will briefly refer to the origins of this theory. According to Monaghan (in Ladson-Billings & Tate IV 1995:52), critical race legal scholarship was developed in the 1970s in the United States of America (USA) because marginalised scholars´ thoughts were being ignored in critical legal studies. In addition, Delgado and Stefancic (in Constance-Huggins 2012:5) suggest that CRT emerged as a consequence of the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman who sought to study the manner in which race, racism, and power persistently excel, even years after the Civil Rights Movement in the USA (1954-1968). For Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001:311), "CRT and LatCrit theory (Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory) draw from and extend a broad literature base that is often termed *critical theory*" (emphasis in original).

Scholars in the CRT tradition suggest that the claim for objectivity and neutrality of the law disregards societal inequalities, and that this results in the normalising and perpetuation of racism (Constance-Huggins 2012:5; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV 1995:57). Calmore (1992:23) observes that the hope is for academic resistance to lay the foundation for large-scale resistance. The contention is that decontextualisation too often marks unregulated and even unrecognised power. The assertion is that neutrality, presented as "rational" or "objective" truth, depersonifies the choice of privilege by passing it off as the universal authority. Calmore (1992:6-7) further notes that "[t]o counter such assumptions, we try to bring to legal scholarship an experientially grounded oppositionally expressed, and transformatively aspirational concern with race and other socially constructed hierarchies". Lawrence (in Bell 1995:901) differs from the belief that laws can be created from a neutral standpoint, as everyone speaks from some kind of "positioned perspective". The issue is, however, that not all positional standpoints are similarly validated. From a CTR perspective, some positions have historically been oppressed and marginalised. Bell (1995:901) claims that the law methodically privileges individuals who are white. It is within this context that it is assumed

that the social order is sustained and prolonged by racial subservience. Therefore, the marginalised voice is imperative in CRT. It is not about the voices understood by those who are implicitly deemed legitimate and authoritarian, but about the others - to expose, tell and retell, signal resistance and compassion, and to reiterate what type of power is feared most, namely the power of committing to change (Bell 1995:907).

Despite a diversity of perceptions within the critical race movement, the following shared features can serve as theoretical pointers:

- racism is not a sequence of isolated acts, but it is prevalent in life, and deeply entrenched legally, culturally, and even psychologically;
- the theory is based on a persistence for subjectivity and the reconstructing of a legal creed to reflect the outlooks of those who have personally been subjected to and victimised by racism; and
- the tradition of telling stories or first-person accounts is imperative (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV 1995:53).

2.4.2 NAMING ONE´S OWN REALITY

Of particular significance in the Critical Race Theory tradition is the theme of "naming one´s own reality" or the concept of "voice" as opposed to objectivity and neutrality. Crenshaw (in Ladson-Billings & Tate IV 1995:57; also Delgado 1989:2437) maintains that members of minority groups internalise the stereotypical image that their lower position in life is their own fault. Such images are thrust on members of outlying groups in society by those who want to maintain their power. To counter such beliefs, Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995:57) aver that the story of one´s circumstances leads to the realisation of how a person came to be oppressed, and this allows for putting and end to imposing mental violence on oneself. Bell (1995:902) is of the opinion that there is a need for conveying opinions that cannot be transferred efficiently through current methods. People for example appreciate listening to stories and will frequently break with their own viewpoints on the emotionally charged subject of race to listen to a story - they will weight up their views with those expressed in the story. "Parables, chronicles, stories, counter-stories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories" as various forms of "naming one's reality" are used for at least three reasons. Firstly, a large part of reality is socially constructed. Secondly, stories provide people from minority groups with a mechanism for self-protection. In the third place the exchange of stories with the listener

can assist in rectifying ethnocentrism and the dysconscious conviction of viewing the world in a particular way (Delgado 1989:2439; *cf.* also Ladson-Billings & Tate IV 1995:57).

The "voice" element of critical race theory subsequently offers a way to communicate the realities of oppressed people. For Ladson-Billings & Tate IV (1995:58), naming one's reality is the first step on the road to justice, and it can also affect the oppressor. On the one hand, one of the adversities of education is the way in which the dialogue of people of colour has been muted (Delpit 1988:280). On the other, reality is not fixed, and members of the privileged race should listen to others' stories in order to enrich their own realities. These realities can allow both the listener and the teller to construct a world richer than either of them could make on their own. Through this development of dialecticism, ethnocentrism and the unthinking conviction that "our way of seeing the world is the only right way" can be overcome.

In the context of the Coloured rural communities of the Western Cape, recognition of these peoples' voices is needed to continue the discourse of educational inequality and social justice. The authentic voices of Coloured people (such as learners, parents, teachers and community members) are necessary in the quest for learners to succeed in life. There is a need for experiential knowledge to be recognised and valued in order to enhance Coloured learners´ academic success.

2.4.3 INSIGHTS DRAWN FROM CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND LATCRIT THEORY

Although originating in legal scholarship, CRT can be meaningfully used to capture and question educational inequality, and to offer means of social justice in societies. In this regard, Ladson-Billings & Tate IV (1995:58) put forward that the voice of people of colour is prerequisite for a comprehensive examination of the school system. Without the real voices of people of colour (as teachers, parents, learners, and community members) it is unsure as to whether anyone can tell or have the knowledge that is useful about education in these communities (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV 1995:58).

For a thorough understanding of the theoretical lens I used in this study, and in order to be able to talk about transformational resistance, I consider it important to foreground the intersectionality between CRT and Latina/Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit theory) (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:312).

2.4.3.1 CRITICAL RACED AND RACED-GENDERED EPISTEMOLOGIES

CRT and LatCrit theory challenge the dominant discourse on race and racism in education by investigating how scholastic theory and practice are used to marginalise Chicana and Chicano students, that is Chicanos, Latinos, and Mexican Americans (Montoya in Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:312; Delgado Bernal 2002:108). According to Solorzano (1998:132) the traditional black/white paradigm used to study race and race relations is not broad enough, and that the practices of other racial and/or ethnic groups are crucial to the understanding of the experiences of academics and students of colour. Solorzano (1998) further argues that the racial, gender, and class experiences of African-Americans and Chicanas/os are comparable in certain aspects, but that there are significant variances in the historical and contemporary lives of these two groups that should not be overlooked. There is subsequently a need for the recognition, utilisation, and analysis of the multiple voices and experiences of people of colour.

The emergence of critical raced and raced-gendered epistemologies started to openly contest the wide collection of popular research paradigms which are based on the narrow foundation of knowledge from the social, historical, and cultural experiences of Anglos (Stanfield in Delgado Bernal 2002:107). Although CRT and LatCrit are part of a system of knowledge which contests the main deficit, they employ frameworks to clarify Chicana and Chicano educational inequality. These frameworks work from within critical raced-gendered epistemologies, but do not intend to substitute an old body of knowledge that is believed to be the truth with another body of knowledge that also asserts to be the truth (Delgado Bernal 2002:120). There is no doubt that Western modernism is a system of extensive viewpoints that are acutely rooted in how Western culture creates the essence of the world and one´s experiences thereof (Foucault 1979, 1988). Similarly, Delgado Bernal (2002:111) claims that white superiority and American democratic ideals, and their particular ways of knowing and understanding the world, are influenced through these mentioned ideals. Delgado Bernal (2002) further asserts that norms, particularly in education, are founded on these ideals. Other people or knowledge that differ from these standards and norms are often undervalued. It is not about substituting an old body of knowledge with a new one, but rather about acknowledging and respecting other traditions of knowing and understanding. It is predominantly about the stories of those who went through other forms of oppression.

2.4.3.2   A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH COMMITTED TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Gonzàlez (2001:643) believes that students of colour are restrained by prejudiced academic and social practices masked by prevalent ideas of academic equality and neutrality in educational and social research and practice. In fact, it is contended that policy makers should counter pervasive views about Chicana and Chicano students´ inability to think at higher intellectual levels, the insufficiency of Chicano/Mexican culture with a history of being socially marginalised and economically exploited, and Chicano/Mexican parents´ lack of concern about their children's education. Lockwood and Secada (in Gonzàlez 2001:642) are of the opinion that many teachers believe that Hispanic students cannot perform academically. This belief is based on, amongst others, negative cultural stereotypes depicting Hispanics as less interested in schooling compared to other ethnic groups. It is in this regard, Delgado Bernal (2002:108) notes how LatCrit theory adds significant layers to a critical race inquiry. She proceeds to argue that LatCrit expresses Latinas/Latinos´ multi-layered identities, and can address the intersectionality of racism and other forms of oppression (Delgado Bernal 2002). On the whole, CRT and LatCrit are transdisciplinary and draw on liberal scholarship to understand and expand the academic experiences of students of colour (Parker in Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:313).

The commitment to social justice is a salient theme that forms the basic perspective, research method and practice of a CRT and LatCrit framework in education (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:312). Of particular significance is that "[c]ritical race researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalise coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:313). A critical race approach in education acknowledges that various layers of oppression are met with several forms of resistance (Delgado 2002:110). This defining characteristic of transformational resistance not only signifies a strong warrant for social justice, but also offers a transformative reaction to racial and other forms of oppression (Matsuda, 1991).

2.4.3.3   CENTRALITY OF EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

Another relevant theme in the CRT and LatCrit framework in education is the significance of experiential knowledge. Delgado Bernal (2002:109) proclaims that "[f]or too long, the experiential knowledge of students of color has been viewed as a deficit in formal learning environments". In this regard, Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001:314) mention that a CRT

and LatCrit framework recognises that the experiential knowledge of students of colour are "legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analysing, and teaching" about racial subservience in the field of education. CRT and LatCrit scholastic studies subsequently see experiential knowledge as an asset, and openly draw on the lived experiences of the students of colour by including methods such as "storytelling, family history, biographies, scenarios, parables, chronicles, and narratives" (Bell in Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:314; Delgado Bernal 2002:109). On the whole, Hernandez-Truyol (in Delgado Bernal 2002:116) maintains that these knowledges allow them to "create nuevas teorias (new theories) that understand, penetrate, define, and elucidate the content and meaning of our multidimensional identities".

Delgado Bernal (2002:116) suggests that by incorporating the method of counter-storytelling, stories can be told from a non-majoritarian viewpoint, and people could learn how to listen to the messages in counter-stories. The practice of listening to counter-stories inside the structures of schooling can be an essential educational practice for teachers and learners, and also a substantial methodological procedure for scholastic researchers. Delgado Bernal (2002:313) argues that although majoritarians tell stories, their stories do not seem to them like stories at all, but they seem like the truth. So-called majoritarians have faith that their stories are based on facts. Eurocentrism is invisible and people therefore often cannot see how subjective their stories are. Stories, however, have the potential to shatter complacency and challenge the current social arrangement that seems fair and natural (Delgado 1989:2413-2414). Furthermore, Delgado (1989:2414) notes that counter-stories can give new insights into reality, showing us that there is potential for lives other than the ones we know.

2.4.3.4 CHALLENGE DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES

The CRT and LatCrit framework in education contests dominant ideologies. According to Delgado Bernal (2002:109-110), this framework offers significance to the establishment of linguistically and culturally related means of knowing and understanding. This tradition also illustrates the prominence of reconsidering the traditional view of what constitutes as knowledge. Politics is central in all educational practices, so the presentation of household knowledge to circumstances outside of the home becomes an innovative procedure that disturbs the transmission of "official knowledge and dominant ideologies" (Delgado Bernal 2001:624).

Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001:315) illustrate that resistance theories differ from cultural and social reproduction theories since the notion of resistance emphasises that people are

not merely dictated to by structures. Rather, resistance theories illustrate how people battle with structures and construct meanings of their own from these exchanges. As such, resistance theories denote a significant development to more deterministic reproduction models of education as they acknowledge human agency (Solorzano & Solorzano (1995) in Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:315-316). Although resistance theories assist in clarifying reactions to social and cultural reproduction, some of these reproduction theories fail to emphasise the value of working toward social justice (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:316; also Delgado Bernal 2001:625). The importance of a social justice orientation in education is foregrounded by its concern to contest institutional practices, to inquire into the consequence of the pedagogy and curriculum, to examine the result and to critique social, cultural, and economic forms of domination (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:319). As a means towards social justice, Delgado Bernal (2001:626) offers an analysis of resistance as a means "to name the strategies of resistance that Chicana students learn in their homes and employ during their educational journeys". As a result of this, Chicana students show that the use of household knowledge enables them to disturb the transferal of dominant (of deficiency) opinions about their ways of being (Delgado Bernal 2001:635).

In this study I used the work of theorists in the CRT and LatCrit tradition to engage in questions as to how Coloured learners´ cultural knowledge can contribute to their educational success. Delgado Bernal (2001:636) postulates that we "need to develop policy and practice that values and builds on pedagogies of the home (cultural knowledge) in order to enhance Chicana academic success and college participation". In this research, I anticipated to ask how people's life world knowledge or experiential knowledge can be acknowledged and nurtured during secondary education within school practices in order to promote improved academic success for historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners. Non-dominant realities should feature strongly in the educational system so that all young people have equal opportunities to succeed. With the assistance of CRT and LatCrit as an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, and in order to challenge the dominant ideologies in pursuit of social justice, I pursued transformation resistance as a theoretical construct.

2.5 GENERATIVE THEORY OF RURALITY

To give preference to historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learner's subjectivities, the study firstly employed the social theory of Bourdieu to give an understanding of their socio-economic context. Secondly, the decision to use CRT centred on the marginalised position of

certain groups of people in a historically racialised context. Lastly, this part of the study engages in GTR to explore learners´ agency in order to achieve academic success in rural and semi-urban contexts. In the next section I present the context of rural education and draw on a generative theory of rurality with specific reference to the variables of forces, agencies and resources. My contention is that an exposition of such a theory will enable an understanding of rural spaces.

2.5.1 *TOWARDS RURAL SUCCESS*

The endeavour of schools to ensure access to education for all (a developmental goal of the United Nations Millennium Project 2005) could certainly fall within a discourse of resistance in the context of rural South Africa. Schools in rural areas are often portrayed as bedevilled by poverty, long distances between home and school, a negative public attitude and very little or no decision-making power (Pansiri 2011:111). Vithal (in Chikoko 2008:78) underscores the need for schools to not only ensure access to education for all, but also to strive for achieving success among all learners. A learner´s failure to succeed and concomitant hardships such as unemployment, poverty, despair and hopelessness may be as dehumanising as failing to access education (Vithal in Chikoko 2008:78).

The problem of education in rural settings has no straightforward solutions. It could probably be tackled from within, namely by means of community involvement. Chikoko (2008:77) maintains that the value of community involvement in education and the impact the local context could have on knowledge construction is of great significance. In this regard, teachers should be assisted to realise their own and their communities´ potential to generate solutions to the problems they face and, importantly, teachers should share such knowledge. By implication, one could contend that this is a way for teachers' voices to be heard. Another possibility to approach the problem of rural education could be found in Guenther's opinion (2013:167) that "there is a strong case to be made for considering further what defines ´success´ in remote education", and how such a definition can advantage learners in historically disadvantaged rural communities to experience success.

In order to advance thinking on rural education, Nkambule *et al.* (2011:344) suggest the conceptualisation of a theory of rurality that accounts for the context in which learners live and learn, and ultimately could achieve the success they desperately aim for.

2.5.2 A GENERATIVE THEORY OF RURALITY

Balfour *et al*. (2008) developed a theory of rurality by contextualising it in relation to existing research regarding rural experiences and lives, and carefully chosen "theories of space, place, and time" relative to rurality and globalisation. For Balfour *et al*. (2008:96) "[e]ducation is as much an activity as labour or production is and as such occurs within space and time even if new technologies and new media make the displacement of both space and time possible through interactive technologies". In contrast to conventional theories of space and time that deal with European concepts of the temporal and linear, Balfour *et al.* (2008:96) suggest the need for a theory that accounts for the rural environment as an active rather a passive force in the development of the identities of both the self and the communities placed within this environment.

Any theory of rurality, however, needs to mirror theories of globalisation as it relates to the conceptualisation of margins and centres of influence and power (Balfour *et al.* 2008). Balfour *et al.* (2008:96) assert that due to international transactions centred on financial capital, the consequences of these global processes have acute influences on rural localities. These influences are "centrifugal and centripetal; pushing populations out, and drawing them in, depending on the economic needs and climate of these regions". As industrial capital is connected mainly with agricultural, mining and manufacturing industries, the rural is intensely impacted in the dependent relationship between industrial capital and production. Marsden (1998:114) maintains that we need to break from the rigid geographically defined notion of "local rural area", for methodological and policy reasons. We rather need to think of distinguishing rural spaces which are situated within different webs of local, regional, national and international supply chains, networks and monitoring dynamics. In addition, since the 1980s, the liberalisation of state economies encouraged a move toward the bottom as countries battle to suggest "cheaper labour, fewer taxes, and relaxed restrictions on the movement of capital", all of which has left the urban working-class and rural labourers at the margins (Balfour *et al*. 2008:97). The exploration of rural access to resources is crucial to knowing the restrictions and value of community or individual agency. Due to the scarcity of resources, individuals and the community have to be extremely creative in attaining and utilising resources.

Chikoko (2008:77) maintains that while rural communities are often marked by a combination of social issues such as illness, poverty, a lack of education and inadequate facilities, one

should not lose sight of the hidden resources that these communities are endowed with. It is within this context that Balfour *et al.* (2008:97) propose the necessity for the conceptualisation of a new theory of rurality that takes into consideration not only the diversity of lived experiences, but also the drivers that enable or prohibit the conversion of such environments. The advantage of such a theory is that it may also consider the capability of people in space and time to uphold themselves both as subjects (of the environment) and as agents (individuals or collectives of agency) who are able to fight back or change the environment, depending on the available resources. As mentioned, rural settings do have limited resources which their communities have to access elsewhere. A natural movement into and out of rural settings to make use of opportunities in semi-urban and urban areas is therefore necessary. Education is one of those resources which has to be accessed, so subsequently the interconnectedness between the rural and urban has to be explored.

When considering a generative theory of rurality, and in particular rurality as context, then three broad areas are foregrounded for discussion, namely *forces* in terms of space, place, and time; *agencies* with regard to movement, systems and will; and *resources* with regard to the situated, material, and psychosocial.

2.5.2.1   RURALITY AS CONTEXT

The cosmopolitan experience is defined as a distinctive postcolonial expansion related to the persuasive lure to urban centres as opposed to forced migration. The possibilities of modernity offer an explanatory opposite to creating a convincing theory of rurality in modernity (Balfour *et al.* 2008:99). If cosmopolitanism is the new token of identity of the urban elite, what identities are offered to rural elites or the rural poor? Balfour *et al.* (2008) advocate for a different theory of rurality that seeks to work against this agreement on the categories already available to us, as those categories are as much used to disempower as to describe people. In the next section I discuss Balfour *et al.'s* theory (2008) of rurality by referring to the three variables already mentioned, namely forces, agencies and resources.

2.5.2.2   FORCES: SPACE, PLACE, AND TIME

The first variable to be discussed is force and its constituents of space, place and time. Balfour *et al.* (2008:100) note that forces allude to the movement of labour and production between rural and urban areas, and, as a consequence, such forces are centripetal and centrifugal. Drawing on theories of space, place, and time, Weber (1996) (in Balfour *et al.* 2008:100)

defines *space* as that which is inhabited. Space is thus place, the *habitus* and that which moves within.

As identity and roles are investigated in relation to the experience of rural-urban disparities, any passage out of the rural is, by implication, also a passage inward (Balfour *et al.* 2008:100). For example, people with connections to rural communities describe their home as the rural farm or homestead. They still experience loyalties in relation to culture and authority structures in these homesteads, yet their working (or school) life and identity are also in urban areas (Balfour *et al.* 2008:100). An individual can therefore simultaneously inhibit the rural and the urban with regard to the space he/she occupies.

Time as a constituent of force is one of the most crucial characteristics of rural life, and refers to how long it takes to move from one location to another (Balfour *et al.* 2008:100). Balfour *et al.* (2008:100) reconsider Gallagher´s idea (1979) of space, and propose that *space* is not only an enculturated and organisational thought in any debate of rurality, but that it is also the one characteristic that modifies or prolongs time. The lengthening of time disturbs identities as the latter are frequently set up to relate to communities that function in virtual isolation in space and time from one other, and in greater remoteness from cities (Balfour *et al*. 2008:100).

2.5.2.3   AGENCIES: MOVEMENT, SYSTEMS, AND WILL

Balfour *et al*. (2008:101) discuss the second variable within a generative theory of rurality as agencies, and its constituents are movement, system and will. Agencies and the crucial conceptual devices, and where they stem from, are vital to a theory in which the generativity and vitality of the rural are highlighted. On the one side, opinions of rurality are negative in that it is "passive, static, backward and ignorant", and on the other side, rurality is seen as transformative, able to alter behaviour and influence the drive of teachers, community workers and learners. Significantly, Balfour *et al*. (2008:101) note that in some instances the idea of *agency* concurs with *habitus* in Bourdieu's theory of class. In Bourdieu´s point of view (1989), *habitus* is a distinct system of resilient and transposable "dispositions". Balfour *et al.* (2008:101) continue to argue that individuals develop these points of view not only in reaction to the defining structures such as family and class, but also in reaction to education and the environment in which they find themselves. In other words, there is an internalisation of the external - the rural or the urban - and an externalisation of the internal - the rural or the urban as perceived by individuals. An individual´s standpoint in life, according to Bourdieu (1989),

could therefore determine their life path. Balfour (in Nkambule *et al*. 2011:345) describes the concept of *agency* as a series of behaviours and dispositions. Balfour for example points to "compliance and disruption, activism and entropy, and involves an exercise of will towards both ends". Studies in rural areas should gain insight into how people´s lived experiences shape agencies´ behaviour and dispositions, which further influence their reactions towards forces and resources (Nkambule *et al.* 2011:353).

Agencies can also denote the "organisations" of the community, and are subsequently referred to as systems of regulation (Balfour 2012a:13). The essential feature of agencies is their ability to alter the relationship between space, place, and time. Amin (in Balfour *et al*. 2008:101) argues that as space and time are constricted through proximity and technology, the interaction between forces and agencies in urban environments are numerous. Within rural settings, "the interspersion of the environment to modify the relationship between space and time regulates the degree to which these require agency to be modified or brought into closer proximity to each other" (Balfour *et al*. 2008:101). Availability in terms of physical proximity to social and support facilities subsequently modifies how long it takes to reach such facilities. Additionally, this modifies the spatial connection between inhabitants and the contexts they cross in order to reach such support.

In the case of rural learners in the Western Cape, they move from their rural environments and homes to semi-urban areas and back again on a daily basis in pursuit of schooling. For most of these learners this movement is a natural step to access education. These rural learners attend primary schools provided for and supported by the state in their own rural environments. In order to attend secondary schools, however, they have to access education which is located further away, in semi-urban areas. In this study I highlight learners´ home environments, learning environments in the community, as well as their movements into semi-urban areas to access education as a resource (*cf*. Chapter 5).

Balfour *et al*. (2008:102) maintain that the land itself acts as a determiner of the status of rural inhabitants in relation to others. In a sense, the environment becomes generative as its landscape impacts on human interactions. Theories of cosmopolitanism (*cf*. Appiah 2006; Bridge 2005) are concerned with whether the reduction of space and time is an effort towards greater democracy or a new transnational distinctiveness of elites. The implication is that all theories of rurality, which concerns itself with entropy as a product of the environment or as exerting a certain kind of will that attempts "to stratify the relationship between space, time,

and agency", subsequently due to the decision of non-movement, that these three drivers will continue to be in balance with one another (Balfour *et al*. 2008:102). On the whole, agencies comprise of the exercise of will towards action or entropy. Entropy is a form of inertia that generates fatalism in reaction to the seeming hostility of the environment, the people, and the incompetence of the government (Balfour *et al*. 2008:102).

2.5.2.4 RESOURCES: SITUATED, MATERIAL, AND PSYCHOSOCIAL

The third variable within a generative theory of rurality is resources, and this covers aspects such as situated, material, and psychosocial resources. According to Balfour *et al.* (2008:102; also Nkambule *et al.* 2011:351), the effective utilisation of resources is mainly reliant on the impact of agencies and forces, and the length to which these might go to remove limits on their availability and use. For example, in Chapter 5 I describe how learners from the Western Cape Province exercise political agency to possibly attain resources in order to alter the relationship between space and time. The obligation to an area has the prospect of extending access to resources, and to convert the relationship between space and time (Budge 2005; Balfour 2012b:14). As such, resources are generative as long as they are generated and not given. The generative ability of communities to arrange resources are determined by agencies´ effects on forces.

The case of Tshamavhudzi, a small village in Venda, demonstrates how this relationship between "space, places and time (forces), resources and agencies" is crucial for a more nuanced conceptualisation of rurality (Balfour *et al.* 2008:102). Community researchers (HSRC 2005:71) learnt that the community was deeply concerned about the lack of electricity at the local school. Gradually it emerged that the provincial government had offered the area solar energy, but there was deep resistance to that idea from the community. Solar energy was seen by the community as inferior to mains electricity. Villagers argued that if they accepted solar energy, "electricity will never come". In the eyes of the community, solar energy provides insufficient energy and would not fulfil their needs.

Although it is simple to form rurality as a "static-passive" setting, Balfour *et al.* (2008:102) contend that rurality is an actively established collection of forces, agencies, and resources that are apparent in lived experiences and social processes in which teachers and community workers are transformed. What further arises from such considerations is that schooling must be comprehended as a "placed resource", and "resources that are functional in one particular place … [can subsequently] become dysfunctional as soon as they are moved into other

places" (Balfour *et al.* 2008:103). It is therefore imperative to understand how such resources as a vital issue has consequences on the quality of education in this age in South Africa, and can be made more efficient through an assortment of educational contexts (urban, rural, middle class, working class, etc.). Balfour *et al.* (2008:103) define certain conceptual characteristics that they claim are essential in a generative theory of rurality. By describing these key features they believe they will change the current understanding of rurality as a means to use curriculum as an apparatus for change.

2.5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

Balfour *et al.* (2008:103) postulate that rural communities must start by naming their particular difficulties and battles, and acknowledging the ways in which moving in, and moving out, functions within these localities. The project "Every Voice Counts" puts forward that the confirmation that large-scale participation, including interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary dialogue, is critical in local communities. Corbett (in Balfour *et al.* 2008:103-104) claims that it is of importance to build pockets of resistance against a "diseased and deceased" discussion in relation to rural life, and to avoid a sort of desperateness that is frequently offered to young people who remain in or leave rural areas.

Nkambule *et al.* (2011:352) point to a shift in rural research and education towards a position where rurality and rural social life are understood as "active rather than passive forces" in shaping educational issues. Rurality should not only be thought of as a space where people live, but also as active and capable of constructing its own knowledge that is different from urban experiences. It can be assumed that such awareness needs to have an impact on policy formulation. According to Balfour *et al.* (2008:100) rurality is not only used as a context of the environment, but also as a construct that can possibly afford a different type of teacher, and possibly, a different type of curriculum in which the "assets of the rural" become characteristic of curricular design and knowledge production.

In this study I used GTR to elucidate the subjective experiences of rural learners with reference to their use of time, space and resources in order to improve their educational endeavours.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed the theoretical framework I used to obtain a cogent consideration of the social reality of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners in the Western Cape. The framework consists of three theories, namely Bourdieu's social theory, Critical Race Theory with reference to LatCrit theory, and the Generative Theory of Rurality. Bourdieu's social theory involves modes of how to perceive and how to understand learners' social realities, especially with regard to education. Bourdieu's theoretical concepts not only advance the notion that school structures play a role in reproducing social and cultural inequalities (*cf*. Mills & Gale 2010:14), but they are also useful to indicate how the school as an institution in society tends to serve, through its internal and external functions, the interests of the middle class, and adversely disadvantage the working class. Complementary to the theory of Bourdieu, CRT and LatCrit theory explores the problem of race and gives weight to the position of Coloured people and their concurrent educational subjectivity. The Generative Theory of Rurality exhibits how the movement between the rural and the urban is adjustable. This theory highlights how rural learners experience the rural and the semi-urban in terms of forces, agency and resources. The motivation for incorporating these three theories into a theoretical framework to guide this study, was premised on the possibility to inform an understanding of how Coloured learners demonstrate a multi-reality, in other words an awareness or consciousness that enables them to achieve academically and to excel in life.

In the next chapter prominence is given to theoretical underpinnings of knowledge production through selected South African school curricula*.*

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION THROUGH SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL CURRICULA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I explored three theories in order to indicate why the knowledge brought to the classroom by working-class learners differs from that of middle-class learners. In this chapter I explore the theoretical underpinnings of knowledge production through two sysems of South African school curricula, namely Outcomes Based Education (OBE) of 1998 and the *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)* (DBE, 2011) in order to foreground the school knowledge codes embodied in the curriculum provisions. The intention is not to do a policy analysis or to critique the documents in terms of the values endorsed by the curricula, but rather to contribute to the curriculum debate on school knowledge by exploring the theoretical bases of recent and current curriculum developments. It is my contention that in order to indicate the misalignment between the life world knowledge of learners in historically disadvantaged schools and the existing cultural capital of the school, embodied school knowledge codes need to be foregrounded.

It has been noted that various critics challenge the foundations on which curriculum design is premised by questioning the kind of school knowledge which different curriculum models appear to build on. In this regard, Zipin *et al*. (2015b:10) maintain that international educational development in numerous nations has observed requests for a renewed focus on concerns of knowledge. Social Realists (hereafter SRs) who expressed a concern for the under-emphasis of what knowledge should and should not be core in a curriculum, have been mentioned by key players in the debate about formal knowledge in the curriculum. According to Zipin *et al.* (2015b:10), South Africa´s current national curriculum (*CAPS*) is significantly influenced by debates on a regained focus on knowledge in the curriculum. It appears that numerous South African policy makers, scholars and educators may not be conscious of social realism as an intellectual movement. In South Africa, the discourse of social realism has also taken root in educational curriculum debates, beginning with Peter Kallaway's work *History in*

Senior Secondary School CAPS 2012 and beyond: a comment (2012) in which he shows the significance of history as a main feature of the worthwhile knowledge to be taught at school.

In an attempt to contribute to the debate on school knowledge, I first discuss standpoint relativism as a means to explain the theoretical basis of OBE. Due to the irrealism of standpoint relativism, "which forecloses appeal to any ontological ground for arbitrating between multiple truth claims" (Edwards 2012:170), the debate on curriculum mandates advances into social realism. I secondly engage in notions of *neutrality* and *objectivity* in order to explore ways of inquiry that warrant the centrality of scientific knowledge in *CAPS*. Thirdly I discuss Bhaskar's conceptualisation (1979) of critical realism in order to engage in explanatory critique as revenues of interpreting reality, including the curriculum. In presenting these arguments on the mandates for the selection of curriculum knowledge, my aim is to contribute to alternative curriculum mandates which can add to ongoing discussions about social justice and curriculum practices (Zipin *et al.* 2015b:11).

3.2 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1994

With the newly elected democratic political establishment in South Africa in 1994, new educational policies were developed to be in line with the goals of a newly adopted 1996 constitution. Since 1997 various curriculum models were introduced in South African education in order to tailor the change from a highly segregated and racist curriculum to a more democratic curriculum. In 1997 the South African government announced the introduction of outcomes-based education (OBE) with the explicit aim "of creating a transferability of knowledge in real life" (Hugo in Kallaway 2012:23). However, as a result of implementation problems such as complexities and confusion created by curriculum statements informed by outcomes-based education, Spreen and Vally (in Mouton, Louw & Strydom 2012:1212) maintain that a review of this particular curriculum was prompted in 2000. The review of the curriculum led to the introduction of the *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9* in 2002 and the *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12* (2002) which came into effect in 2003 (DBE, 2011). Ongoing challenges regarding implementation led to another review in 2009, which resulted in the adoption of another new policy statement for teaching and learning, namely the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements* in 2011. *CAPS* has been employed in South African schools since 2012.

3.2.1 THE HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF OBE

Since 1997 the government of South Africa implemented a range of curricula designed to offer quality education for all learners in South African schools (Ramatlapana & Makonye 2013:8). In this regard, Kallaway (2012:24) asserts that the dismissal of the apartheid education curriculum was mistook for the rejection of a curriculum that was founded on historically constructed knowledge. While apartheid education was characterised by formal knowledge acquisition, the new OBE curriculum, also referred to as Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (DoE, 1997), was presented as an oppositional project. If formal knowledge refers to specialised disciplinary knowledge within the school curriculum, then it can be assumed that the "oppositional" curriculum implies everyday, working-class knowledge, including the cultural knowledge of the individuals who had been educationally oppressed during apartheid (Hoadley and Jansen in Zipin *et al.* 2015b:10). By comparison to everyday and populist knowledge, powerful knowledge appears to have more value within the debate of knowledge production. Young (2008b:11) claims that

> *[p]owerful knowledge* provides more reliable explanations … for engaging in political, moral, and other kinds of debates … In modern societies, *powerful knowledge* is, increasingly, specialised knowledge; and schooling, from this perspective, is about providing access to the specialised knowledge that is embodied in different knowledge domains [emphasis in original].

Critics advocate that scientific, specialised knowledge should feature strongly in curricula. By implication, scientific knowledge should therefore form the basis of any curriculum, as opposed to the glorification of the everyday or populist cultural knowledge of learners as presented in OBE.

However, in order to clarify the confusion often experienced around OBE and C2005, Jansen (1999:9) points to the introduction of the latter as "weakly coupled" to OBE in governmental documents and discussions. Incorrect perceptions about what was meant by C2005 were underscored by teachers who indicated to Jansen that for them it merely meant a deadline, namely the year by which all General Education grades (1-7) should be introduced to OBE. For many department officials C2005 and OBE meant the same. Other officials believed that C2005 defined the goals of a reformist approach to education, within which OBE was simply a mechanism to convey the "methodology" for achieving the goals stipulated in C2005 (Jansen 1999:9). For Spady, who is regarded as the introducer of OBE in South Africa, C2005 was an

academic development not related to OBE, as the latter was all about outcomes and not really concerned with the organisational or curricular contributions which characterise them (Jansen 1999:10). Since its inception OBE/C2005 had been controversial for South African educators and policy makers alike (Spreen and Vally in Mouton *et al.* 2012:1212). Most teachers did not know how to engage with the new curriculum and the implementation of OBE/C2005 started off ambiguously, and an urgent review was undertaken in 2000.

According to Lewis (2008:31), the period after the introduction of OBE suggests a robust emphasis on policy documents which highlighted the link between a stronger vocational orientation and the school curriculum. The motivation for this link appears, amongst others, to thicken the connection between education and the economy. Policy documents refer to this connection as imperative for a country to heighten the competitiveness of its economy (WCED 2008:15). Another rationale was to cater for historically disadvantaged learners to succeed academically during their secondary education. Jansen (1999:12) claims that the curriculum debate in South Africa unfolded along racial lines. On the one hand white South Africans perceived OBE as "´meant for black kids´ which did not affect white education since ´we have been doing OBE all the time´". On the other hand, academics and other critics perceived the curriculum debate that vocational education was meant for non-white learners (Badroodien 2004:154). As seen from the above discussion, policy makers implemented OBE with a consideration to explicit as well as implicit impetuses.

3.2.2 OBE AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL RELATIVISM

With regard to the theoretical underpinnings of the curriculum debate, Kelly in Edwards (2012:170) asserts that, on the international front, contra-behaviourism and developmental psychology provided support to criticism of pedagogy in the field of education. Such a critique of pedagogy has been undertaken as part of a progressive reform movement to move past "behaviourism in psychology with its preoccupation with prediction, measurement and social control" (Edwards 2012:170). The developmental tradition aligned itself with constructivist, enquiry-based pedagogies, and agreed with the pedagogical principle of starting with the existing knowledge of the child (Edwards 2012:170). According to Kallaway (2012:24), there was a robust dependence on ideas of the constructivist curriculum design, highlighting the benefits of learning from the social context and the immediate environment of the learner. The indication was to stress the importance of local knowledge, and that learners should learn

through self-exploration. South Africa, these notions of the movement of constructivism formed the premises of OBE.

However, according to Fakier & Waghid (2004:56), the curriculum and pedagogy in terms of OBE is faulty, because OBE insists on interpreting the complexity of human activity in relation to outcomes. The assumption is that education should be seen as a critical dialogue between the teacher and the learner who are both continuously seeking truths. Individuals must be allowed to freely articulate reasonable beliefs, and certainly not in terms of a fixed set of goals and outcomes. Zipin *et al.* (2015a:3) agree that OBE failed due to a philosophy of "competencies" and a banal "everyday life" basis for the curriculum.

At the same time, and in a similar vein, concerns were also raised by social realists Moore and Muller (1999) who argued that the interpretivist criticisms started by the New Sociology of Education (NSOE) have spawned into relativism and a certain kind of standpoint theory. Founded in the 1970s by the analytical philosophers of education, the NSOE regards curriculum as a reflection of the ruling group's control over school success rates (Corson 1991:225). Moore & Muller (1999:191) contended that standpoint theory, in other words the idea that the construction of learners´ knowledge in schools is influenced by their culture, has challenged the possibilities for progressive reform. One of the problems mentioned is the irrealism which excludes an appeal to any ontological grounds for arbitrating between multiple truth claims (Edwards 2012:170). Epistemological relativists make the judgment that various groups or cultures have various norms to determine what counts as knowledge, and that these often conflicting standards are equally valid and equally good (Harding 1992:576). In other words, and by implication, this is a notion of postmodernism which is recognised as an underlying premise of OBE. Moore & Muller (1999:193) assert that standpoint relativism usually results in power relations, and the truth for standpoint theorists is that individual voices find it difficult to stress their knowledge over that of others. For social realists like Moore & Muller (1999), the NSOE originally promised emancipation from a determinist view of humanity, but it conversely led to another challenge for teachers who wanted to avoid the reproduction of inequality through schooling, namely a paralysing relativism (Edwards 2012:170).

It is important at this point to present an argument to counter epistemological relativism. Harding (1992:582) points out that a reductionist account of relativism is not essentially about the lives of those who are marginalised. Research starts with inquiries from marginalised

people, but inquiry is also about the rest of the local and global social order. Harding (1992:582) insists that inquiry is about science, so it is about "the systematic causal accounts of how the natural and social orders are organised". An example is how the everyday lives of marginalised peoples end up in the condition that they do. Harding (1992:583) claims that standpoint theory is continuously mistaken for a kind of "perspectivism" that produces relativistic understandings of nature and social relations. Rather, Harding (1992:583) states that standpoint theory requires recognition from the position of sociological relativism. He further suggests that all human enterprises have claims on knowledge construction but reject epistemological relativism, which implies that all types of knowledges have equal value. In reality, sociological relativism simply states that different cultures have different views of what constitutes as knowledge. There is subsequently not one standard that they all accept to be true (Harding 1992:575). Different kinds of knowing therefore acknowledge ways of perceiving realities, and these realities are partial at all times because we can only see in being positional as we see from somewhere (our standpoint) and not from everywhere (Haraway in Zipin *et al.* 2015b:15).

The implementation of OBE failed, and by 2010-2011 the flaws of the post-apartheid OBE curriculum and the criticism against it, led to the new *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS), the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)*, that was introduced for Grades 6 – 9 in 2010 and for Grades 10 – 12 in 2011 (Kallaway 2012:24). Cognisance should be taken of the fact that the key issue of the review has been the regained notions of curriculum disciplinarity. Significant to the issues of inquiry, ways of how the natural and social are perceived and how knowledge is generated in the world, will ultimately manifest in the national school curriculum. Notions of constructivism regarding learning through the construction of own knowledge and through self-exploration made way for a new movement, namely social realism. Social realism gives weight to powerful, scientific and disciplinary knowledge within the school curriculum, and not the banal everyday knowledge that OBE embraced.

3.2.3 CAPS AND SOCIAL REALISM

Harding (1992:584) claims that a social *science* is about "knowledge qua knowledge", and not simply a decline of knowledge to sustain power relations. This approach not only considers structural power relations as an object of sociological objectification, but assumes that "explanatory power can be obtained through the hard work of specialist knowledge communities to map systematic causalities across the partial objectivities that they research"

(Harding 1992:582). Put differently, knowledge should not withstand power relations, but knowledge should confirm that all to be known is only partially objective.

Zipin *et al.* (2015b:17) argue that SR argumentation centres on the conviction in the "social ontological reality" of an impartial locus attained by "immense cooperation" over "long generations". In this regard, the tendency is to lean more towards standpoint theory´s claim for "stronger objectivity", which can be achieved when varied intellectual communities "triangulate partially objectified knowledges" in order to gain more explanatory power (Zipin *et al.* 2015b:19). Standpoint theorists challenge SR's characterisation of horisontality as an insufficient interpretation that fails the rich possibilities to utilise life-world knowledge for curriculum outcomes. To merely acknowledge that all knowledge is produced by scientific communities refutes the fact that localised knowledges by local communities are of little worth.

Kallaway (2012:26) recognises, for instance, that preference is given to forms of "disciplinary knowledge as a mechanism for exploring issues of similarity and difference; change and continuity and cause and consequences" in the *CAPS* history curriculum (DBE 2011a: Section 2.3.2). This reference to disciplinary knowledge is similar to Counsell´s observation (2011:202) that the history curriculum in the UK brings "an epistemic tradition to the pedagogical site so that pupils can understand the grounds on which valid claims about the past can be made". In this regard disciplinary knowledge, particularly in the history curriculum, is therefore pursued through the utilisation of educational strategies that are motivated by the ideas of the engaged probing of the structure and forms of historical knowledge, making use of concepts and attendant processes (Counsell 2011:207-217). The history curriculum therefore acknowledges the continuity of communication between intellectual generations within certain themes (Bourdieu 2003:342) over long periods of time.

Kallaway (2012:55) is adamant that a disciplinary curriculum such as history, for example, should focus on introducing learners to the processes of the historian and the manner of enquiry accustomed with the discipline itself. As such, teaching as a series of cognitive skills and abilities should permit learners to think individually within the frame of a series of methods of inquiry (Kallaway 2012:55). In this regard, Counsell's characterisation (2011:202) of the disciplinary curriculum is precise:

the purpose of teaching and learning history in the classroom is to bring the epistemic tradition of history to the pedagogical site so that pupils can understand the grounds on which valid claims about the past can be made.

Rigorous disciplinary knowledge subsequently began to take root as a critique of constructivism in the form of an academic movement called social realism (Zipin *et al.* 2015a:4). Accordingly, in South Africa this education movement forms the theoretical basis on which *CAPS* is based.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that while constructivism informed the theoretical basis of OBE, it was the critique thereof that led the way to SR as the curriculum mandate that proposes scientific knowledge to prepare learners to engage in disciplinary knowledge in schools. If we are to assume that *CAPS* is underpinned by SR, then preference to local particularised knowledge relating to everyday tasks becomes irrelevant and is replaced by knowledge produced by scientific communities. Within the South African curriculum context, knowledge relating to learners´ standpoint in life was subsequently removed from the curriculum in order to make space for the regained appeals to bring scientific knowledge back into the curriculum.

3.3 NOTIONS OF SOCIAL REALISM

In reaction to the curriculum being informed by forms of relativism, calls emerged to bring knowledge back into discussions about the curriculum. Curaming (2010:823) maintains that the first two chapters of Young's book "*Bringing knowledge back in: from social constructivism to social realism in the sociology of education*" (2008) lay the foundation for "rescuing" knowledge from the relativist clutches of social constructivism. Similarly, Biesta (2014:29) explores the importance of knowledge in the curriculum and asserts that the issue of knowledge may certainly have been left out from parts of curriculum theory and practice. In order to take part in the curriculum debate regarding the selection of knowledge, and to explicate social realism as the theoretical basis of *CAPS*, I draw on various notions of this academic movement in this section. I give particular attention to issues of neutrality and objectivity, Bernstein's socio-linguistic theory, other theoretical grounds and possibilities for knowledge.

3.3.1 SOCIAL REALISM: A QUESTION OF NEUTRALITY OR OBJECTIVITY

Edwards (2012:169) maintains that in generating work that is universal in origin and scope, social realists are led by a group of respected theorists such as Bernstein, Bhaskar, Durkheim and Vygotsky. There seems to be a common understanding that to achieve scholastic equality, all learners must be provided with access to objective "powerful knowledge" by the curriculum, created by specialist scholarly communities (Edwards 2012:169). Zipin *et al.* (2015b:11), however, contend that SR decides what knowledge should or should not be in the curriculum, and they over-stress cognitive objectives for schooling in manners that oppress axiological (ethical) purposes. As a result, SR ideas of what social-educational justice is, is too lightweight to accommodate the fundamental needs and aspirations among advantaged-disadvantaged collectives, not just in South Africa, but globally as well, for the bettering of lives through education. It is in this regard that I intend to draw on a critical realist position (*cf*. 3.4) to advance the curriculum debate.

The NSOE rebuked the idea of positivism on the claim that a school syllabus authorised by analytic philosophers of education such as Paul Hirst (1969) reified knowledge, in other words an abstractification of knowledge. Scholars in the sociology of education believe that liberal philosophers had presumed that knowledge is "value-free, decontextualized and out there", and that liberal education had not interrogated the normative standing of knowledge in the curriculum (Edwards 2012:170). In this sense, liberal philosophers espouse positivism and subsequent neutrality. With regard to education, neutrality and objectivity signify a detached, empirical approach to curricula. Moore & Muller (1999:196) quote Usher and Edwards to show that the dominance of the scientific method of inquiry to establish knowledge had failed to investigate science as a social practice and as a historical and cultural invention. Moore & Muller (1999:196) further claim that

> [s]cience has instead been seen as transcendent and decontextualized. Knowledge, as well as the knowing subject, therefore becomes context-free. Rationality is cast as universal and transcendental, operating across all historical and social contexts and practices but independent of them all. The result is an individualistic epistemology where the solitary individual confronts an independent reality of objects.

Harding (1992:573) suggests that a further acceptance of epistemological relativism has the result of preserving the views of the dominant against its toughest critics. Similarly, Corson (1991:225) is of the opinion that the analytical philosophers of education and abstractification

of "forms of knowledge" epistemologies were progressively rid of their masks of ideological neutrality. Scientific enquiry with post-empirical agendas is now replaced by projects for stronger objectivity for marginalised groups (Harding 1992:587).

Through the work of sociologists of knowledge who moved their attention towards classroom-level processes of schooling with the hope of highlighting the apparatuses by which operational patterns are reproduced, the change is made to address inequalities in the system of education (Edwards 2012:170). Edwards (2012) proceeds to argue that this paradigmatic shift was prompted to counter structural-functionalism's assumption that working-class underperformance is the result of cultural shortcomings. For decades it was assumed that the liberal curriculum in schools serves predominantly white, middle-class children, while excluding and subordinating working-class children whose own culturally-situated knowledge prevents them from achieving academically (Edwards 2012:170; Mills & Gale 2010:14). A scientific, neutral and objective approach to curriculum matters subsequently implies that marginalised people cannot benefit from a curriculum because of the misrecognition of their social, cultural and historical contexts.

3.3.2 Bernstein's Socio-Linguistic Theory and the curriculum

To further the discussion on SR's contribution to the curriculum debate for calls of bringing "knowledge back in", I engage with the work of sociologist Basil Bernstein. In addition, my discussion is also prompted by Ramatlapana & Makonye's assertion (2013:8) that *CAPS* is founded on Bernstein´s approach (1996) of robust classification and framing, which is intended to make curricula knowledge apparent to all learners.

Harley (2010:1) is of the opinion that Bernstein's well-developed set of concepts and criteria for understanding curriculum has been particularly influential in developing countries. Fundamentally known as a structuralist, Bernstein functions at one end of the pole on a related set of distinctions, and at the other on common sense knowledge. A set of distinctions refers to the academically informed, methodically organised and explicit knowledge of economically advantaged social groups. Such a set of distinctions is not dependent on context, it is not personal, and it is abstract. The context of common sense knowledge is, on the other hand, precise, has an emotional impact and is rooted in the concrete. Such a context is recognised by informal groups, families and peers. Bernstein´s argument is that while middle-class dialogue exceeds the local context and creates an efficient revenue of symbolic control,

working-class dialogue is a key part of a specific context and introduces an instrument of domination (Nash 2004:612). The educational system which successfully reproduces the structures of social domination through pedagogical work, is implicated by producing students to fit into specifically socialised forms. For Bernstein the mental formations constructed by intense forms of literate socialisation are far from class-cultural reference, in the sense that they offer lasting intellectual capabilities needed "to the competent mastery of the analytical and scientific knowledge that must form the basis of the modern school curriculum" (Nash 2004:612).

The central notion of Bernstein´s theory of speech and meaning is that the school should be engaged in the transferal of universal knowledge, that is methods of pedagogic dialogue characterised by an elaborate code (Nash 2004:612). Bernstein goes a step further and claims that a schools that fail to teach its learners the essential abstract ideas of language and mathematics should not be seen as a school in the modern sense. This "code" theory of Bernstein is an assertion that "powerful knowledge" should be part of curriculum selection in the SR tradition. Zipin *et al.* (2015b:12) postulate that SR mandates powerful knowledge which deserves overwhelming centrality in curricula produced by those in academic or disciplinary communities, according to SR. The implication is that scientific knowledge is objective and universal, and that such curricula should be offered to all learners.

3.3.3 SOCIAL REALISM: FURTHER THEORETICAL GROUNDS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR KNOWLEDGE

In this section I engage with certain aspects of social realism in order to further highlight the theoretical grounds which inform SR. Objectivist approaches are created to pinpoint and remove those social and political beliefs that vary between the individuals who form part of a scientific community (Harding 1992:577). A key critique of SR is that its methods should be less partial, and accounts of nature and social relations need to be less distorted. Accounts are claimed to be partial and distorted because knowledge produced by scientific communities not only reflects the point of views and interests of dominant social groups (Moore in Zipin *et al.* 2015b:14), but refers mostly to white, middle-class males. The dominant discussion of science withstands fallibilism in its claims of absolutism in knowledge that prohibit claims to scientificity (Moore & Muller 1999:203). Harding (1992:580) suggests that knowledge production should be fair and honest, and that it should advance democracy – it should not be representative of merely one part of society. Harding (1992:574) continues to

note that in order for the curriculum debate to progress, the "natural sciences do and must assume histories, sociologies, political economies and philosophies of science whether or not they explicitly articulate such assumptions". What the natural sciences essentially perceive is not simply nature, but "nature-as-an-object-of-knowledge" which is at all times already completely encultured by humans.

Maton & Moore (2010a:26) detail the tenets of social realism, and place emphasis on *social objectivity*, *contextual transcendence*, *internal cognitive interests* and *contestations*. *Social objectivity* refers to avoiding relativism, and calls for knowledge to be based on the social "codes of association" and procedures of epistemic communities such as university research and subject associations. Durkheim´s collective consciousness and Bernstein´s sociology of knowledge are employed to build on the notion that objectivity exists within disciplinary margins. *Contextual transcendence* implies that knowledge can be objective in the way that it can exceed the context of its creation. The claim is that it is imperative to differentiate between everyday common sense knowledge and abstract, powerful knowledge. Vygotsky is mentioned as a main inspiration in this regard. *Internal cognitive interests* is the assertion that the significance of mental (truth-seeking) standards inside epistemic communities, which differ between intellectual spheres and cannot be condensed to sectional authority interest in broader society, should not be neglected. Maton & Moore (2010a:26) conclude the tenets by highlighting *contestation* as the perception that intelligent spheres are not monumental. They are continually active with opposing claims, which subsequently allows for evolutionary transformation.

Social realism is criticised by thinkers such as Lawson (1997) and Hammersley (in Edwards 2012:178), who question whether curriculum knowledge is limited to knowledge generated by a small cross-section of members of society who are university researchers and are subsequently open to potential ideological distortion. The question pivots on the possibility of whether forms of scientifically produced knowledge can result in ideological falsification and subsequent asymmetrical associations of privilege. This again could continue to carry on through schooling, and challenging privileged groups in society. The contention is that social realists are wrong to suggest that knowledge-producing communities can be separated from the wider society. There are unequal relations of privilege that function to generate clashes in a sense which are not just theoretical, but practical in the sense that they are present at various levels of education, ranging from the level of policy-making to school practices

(Edwards 2012:179). The problem of social realism is the privileging of social facts and the lack of the required reflexivity to practically overturn unwanted structures (Edwards 2012:180). This problem alludes to Durkheim´s ontological collectivism and subsequent insufficient consciousness of its own historicity. The implication for curricula is subsequently a privileging of scientifically powerful knowledge that advances the interest of the middle class while adversely disadvantaging marginal lives.

3.4 CRITICAL REALISM: A CRITICAL TURN IN SCIENTIFIC REALISM

In presenting arguments on the mandates for curriculum knowledge selection, the aim is to suggest different curriculum mandates that could add to ongoing discussions about social justice and curricular practices for historically disadvantaged learners. It is with this aim in mind that I discuss in this section a different and more developed form of realism, namely critical realism as developed by Roy Bhaskar. Critical realism arose in the last part of the twentieth century from two constituents of thought. The first of these is as a *critical current*, originating from Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, which highlighted the socially constructed nature of knowledge. The second is as a *realist ontological current,* which highlighted the power of science to clarify and foretell actualities in the natural world (Shipway 2011:13). Lukács (1971) and Bhaskar (1978), who are both associated with critical realism, drew upon the critical current and in particular on Marx's ontological point that a worthwhile reality can only be known through "a socially constructed medium that is prone to partiality and error" (Edwards 2012:171).

3.4.1 THEORETICAL MARKERS OF CRITICAL REALISM

According to Hacking (in Gorski 2013:662), Bhaskar believes that the natural sciences mostly isolate causal mechanisms by way of vigorous interventions into the world (in other words "experiments") that generate indirect observations of the world (through "instruments"). Gorski (2013:662) adds and asserts that one motive why social scientists have not succeeded in discovering any "covering laws" is that they are unable to generate experimental closure. Another reason mentioned is that social structures are not only reliant on human activity and culture, but they differ over space and time to a far larger degree than physical structures (Gorski 2013:662). In his book "*A realist theory of science"* (1978; 1993), Bhaskar refers to "transcendental realism" as his approach to natural science. This approach is "realist" in the

general sense, since a "mind-independent" nature functions as a fundamental "condition of possibility" for natural science. However, Bhaskar contends that the realist current is also realist in the "critical" manner, as it perceives science to be a human action that is unavoidably mediated by human language and social control (Gorski 2013:664).

Gorski (2013:664) is of the opinion that for Bhaskar the argument is that if reality can be effectively analysed through a wide range of diverse spatio-temporal measures, and if the physical and biological sciences are relatively independent from each another, then this is at least partially so because nature is essentially organised in that manner, namely into various layers and realms. A key principle in Bhaskar's work is the concept of the social sciences and their relation to the natural sciences. His own opinions as critical naturalist entail the rejection of any sharp division between the natural and social sciences. In particular, Corson (1991:231) argues that "Bhaskar´s naturalism is ontological rather than epistemological in its fundamentals as it incorporates the social world as an intrinsic part of the scientific world". For Corson (1991), Bhaskar makes claims for critical naturalism and the transformative model of social actions that stem from it. For Bhaskar the last model involves a beginning of social science as an explanatory critique. Bhaskar (1993:7) points to dialectics as the thought of understanding and grasping conceptions of life in their methodical interconnections, and not only in terms of their determinate differences. He contemplates every development as a total of a previous, less developed phase and whose necessary truth is still in the process of becoming. At the same time, Gorski (2013:666) claims that Bhaskar's question about how social science can cross over the *is/ought divide*, is actually about how social science uses dialectics to makes sense between the natural and social sciences.

Bhaskar´s critical realism maintains that it will only be possible to understand and transform the social world if we recognise the structures that are working in the interests of the privileged (Bhaskar in Corson 1991:231). For Bhaskar (in Corson 1991:232), liberation takes place when we make the transition from "unwanted to wanted sources of determination". The emphasis is subsequently placed on altering the relationship between agency and structural context to support the development of such emancipation.

Corson (1991:233) claims that "[s]ince society for Bhaskar pre-exists the individual, then in changing society human activity goes to work on objects that are given". Bhaskar in Gorski (2013:666–667) asserts that the reproduction of certain types of social structures may be influenced by the production of distorted or inaccurate social beliefs. Bhaskar proceeds to

argue that if one can establish a systematic link between inaccurate beliefs and oppressive social structures, then one has not simply described the beliefs but also provided a motivation for transforming the structures. Effectively, this means that one has made the transition from facts to values. For Bhaskar this is not to say that explanatory critique is sufficient in itself to motivate action, but it is "always a matter of will, desire, sentiment, capacities, facilities, and opportunities as well as beliefs" (Gorski 2013:667).

3.4.2 DIALECTICS AND REFLEXITIVITY IN CRITICAL REALISM

The shift to dialectics alludes to Bhaskar's belief (in Gorski 2013:667) that the movement of our thoughts should follow the movement of reality itself. In this regard Bhaskar (1993:15) postulates that the "dialectic includes argument and conflict, disputation, struggle and split, dialogue and exchange, but also probative progress, enlightenment, demystification and the critique of illusion". Dialectic is the manner in which humans mediate the truth. Gorski (2013:668) regards dialectical critical realism as a more suitable ontology of change as it offers an improved account of the real forms and processes of change.

For Bhaskar (1993:14) the objects of science do not exhaust reality, but rather afford a particular angle on reality from which certain objects can be chosen specifically for their explanatory scope and power. Bhaskar (1993:14) writes that, together with ethical naturalism, he is devoted to moral realism, and aspires to anticipate to a nearby position in aesthetics. As such, truth claims are positioned inside both the natural and the social sciences.

Corson (1991:235) theorises that although Bhaskar denies that the human sciences and the natural sciences can be studied in the same way, it is the capacity for "second order monitoring" by humans that sets the human sciences into a different level of complexity that is not even matched remotely by the sciences - the reflexivity of human agents. Reflexivity can be explained as "the reasons and the accounts that actors offer to explain social effects and to constitute social mechanisms" (Corson 1991:236).

For Bhaskar the truth can be mediated through dialectics and reflexivity. In order to bring forth more precise claims regarding the truth about the natural and social worlds, better accounts of the real forms and processes of change should be mediated through dialectics. Accounts to clarify social effects and to establish social apparatuses could be obtained through reflexivity. In this respect evaluative structures about the human sciences could in reality

reflect a more accurate account. Emancipation subsequently comes about when we move from "unwanted to wanted sources of determination". In other words, dialectics and reflexivity in relation to moral and ethical considerations could accomplish social justice.

3.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM SELECTION

As seen from the above discussion, Social Realists make an argument for *objectivity* contrary to *neutrality*. For education this means that the content of the curriculum makes provision for scientific, universal knowledge. The assertion is that the school curriculum has been designed by remote research communities, with the implication that learners are the uncritical recipients of such a curriculum. Moreover, knowledge production with regard to this academic movement is removed from the school and learner communities. Edwards (2012:179) contends that

> [t]here is no mechanism by which distortion and error may be challenged since, without a transactional account of the relation between structure and agency, there is no possibility for an agent to ´act back´ upon structure.

Zipin *et al.* (2015b: 12) claim that SRs are serious about specialist communities, as the social locus promises increasingly larger approximations of objective truth. SR has assisted in moving away from a weak OBE curriculum. To advance the discourse from a fragile OBE curriculum positioning, capacities to bring ethics and knowledge back to the centre are required for a democratic dialogue about curriculum among academics, policy makers and the broader public (Zipin *et al.* 2015b:34).

The criticism remains, however, that if knowledge is merely produced by the scientific community, distortion and error cannot be challenged, especially not by other non-scientific communities. It is in this regard that a step towards critical realism places the emphasis on the critical locus which enables engagements with other knowledge producing groups, which could advance development in educational thought. In terms of the content of the curriculum, critical realism produces knowledge through methods of enquiry from a perspective that the natural world is divided into different strata or domains. As such, social reality is observed as an intrinsic part of the natural world (*cf.* Gorski 2013:664; Corson 1991:231). The natural world is interpreted through inquiry, via the power of the ever-evolving theory of evolution (Corson 1991:228). Opposed to this the social world is interpreted as a social phenomenon (Bhaskar in Corson 1991:230). Bhaskar also underscores the centrality of language in the process of discovery in the human sciences when he proclaims that we cannot escape from

our language (or time). For Bhaskar language mediates between his realist ontology and his ever-sceptical epistemology which represents the set of meanings that is extracted from encounters with the material world (Corson 1991:234-235).   Knowledge is subsequently acculturated and socially constructed, and is therefore partially objective. Of importance for the *CAPS* curriculum debate is the challenging of the Eurocentricity of knowledge.   In particular, critical realism foregrounds questions around the detachment of knowledge from the knower or the learner in local circumstances.

In taking cognisance of Bhaskars´ ideas, learners are regarded as part of the natural and the social world. The human is an intrinsic part of the natural world, and the way the natural world is approached often leads to distorted and inaccurate beliefs, especially about marginalised people, resulting in dominant versus subordinate power relations. Bhaskar´s notion is to critique those structures which position people in marginalised spaces. The implication for curricula is that if we regard the learner as part of both the natural and the social world, then this needs to reflect the particular socio-historical period of which the learner is part. It is through such a reflection that curricula can counter the detachment of knowledge from the learner in his or her specific circumstances.

Knowledge production should give a better account of the real forms and processes of change (Gorski 2013:668).   Edwards (2012:180) claims that critical realism suggests an evolving, transformative relationship between structure and action. Dispositions are always defined by the specific socio-historical period of time in which agents find themselves. This notion is a continuation of the dialectical tradition of Hegel and Marx.   Au (in Edwards 2012:180) describes the concept as the dialectical relationship between subjectivity of experience and the material world of relationships. Learners are not only the uncritical receivers of pre-constituted curricular knowledge; they should rather constantly subject knowledge to the test of practical experience (Edwards 2012:180).

In the South African context, the socio-historical trajectory plays an important part in curriculum matters. Allusions to our complex history of colonialism and the apartheid system were included in the content conveyed in schools. The introduction of democracy in our country after 1994 reflects endeavours of progressive human rights education as a basis for curriculum selection. In this regard, Kallaway (2012:28) notes that the curriculum promotes egalitarian values instead of pure disciplinary universal knowledge claims. In contemporary educational debates the following question however surfaces: *Did the transformation agenda*

bring about the required changes? Fataar (2017) avers that scrutiny of the *CAPS* curriculum reveals a thin pedagogical transfer which signals an ethics free form of curriculum selection. For Fataar (2017) the sociological worlds which learners bring to the school requires placing the human at the centre of the curriculum. In the South African context the human as a historical being becomes a focal point. It has become imperative for schools to connect to the life worlds and subjectivities of learners, especially that of the poor and historically disadvantaged learners. By implication, critical realism has foregrounded the misalignment between the localised knowledge of learners and universal, scientific knowledge in the South African curriculum debate. As seen in student protests that started with the #Rhodes Must Fall in 2015 and the ongoing #Fees Must Fall movements, the current status quo in South African higher education is fundamentally challenged by the need for a more just system that speaks to all people in society.

As mentioned, critical realism produces knowledge from the preconception that science recognises different strata or domains in the natural world. In addition, Bhaskar integrates the social world as an inherent part of the scientific world (*cf*. Corson 1991:231). Based on this perception I assert that the learner is an inherent part of both the natural and social worlds, and that the learner's knowledge and what counts for success for the learner should be a vital part of the education system. An incorporation of different kinds of knowledge, and not merely a representation of one layer of society, could bring emancipatory power. To incorporate all people´s historical, political, cultural and socio-economic contexts will advance the democratic debate about humans in the education system. By implication, the SR discourse on objectivity in knowledge production has moved values and moral considerations in the curriculum, to the linking of lifeworld knowledge and scientific school knowledge codes for equality in education. Of importance in the South African curriculum is to not only know the learner, but to place the learner's sociological world in the classroom by making connections with ethics. Such connections should span from the level of policy-making processes to classroom level in order to provide for human lives and experiences in their becomings.

With regard to the above Fataar (2012:5) commits himself to "a sociological analysis that pluralises our understandings of our educational publics; thus a kind of sociological contextualism or perspectivism that expands the boundaries of our educational knowing and sets up a more inclusive conversation about the human in education". It is also in this

contestation that I notice a manifestation toward the education subjectivity of learners in their educational becomings. This observation seems to be similar to the NSOE's argument for development towards equality in education. It also touches on Bhaskar´s quest for unwanted to wanted sources of determination (*cf*. Corson 1991:232) for social justice for the marginalised in the education system. More specifically, cultural and localised accounts of knowledge, in combination with scientific knowledge accounts, provide a far better description of humans as part of both the natural and social worlds.

Both scientific and life world knowledge should form part of the school curriculum, especially for the sake of the advancement of educational work. "Bringing knowledge back in" and, significantly, bringing ethics back into education, should form the basis of knowledge production. Bhaskar (1993:14) is committed to the idea of moral realism, which is an ethical valuation of science. The initiation of power-sensitive discussions (dialectics) across life-world settings through the promotion of educative processes, has the potential to increase consciousness about how place-based funds of knowledge carry global dimensions across locales. Within the Freirean tradition, for example, paralleling funds of knowledge approaches scaffolds or rather integrates vernacular oral literacies of people in high-poverty locations towards written literacy capacity (in Zipin *et al.* 2015b:27). Within such a context educators and power-marginalised people can think together, can teach one another and subsequently raise critical consciousness to generative themes of global connection that run across local social spaces. In this regard, Harding (1992:582) refers to democratic dialogues between numerous marginal and dominant communities.

Moving the position of critical realism into the South African context, the curriculum debate centres around the misrecognition of cultural processes which should integrate the human being into education. The incorporation and embracement of *all* people´s ways of being should be reflected in curricula. The local particularities and scientific universalities can give more true accounts about reality. Finally, knowledge systems and curricula, which is reflective of important dimensions of various population groups, give a truer reflection of reality that is less distorted and inaccurate. This study focuses on one population group in South Africa only in order to make truth claims more visible. More research has to be done, however, to be able to reach agreement on more accurate beliefs on this specific part of reality.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I attempted to explore the philosophical foundations on which school knowledge codes in selected school curricula could be based. I discussed empirical relativism as exposed in the OBE debate, and critiqued the social realism orientation of *CAPS* before I focused on critical realism as an alternative approach to curriculum development.

Within the context of *CAPS,* the mere offering of knowledge produced by scientific communities aligns with the school knowledge codes of the middle-class layers of society. This privileging of middle-class knowledge codes further marginalises disadvantaged communities. It is with this in mind that a case is to be made for stronger objectivity in the curriculum, which becomes attainable when diverse scholarly and non-scholarly communities triangulate partially objectified knowledges in order to gain more explanatory power (*cf*. Zipin *et al.* 2015b:19). By implication it is assumed that both locally produced knowledge and scientifically produced knowledge are only partially objective, and could contribute to truth claims. Specifically, in the context of curriculum development, a mediation and eventually an integration of all types of knowledge should form part of knowledge production and curriculum selection in order to serve all learners and offer equality in education.

By displaying the thoughts of Roy Bhaskar, this chapter engaged in ways to open debates on democratic dialogue on knowledge production and curriculum selection in the South African educational arena. Through dialectics and reflectivity, Bhaskar permits for the actual existence of generative apparatuses which explain social and historical events over long periods of time, and the manifesting of such events as issues to be dealt with in the present. These actualities that schools have to cope with need to be understood, and mechanisms should be put in place to bring emancipatory means to specifically marginalised people in society.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the study engaged in the school knowledge codes offered by South African school curricula, and their underlying theoretical basis. The Social and Critical Realist positions were explored to shed light on both orientations respectively regarding the curriculum. Towards informing the empirical part of my study, in Chapter 1 I briefly discussed the research design. In this chapter I not only introduce the methodology and the research method used in the study, but also introduce the context of the historically disadvantaged surroundings of the small and larger towns in which the schools are located. This chapter further details my design, detailing my engagement with matters of participant selection, addressing aspects such as trustworthiness, ethics, data analysis and reporting, and interpreting the data. Importantly for this thesis, I employed and used data from a range of semi-structured interviews to capture the essence of the phenomenon in question.

4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

For Bourdieu (2007:251) "the force of the pre-constructed resides in the fact that, being inscribed both in things and in minds, it presents itself under the cloak of the self-evident, which goes unnoticed because it is, by definition, taken for granted". Bourdieu suggests a conversion of one´s gaze, looking through "new eyes". Bourdieu further asserts that "this ´new gaze´, a sociological eye, cannot be done without a genuine conversion, a metanoia, a mental revolution, a transformation of one´s whole vision of the social world". And, in terms of the study of the sociology of knowledge, the curriculum should on the one hand open ways to perceive how the curriculum perpetuates the societal status quo, and on the other suggest avenues how to promote equality in society (Cohen *et al.* 2011:32).

To answer this question, the empirical part of my study aspired to *uncover school practices in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities that could mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school to aim towards learner achievement*. This, together with insights from previous chapters, enabled me to offer critical comments regarding the mediation of learners' life world knowledge and the existing school cultural capital towards learner achievement in the final chapter. Merriam (2009:5) maintains that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret

their experiences, how they create their realities, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. In this chapter I respond to the objective highlighted earlier in this paragraph, to make use of qualitative research and interviews with different types of participants in order to obtain their meanings, interpretations and feelings about schooling in historically disadvantaged communities.

That being said, according to Gibbs (2007:x) qualitative research proposed to approach reality (not in specialised research settings) and to understand, describe and sometimes clarify social phenomena from the inside in a number of different ways. In this research process, Gibbs (2007:xi) explicates that qualitative researchers themselves are a significant part of the research process, either in terms of their experiences in the field or with the reflexivity they bring to the role. Yet, Birch & Miller (2012:104) claim that if researchers continually allow interpretations to depend upon the scientific community, and ignore the "participation of the ´research participant´", there may be a threat of strengthening particular ways of knowing and particular forms of knowledge. My role was essentially to give a voice to the participants from a marginalised community. I engaged in critical self-reflection in order to offer more real and accurate accounts of the participants in historically disadvantaged rural areas. This was done to reveal truth claims from the viewpoints of the participants in the study.

Bourdieu & Wacquant (2007:238) assert that to avoid becoming the object of the problems investigated in your research, you must retrace the history of the emergence of these problems, and that of their advanced constitution. This progression is often the result of competition and struggle, necessary to make such issues known and recognised as legitimate, avowable, publishable, public and official problems. Furthermore, Merriam (2009:35) denotes that scholastic research interrogates the context within which learning takes place. Such a context, however, runs across the larger systems of society, and also include the culture and institutions that shape and frame educational practices. In this regard, the local and broader contexts of the South African society were questioned to offer answers to this particular research question. As I have shown, these issues are manifesting in the present and need our attention.

This qualitative study employs a critical social approach of interpreting the real world. Merriam (2009:36; 2002:9) states: "[d]rawing from critical social science and in particular Habermas' (1972) theory of knowledge, critical qualitative research uncovers, examines, and critiques the social, cultural, and psychological assumptions that structure and limit our ways

of thinking and being in the world". In addition, especially within education, the goal is to change society for the betterment of all. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011:36) state that "Habermas' emancipatory interests denote an inescapably political reading of the curriculum and the purposes of education – the movement away from authoritarianism and elitism and towards social democracy". In this research the focus is on school practices in historically disadvantaged communities which could mediate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school towards improving learner achievement. I employed a bricolage of three theories, namely the Bourdieu's social theory, CRT and LatCrit, and GTR to interpret the collected data.

An ethical standpoint that would always address human suffering and life conditions, is aligned with the politics of the oppressed which moves to reclaim multiple knowledges and ways of being, involves complexity, openness to uncertainty and continued reflexive insight (Cannella & Lincoln 2011:82). Canella & Lincoln (2011:82) further suggest that, as researchers, we must reflect on questions such as "How can we enlarge the research imaginary to reveal the "possibilities/could be" that our preoccupations have obscured?". Important for education is furthermore that teachers must work both with and on the life world knowledge that learners bring to the educational encounter, rather than imposing a dominatory syllabus that reproduces inequality in society (Cohen *et al.* 2011:37) and alienates learners. The human in the contemporary educational context is of paramount importance, and research which centres on both humans and curriculum development attempts to work towards a more just society for all.

Serious attention is paid to the manner in which different types of linguistic, social, political and academic components are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical substance is constructed, interpreted and written (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2012:9). Alvesson & Sköldberg further suggest that "empirical research as a reflective mode starts from a sceptical approach to what appears, at a superficial glance, as unproblematic replicas of the way reality functions, while at the same time maintaining the belief that the study of suitable excerpts from this reality can provide an important basis for the generation of knowledge that opens up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes ´truths'" (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2012:9).

On the whole, qualitative research engenders knowledge that primarily unlocks understanding about our social reality. In this research an understanding of the perspectives

of different role players regarding the phenomenon of low achievement of learners in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities was under scrutiny. In the section that follows, data generation strategies for this study will be discussed as a means of explaining existing theory and also of generating new theory in order to understand the phenomenon.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

As stated earlier (1.5.3.3) aspects such as expense, time and accessibility exclude researchers from obtaining information from the whole population. They therefore frequently have to obtain data from smaller groups of the entire population (*cf*. Cohen *et. al.* 2007:100).

4.3.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Below are descriptions of the towns where the schools are located, their community lives, as well as sketches of the schools. The features of the regions and towns, characteristics of the schools and the backgrounds of the learners played an essential part in the research - consequently a consideration of this context is crucial to the research methodology itself. Specifically, the conceptualisation of the historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learner / community had to be unpacked.

These towns in the Cape West Coast and Cape Winelands regions are described in colourful informational sites on the Worldwide Web and tourist pamphlets as idyllic destinations for the traveller. Information pages mention that one of these historic towns rests in a picturesque setting surrounded by wheat fields in summer and yellow flashes of canola and indigenous wild flowers in winter. Another serene village is described as covered in the softest shades of pink and white during spring when the peach orchards are in bloom.[4]

These valleys are perfectly temperatured for producing its world-renowned South African wines. One of the valleys is quite literally home of the vines - almost 90% of the country´s vines are grown in vine-cutting nurseries before they are transported elsewhere for planting. This specific town also accommodates the production of berries, apricots and olives. Another invitation to one of these villages is as follows: "It is quite a revelation to enter the serene, unspoiled valley and discover the rural village of the town nestling in its bowl of magnificent

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[4]   I did not include the URLs and tourist pamphlets as this would make the schools identifiable, resulting in ethical issues.

mountains". The information guide notes that the wine cellars, olive growers and working farms welcome visitors to taste their produce. For the outdoor enthusiasts there are hiking trails, 4x4 trails, mountain bike routes and fly-fishing facilities, while closer to town, guided wine-walks and horse-trails through the farms and flowering fynbos can be enjoyed. For those wishing to spend more than a day in these valleys, there is a range of accommodation establishments and restaurants which cater for a variety of tastes and preferences.

These descriptions are certainly true, although these luxuries are not allotted for the poor locals. Inhabitants work on these farms as farm labourers, housekeepers and kitchen staff. A large percentage of the parents that I interviewed are working in the hospitality sector, with no union representation. They are working in coffee shops, restaurants, guesthouses and hotels as cleaners, cooks, waiters, managers, assistant managers and shop assistants. Farm workers and people working in the service economy do this for long hours and are usually the lower paid wage earners.

Most learners follow the same labour paths as their parents. The fortunate ones find work in law enforcement, correctional services, and semi-professional and professional employment in far-off urban ares.[5]

These inhabitants also usually do not reside in the tranquil town centres. They stay further out of town in townships (*die lokasies*), in old and new government subsidised housing schemes such as the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) housing project. These areas are not nearly as scenic as the residential neighbourhoods situated in the historically white areas.

Upon entering historically disadvantaged Coloured neighbourhoods, you usually see children playing in the streets. This is where you can find the Coloured communities, typically in these areas, remnants of the apartheid regime. The Coloured population group is of mixed descent, and generally in the South African society discriminated against because of their status as a historically racialised and marginalised group of people. In the context of this thesis and as

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[5]   I did not include the URL and tourist pamphlets as this would make the schools identifiable and results in ethical issues.

explanation of my research position, I am part of this community. In fact, as a child, I grew up in one of the towns where the research was undertaken.

From my insider's perspective I know that Coloured communities struggle with high unemployment rates and poverty. Subsequently social issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, violence, teenage parenting and other negative issues are a reality. On a positive note, these historically disadvantaged communities usually have community assets such as community centres which learners can use for school-related activities. There are often also other multidisciplinary community cultural centres for training and interaction with the visual arts, crafts, music and writing. Still, there is a lack of recreational activities in most of these rural settings where young people can be engaged.

4.3.2 SELECTION OF SCHOOLS

In terms of the schools, the study made use of purposive participant selection. The cases to be included were hand-picked based on judgment of typicality of specific characteristics (Cohen *et al.* 2011:156). For this reason, schools in historically disadvantaged communities which serve farm communities were selected. Due to the nature of the research, and to build on the theoretical basis of the study, children residing on farms and in rural towns were selected. These learners were furthermore selected on the basis of moving in and out of rural areas into semi-urban spaces to access schooling as a form of resource that rural places do not have.

The research was conducted in the Cape West Coast and the Cape Winelands regions respectively. Two of the schools are situated deeper in rural areas and serve mostly farming communities and poor, small town communities. The remaining three schools are located in larger towns, serving historically disadvantaged Coloured communities and also farming communities (near and distant). Although I initially selected six schools, one declined to take part in the study.

The selected schools for the research are all public schools. One of the schools is a combined school that offers primary and secondary grades up to grade 12. The rest of the schools are secondary schools, catering for grades 8 to 12. The number of registered learners varies between 800 and 1 680 learners. Two of the secondary schools offer hostel accommodation for learners from nearby and more distant small towns and farms. Certainly the schools have

their fair share of difficulties embodied in these learners, as the research exhibited. The above discussion has set the stage for the research, and influenced the choices around methodology.

4.3.3 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants in my study were learners, parents, teachers, school principals and community workers.

While these schools were purposefully selected for their poor, working-class nature to serve the intention of the study, learners were also purposefully selected (Cohen *et al.* 2007:110). Five learners from each school were selected, and included both male and female participants. Preference was given to grade 10 to 12 learners because of their experiences in moving into and out of rural areas, and also how well they could convey their subjectivities and life experiences in these communities and in these schools. In the end I conducted interviews with 18 learners, of whom ten were boys and eight were girls. The ages of the learner-participants varied between 16 and 19. Two of the learners were in grade 8, but I found them too young to work with.

The principals of the schools took the initiative to invite learners to take part in the research. The various principals announced at formal school assemblies that learners from grades 10 to 12, who were interested to take part in the research, could come and talk to me. The principals informed learners that they should be residing on farms in the area and attending school in these towns. I chose four or five learners from each school who conformed to the relevant criteria (living on farms and in grades 10 to 12) to engage in the interviews (two grade 8 learners of two schools who volunteered, were not used because of their age). I provided the volunteer learners with the necessary assent and consent forms for themselves and their parents or guardians to complete. As soon as the learners returned the completed forms, I commenced with the interviews. The interviews with the learners took 30 to 60 minutes to complete. In cases where the learners were interviewed in the community centre, I was fortunate to be able to do follow-up interviews to probe for more information.

Due to my knowledge and networks in the specific communities, I could easily access and approach the parents in their residential neighbourhoods. I used convenience selection which involves selecting the nearest individuals to be participants. These participants happened to be available at the time and to whom I had easy access (Cohen *et al.* 2007:113-114). I gained

access mostly to the mothers of the learners, as many father figures were absent or working in semi-urban and urban areas. I interviewed ten female and two male parent participants. The interviews usually lasted no more than 30 minutes. The ages of the parents varied between 32 and 45 years.

Most of the teachers whom I interviewed were known to me. I invited them to take part due to their interest and knowledge of the phenomenon. I made appointments and eventually engaged for 45 to 60 minutes with the participants. In the case of two schools where I did not know the staff, the principals introduced me to the staff, and gave me permission to approach staff members to invite them to take part in the study. In the end four female and six male teachers took part in the research.

Three male and two female principals were interviewed. I made telephonic contact with the principals of the schools. In two cases I found it extremely difficult to set appointments with the principals due to their harsh programs. After many initial difficulties I could complete the research at the schools. The interviews took 30 minutes to complete. At two schools the principals introduced me to the two community workers who also formed part of the research (the so-called snowballing technique). In the case of snowball sampling, researchers identify a small number of individuals who have the features in which they are interested. These people put the researchers in touch with others who meet the requirements for inclusion. Community workers associated with the other schools were not available when I conducted the interview research. The community workers´ interviews took 30 minutes to complete, and both were female and in their thirties.

4.4 DATA GENERATION STRATEGY

Merriam (2009:214) suggests that because people are the main instruments of data generation and analysis in qualitative research, understandings of reality are accessed directly through their observations and interviews. As qualitative research is not known for the interjection of a data collection instrument between the researcher and the participants, the term "data generation" is used rather than "data collection". Furthermore, Maree (2016:37) recommends that as soon as a decision is made about a research strategy, you need to describe how you intend to set about generating the data to answer the research question.

4.4.1 *Semi-structured interviews as a data generation method*

As indicated in the earlier section, I used semi-structured interviews to generate data for this study (Addendum I). Nieuwenhuis (2016:92) maintains that an interview is a dialogue between two parties, with the aim to see the world through the eyes of the participant. This method can be a valuable approach if used correctly. In semi-structured interviews, pre-set questions serve as a guideline to this conversation, but should be used in a flexible manner (Merriam 2009:89).

The success of interviews depends on how the interviewer approaches it. One must be attentive to the reactions of the participants in order to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied, and then to explore and probe for new insights (Nieuwenhuis 2016:93). Nieuwenhuis (2016) also points out that if the participants regard the topic as important and they trust the person doing the interviews, they will offer information that will not otherwise be available to the researcher. I used semi-structured interviews based on a line of inquiry developed by the researcher (*cf*. Nieuwenhuis 2016:93), in order to obtain the participants´ perspectives on living and learning in racialised, rural disadvantaged places.

The only way to get good answers from participants is to ask good questions, and in such a manner that the participants can easily understand them (Merriam 2009:95). I thus carefully planned my interview schedule (Addendum I).

4.4.2 *The interview schedule*

The first few questions in the schedule focused on the home circumstances of the learners, which ultimately influence their school performance. These questions referred to the theory of Bourdieu, Critical Race Theory and the Generative Theory of Rurality. The engagements describe the nature of their working-class backgrounds, subjectivities in historically racial areas as well as life experiences within rural areas. The construct identified was *cultural capital,* which alluded to the working-class or possibly middle-class nature of the learners in the study. Reference is made to forms of cultural knowledge, competencies or dispositions which learners in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities possess.

The second set of questions was directed toward the influence of the school on the learning practices of learners. This was done to foreground learners' relationships and attitudes

toward the school. Here reference is giving to learners' *position in social space*, according to their families' accumulative cultural capital, which is determined through success in the cultural field. Bourdieu´s capital theory makes provision for the fact that working-class learners display different attitudes toward the school because their culture usually differs from that of the school.

The next set of questions highlighted the influence that rural environments have on these learners, and how this eventually impacts on their school performance. *Disposition (classification and appreciation of cultural goods and productions)* refers to representations obtained from cultural capital and which are visible through symbolic outlines for practical activities, that is conducts, thoughts, feelings and judgements. *Habitus*, ways of being and ways of doing, makes playing the game of school easier if you belong to the middle class. In this regard, people enter the school system from different structural positions and different social habitus. Working-class children are placed adversely in schools, sometimes resulting in poor school achievement. In this study, the focus is mainly on the disposition of working-class learners living in rural areas and attending schools in semi-urban areas.

The last set of questions regarding the learners centred on the movement into and out of rural areas in order to access education in semi-urban spaces. This part dealt with their subjectivities within their own community environments as well as in the school environments in semi-urban places. *Field of space/field of powers* introduced the concept of field where agents (in this case learners) own their position through competition. The kind of capital you possess is powers that describe your probabilities of profit in a certain field. Historically disadvantaged Coloured learners in rural areas are placed at the margins of society in terms of the capital their families possess. According to the theory of Bourdieu this is the reason why they are placed at the margins of society - they are without resources and consequently do not perform well in school. In the case CRT orientation, *naming one´s own reality,* learners talked about experiences at home, school and in the community. *Learners´ subjectivities (lived experiences)* in the GTR positioning refer to ways in which learners make use of time, space and resources to advance their educational journey within a rural context. *Rurality as context, agency and resources* allude to the voices of learners, parents and teachers. Relevant issues include "What counts for success in rural areas?", "What agencies do learners demonstrate to advance in life" and "How could resources be used for the betterment of all?".

The dominant view suggests that social classes are constantly involved in a battle to enforce the view of the world most consistent with their specific interests. This state of affairs results in the middle class dictating the education system through their demands for traditional knowledge. *Internal and external functions of the school* align with the cultural capital the middle-class learners receive at home. The school therefore usually assumes middle-class culture, attitudes and values in all learners, and the culture of a working-class learner is seen as a liability. *Effect of homologies* refer to how powerful groups within society forms alliances with working-class groups to accumulate more power to express their particular views and their particular interests in life, helping learners to gain access to resources.

The questions posed to the parents of these learners gave attention to historical and racial concerns. The questions also focused on community life, especially their working lives and factors which impede learners in their education. The questions furthermore gave preference to curriculum concerns and what they regarded as success for their children. *Experientially grounded truth or contextualisation of social realities* makes reference to the critical race theory positioning which is concerned with experientially grounded, transformative aspirational knowledge, including race and other socially constructed hierarchies. Parents sketched their lives in tough environments, describing how they do their best to give their children better futures.

The final set of questions emphasised the role of teachers and principals in these schools. The focus was on school practices which motivate learners to perform, and also practices that encumbers learner performances. These questions centred on school practices and curriculum matters concerning the learners. *Experiential knowledge (experiences of other racial/ethnic)* alludes to educational inequalities and injustices, where teachers do not really see and hear the cries of their learners. School curricula do not speak to the majority of historically disadvantaged learners. *Transformational resistance* suggests that learners display all kinds of internal resistance (agencies) to transform their lives.

The theories about Relativism, Social Realism and Critical Realism centre on curriculum issues and what kind of curriculum would best suit historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners for them to be able to perform and excel academically in school. This study would like to see school and community practices to assist marginalised learners to achieve academically. The interview schedule is attached as Addendum I: Interview schedules and how the theoretical

constructs are linked with the research questions is indicated in Addendum J: Link between the theoretical framework and the interview questions.

4.4.3 REFLECTING ON MY EXPERIENCES

I interviewed various sets of participants to support the themes emerging from the different sources. I conducted interviews with parents, learners, teachers, principals and community workers to obtain different perspectives on the phenomenon of low achievement of historically disadvantaged Coloured learners in rural areas, and how school practices can support these learners. I found that the interviews I conducted outside the premises of the schools were more engaging than those conducted on school premises.

The teachers were quite open during the interviews. This was in contrast with the principals. I got the impression that the latter were trying to provide rosy pictures of their schools, and would rather steer the discussion in a particular direction to play it safe. I do however have empathy with this approach, as school principals saw themselves as protectors of the interests of the school as an organisation, and not necessarily focusing on protecting the rights of learners in the first place.

Parents shared their experiences about the schools their children attend, and admitted that schools are no longer what they used to be. They enjoyed speaking about their children and what they aspire their children to do after completing school. The community workers talked about poor living arrangements on farms and mentioned how they wanted to contribute to learners' success in life.

I was fortunate to interview learners in a community centre after school hours in one specific town. At the time when I sought permission to conduct the interviews, the school principal specifically requested me to complete the interviews after school hours. In order to comply with this request, I engaged with the learners in a community centre where they did their homework in the afternoons. I felt more comfortable and at ease during the discussions with the learners, and this resulted in obtaining comprehensive data from the learner-participants. I could even do follow-ups with the participants to probe for more information. Some learner-participants engaged enthusiastically while others were more reflective in the interviews. They shared their experiences at home, especially broadly from the context of the school and

the community. I was amazed with their insights, particularly on issues with regard to school life and what they aim to achieve in life.

Unfortunately this was not the case with the learner-participants in the other schools. Particularly in two schools I did the interviews under the watchful eyes of the principal and a "concerned" teacher, who saw the need to regularly enter and exit the office where the interviews were conducted. This limited the engagement with the learners and intimidated the learner-participants, so most of that data were limited. To be honest, I was relieved when the discussions were done so that I could leave the school premises.

Although the interviews with the teachers and community workers in these particular schools were also held during school hours, it was less restrained. Even with adults, however, in my experience the interviews conducted away from the school premises were more engaging and fruitful.

My experience was furthermore that the older learners were more at ease and engaged better with me. They could articulate their experiences far better than the younger participants. The richness and scope of the interviews thus differed notably. Ultimately, this data generation process is reflected in the findings where some participants´ responses are used more than others. The circumstances and "permission given" to conduct the interviews varied from school to school. The unevenness in reporting on the empirical work, where I had to depend more on some participants, is an authentic reflection on the interviews, and not an attempt to exclude any particular view.

4.5 INTEGRITY OF THE STUDY

When discussing the integrity of the study, one has to ask two broad questions: *Can my research be trusted?* and *Did I go about in a sound manner from an ethical point of view?* These issues will be considered in the section that follows.

4.5.1 ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS

Lincoln and Guba (in Cohen *et al.* 2011:181) propose that the key criteria of integrity and trustworthiness in qualitative research are: (a) credibility (substituting the quantitative concepts of internal validity); (b) consistency (substituting the quantitative concepts of

reliability) and (c) transferability (substituting the quantitative concepts of external validity). They argue that within these criteria of validity, soundness can be attained in the research process.

4.5.1.1 CREDIBILITY

Ways to ensure credibility of the study are to include the acceptance of well-established research methods, a research design that fits the research question, and a theoretical underpinning that is aligned with the research question and the methods (Nieuwenhuis 2016:123). Winter (in Cohen *et al.* 2011:179) claims "in qualitative data soundness might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data, the participants, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher". In this study rigour is obtained through different participant sources, namely learners, parents, teachers, principals and community workers to attain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of the lower academic achievement of the learners under study. The intention was to get as near as possible to the participants' understanding of the phenomenon. The ultimate aim for me was to understand the perspectives of the different role players involved in order to help uncover the complexity of human behaviour in a historically disadvantaged rural context, to better present an interpretation of the situation (Merriam 2009:2015).

With regard to credibility Nieuwenhuis (2016:121) points to triangulation, that is an understanding that people have multi-realities in their minds. He also discusses crystallisation – the crystallised reality is credible in so far as those reading their data and analysis will be able to see the same emerging patterns, and this adds to the trustworthiness of their research. In this research I also used the method of bricolage, specifically utilising three theories to gain a substantive portrait of the world the participants live in. This particular theoretical lens enabled me to critically engage in the context and structures of society reinforcing the distribution of power (Merriam 2009:10).

4.5.1.2 CONSISTENCY

An important issue for qualitative researchers is whether the findings and claims are consistent with the data collected (Merriam 2009:221). Consistency is enhanced by the investigator explaining the assumptions and theories underlying the study, and by describing in detail how the study was conducted and how the findings were derived from the data (Merriam 2009:234). I employed the work of Pierre Bourdieu to account for the working-class nature of learners living on farms and in small towns. In addition, I offered descriptions of

how learners are living in their home environments where poverty is an inherent part of their daily lives (*cf.* 5.1 – 5.2.2). In these historically disadvantaged rural areas learners make use of resources such as community centers, support from some farm owners, individuals from establishments, other initiatives and also their schools (*cf.* 5.2.3.3, 5.2.3.4 and 5.2.3.7). Bourdieu´s concepts to understand the ways in which educational institutions operate as sites for the reproduction of social and economic inequalities, are used to illustrate the undesirable circumstances in which these learners live (Ferrare & Apple 2012a:341). I used Bourdieu´s social theory in combination with two other theories to reach a more nuanced understanding of this field that I was reporting on (Ferrare & Apple 2012a:348-349).

The intention was also to employ CRT and GTR in order to gain a better understanding of the social reality of these communities. According to Solorzano (*cf.* 1998:132), the traditional black/white paradigm used for examining race and race relations is however too narrow. The experiences of other racial and/or ethnic groups are crucial to comprehend the lives of scholars and students of colour. Solorzano (1998) argues that the racial, gender and class experiences of African-Americans and Chicanas/os are similar in some areas, although there are very significant differences in the historical and contemporary lives of these two groups that cannot be ignored. For this reason I had to use CRT and LatCrit theory in order to capture the experiences of this group of Coloured learners in the Western Cape (*cf.* 5.2.1 – 5.2.3.8), and also to offer interpretations of their external and internal transformational resistance strategies (*cf.* 5.2.3.9). I especially used internal transformational resistance in this study, which is characteristic of LatCrit theory, and which shows how learners express their will and determination to better their own positions.

I used GTR as a theory which is essentially indicative of rural South Africa. This theory gives explanations to concepts of contexts, forces, agencies and resources. It allows the study to investigate learners moving into and out of rural areas to semi-urban places in order to access education as a resource. Most importantly, GRT provides versions of learners and other role players' life experiences, especially learners´ self-confidence and agencies to make use of resources to progress in life (*cf.* 5.2.1 – 5.2.1.3.10).

In Chapter 3 I presented the theoretical underpinnings of OBE in terms of relativism, *CAPS* in terms of social realism and a curriculum warrant in the form of critical realism. Critical realism accounts for ethics to be realised in curriculum selection. This means that curricula should

make provision for diverse knowledge systems such as the life world knowledge of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners.

This research demonstrates that the theories used in the study and the findings of the study correspond with each other. In this case the findings are mostly a confirmation of the theories but also, in some cases, an extension of the existing theory. An example of this is the case of the organisation of farm women and a group of rural learners who formed coalitions to exert power in an attempt to access better transport services from the education department.

4.5.1.3 TRANSFERABILITY

Qualitative researchers often employ two strategies to enhance the transferability of a study. The first is through thick description, meaning that the researcher offers the reader a complete account of the context, participants, and research design so that the reader can make his/her own decisions about transferability. The second is through purposeful participant selection, that is applying careful thought to choosing the participants with the innate notion that they somehow represent the whole population in terms of the phenomenon or context being studied (Nieuwenhuis 2016:124).

Finally, to ensure integrity and trustworthiness, Lincoln & Guba (in Patton 2002:584) assert the following:

> "the degree of transferability is a direct function of the similarity between the two contexts, what we shall call 'fittingness'... If context A and context B are 'sufficiently' congruent, the working hypothesis from the sending originating context may be applicable in the receiving context".

In other words, the researcher has to offer enough detailed explanations of the study's context. I provided rich and thick descriptions of the context of the study, commencing with descriptions of the towns where the schools are located, community life and outlines of the schools. The features of the regions and towns and, importantly, the characteristics of the schools and the socio-economic backgrounds of the learners, were highlighted. Merriam (2009:226) suggests that the study's context should enable readers to compare the compatibility with their own situations. Lincoln & Guba (in Merriam 2009:224) promotes the notion of transferability, in which the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere. These strategies could enhance soundness and trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Merriam (2009:227) maintains that "when rich, thick description is used as a strategy to enable transferability, it refers to a description of the setting and participants of the study, as well as a detailed description of the findings with adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from participant interviews". In the methodology chapter rich, thick descriptions of the towns, neighbourhoods and schools in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural areas were presented (*cf.* Chapter 4). In Chapter 5 descriptive and detailed explanations of the learners, in their home environments, will be given. Similarly, descriptions and interpretations of their community lives and journeys to school in semi-urban areas and journeys back to rural places will be provided. Sufficient descriptive data is presented in the findings chapter about how learners exhibited agency or non-agency towards their schooling. The perspectives of principals, teachers, parents and community workers also indicated how transferability could be made possible.

In the following section attention is directed toward ethical issues. Research has to adhere to these issues prior to conducting a study, at the start of a study, during data collection and data analysis and in reporting and storing data (*cf.* Miller & Bell 2012:61).

4.5.2 ETHICAL ISSUES

The expression "basic ethical principles" refers to those judgments that serve as a basic justification for the many particular ethical prescriptions and valuations of human actions. In this regard, three elementary principles are mainly relevant to the ethics of research involving human subjects: "the principles of respect of persons, beneficence and justice" (DoHEW 2007:1).

4.5.2.1 RESPECT FOR PERSONS

Sensitivity of information refers to how personal or potentially threatening the information is that is being collected by the researcher (Cohen *et al* 2011:90). Protection of privacy is vitally important in the whole research process. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (in Cohen *et al* 2011:91) underline the need for confidentiality of participants´ identities, and that any violations of this should be made with the agreement and consent of the participants.

For my study, access to the selected schools was not easy. Schools are busy places and principals do not automatically see the need to give access for "their schools" to be researched. A high percentage of mistrust is involved, fuelled by overprotection and anxiety

of "what can be found out" and possibly reported to the educational authorities. The principal can be perceived as a protector of the interests of the school as a research site.

My task was to gain the principals' trust through my personal conduct, professionalism and assurance that my intention was not to disturb the daily programmes of the schools. I reminded them, as stated in my original communique to the schools, that I needed to visit the schools for a short period only in order to complete my research.

I ensured that I had obtained the necessary permissions to conduct the research. Attached are copies of permission letters from the provincial education authority (Western Cape Education Department) [*cf.* Addendum A], University of the Free State [*cf.* Addendum B], letter to the education authorities and principals to obtain permission to conduct the research [*cf.* Addendum C], letters to the school governing bodies of the various schools to obtain permission to conduct the research [*cf.* Addendum D], information sheet and assent forms in order to safeguard the interests of the learners [*cf.* Addendum E], letters of consent to the teachers [*cf.* Addendum F], letters of consent to the parents [*cf.* Addendum G], letters of consent to community workers [*cf.* Addendum H], interview schedule [*cf.* Addendum I] and link between the theoretical framework and the interview questions [*cf.* Addendum J].

Miller and Bell (2012:62) state: "Accessing potential participants not only requires providing information about the research, but also that individuals are in a position to exercise choice around whether or not to give their consent to participate". The choice on whether or not to take part must really be free, with no negative consequences for not taking part, and no feelings of researchers having taken advantaged of powerless participants. It is important to ensure that participants are not pressurised into participating by a school principal or manager, for example, who makes the decision for the staff, or where staff are not given sufficient time to come to a decision on whether or not to participate, even though they actually would rather not take part in the research (Oliver in Cohen *et al.* 2011:80).

Miller and Bell (2012:61) argue that "consent" should be continuing and renegotiated between researcher and subject throughout the research process. Of particular significance, Miller & Bell (2012:71-72) assert that researchers need to decide what they are inviting participants to consent to. They proceed and ask: "Is consent just about participation in the research in terms of being interviewed or does it go further, involving reading and commenting on transcripts and the analysis of data?" (Miller & Bell 2012:71-72).

In my case, it took a lot of effort, negotiation and time to get access to the schools to conduct the interviews. After the initial constraints I was fortunate to get quick responses from the parents and teachers. Once I had permission to interview the teachers and learners, I felt more free to continue with the research. I was also fortunate enough to conduct the learner interviews in a community center in one of the towns. In my opinion it is better to conduct the interviews outside of school hours and the school environment in order to minimise the interference of school principals. To conduct the interviews outside the school environment also gave me the sense of not interrupting the day to day operation of the school, although I specifically mentioned this in the communique to the schools.

Each engagement was in the form of a semi-structured interview. The questions [*cf.* Addendum I] provided the structure of each of the conversations to uncover the perceptions of learners regarding their home life, school life and community life, to eventually answer the research question of school practices to possibly assist learners to be successful in life.

I tried to assure the protection of the participants' identities by giving them pseudonyms from the outset. I further changed the names of the relevant schools and towns respectively to protect them from recognition. I put the participants at ease at the start of the dialogue and always reminded them that their participation was voluntary. If they did not want to answer a question they were welcome to do so (Belmont Report 1979:4). In point of fact, most of the learners and parents were keen on sharing details about their family, school and community lives.

After the completion of my thesis I will send a report on my research to each of the participating schools and once more offer my appreciation for participating in the research. This is a form of gratitude to the community for their participation (Strydom 2005:66).

4.5.2.2 Beneficence

Research subjects can be harmed in a physical and/or emotional manner (Strydom 2005:58). Persons are therefore treated in an ethical manner not only by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, but also by making an effort to protect their wellbeing (Belmont Report 1979:5). Participants may experience harm in their everyday life and place of work, and negative events of the past might be evoked during the investigation that could be the beginning of renewed harassment or embarrassment. For this reason the researcher should have the "firmest of scientific grounds if he/she extracts sensitive and personal information

from subjects" (Strydom 2005:58). The Belmont Report (1979:5) states that members of scientific research are obliged to give thought to the maximisation of benefits and the lessening of risk that might occur from the research investigation.

In my study I had to be particular cautious, because I worked with learner subjectivities and their experiences of their home, community and school lives. As previously mentioned, concerns about the wellbeing of learners had to be directed to the parents and the relevant school authorities. Merriam (2009:231) asserts that in-depth interviewing may have unexpected long-term effects. The writer further suggests "painful, debilitating memories may surface in an interview, even if the topic appears routine or benign". Patton and others (in Merriam 2009:231) recommend that being able to make referrals to resources, for support in dealing with problems that may appear during an interview, is essential.

Bailey (in Strydom 2005:58) is of the opinion that sometimes more harm exists in participants' everyday natural situations than any anticipated harm from a research project. The author further states that in these cases it is justified that participants suffer a certain degree of discomfort in order to eventually better their circumstances. Subjects may also, according to Torczyner (in Strydom 2005:59), sometimes feel morally obliged to furnish even extremely personal information because they want to retain the researcher´s goodwill. In my study most people who agreed to be interviewed enjoyed sharing their knowledge, opinions and experiences. Some gained valuable self-knowledge, while for others the interview might even have been therapeutic (Merriam 2009:231). One parent, for example, described a feeling of catharsis after participating in the interview. To my mind the parents found it extremely pleasant to talk about their children, and I sensed that they have a deep interest in the lives of their children. However, as Patton (in Merriam 2009:231) points out, the interviewer´s task is primarily to gather data for the study and eventually use the data to accomplish the goals of the study.

4.5.2.3   JUSTICE

An injustice occurs when some benefit to which a person is entitled to is denied without good reason, or when some burden is imposed unduly. The question is "Who ought to receive the benefits of research and bear its burdens?" (Belmont Report 1979:6). In my study it is particularly important to note that historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners experience different kinds of domination and oppression. These learners deserve more research efforts in order to reduce distorted evaluating structures and inaccurate beliefs

about them, in a move towards social justice in particular. Fataar (2017:1) suggests that the context in which education takes place has been ignored in policies. The focus should be on the shadows of people´s encounters with deeply complicated lives and how such experiences impact on their learning. To make space for justice and ethics in education, the powerless in education should be the focus of research efforts which could change structures both in reality and in people´s minds, and these could result in countering oppressive practices.

As described in this methodology chapter (*cf.* Chapter 4) and in the findings (*cf.* Chapter 5), I gave full descriptions of the towns, neighbourhoods and the schools of the historically disadvantaged Coloured learners and their families living on farms and in rural towns that were included in this study. The research highlighted the circumstances in which these learners live with their families. The research gave meaning to what it actually means living and learning in rural historically disadvantaged communities. A large portion of learners in the South African school system is coming from these contexts. Policy makers and educators have to acknowledge this fact and give weight to learners´ subjectivities, life experiences and diverse knowledge. In order to give justice to these communities, research has to focus on these population groups.

4.5.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Guided by several authors, as will be discussed below, I rigorously engaged with the data. Drawing from my theoretical framework I identified the constructs, thematic ideas and coded schemes, and captured the recurring or common themes in order to offer a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Following is a more detailed account of the process.

Marshall & Rossman (2011:209) maintain that the researcher should use the research questions and the related literature developed earlier in the proposal as guidelines for data analysis. They note that the intellectual work of analysis lies in generating categories and themes. The coding process enables researchers to quickly retrieve and collect all the text and other data that they have associated with some thematic idea so that the sorted units can be examined together and different cases can be compared (Nieuwenhuis 2016:116).

The researcher then applies some coding scheme to those categories and themes, and diligently and thoroughly marks passages in the data using the codes (Marshall & Rossman

2011:211). Mills & Gilbert (in Nieuwenhuis 2016:119) maintain that the generation of categories usually ends with a taxonomy that describes and interprets the whole phenomenon as it was contained in the gathered data. The data are inductively analysed to identify the recurring patterns or common themes that cut across the data (Merriam 2002:6-7). Where data analysis consists of the process of breaking data into smaller meaningful units that are coded and categorised into a specific system, the need is now to move towards synthesis. To complete the process of data generation, it is important to place one´s qualitative findings within the context of previous theory and research findings (Nieuwenhuis 2016:119). Further, the findings are put into a logical and well-ordered structure that will reveal the essence of the phenomenon being studied (Nieuwenhuis 2016:120). This is called a thematic analysis.

Through this process, a structure in the data is developed as a step towards a comprehensive understanding of the issue, the field, and the data itself (Flick 2007: 101). In discovering new meaning and understanding you will continually move between existing theory and the insights from your data to find those aspects in your data that corroborate theory and those aspects that may enhance or question existing theory (Nieuwenhuis 2016:121). The themes and subthemes that I identified will be discussed and reported on in chapter 5.

4.5.4 *REPORTING AND INTERPRETING OF DATA*

A rich, descriptive account of the data is offered and discussed. I used direct quotations (original and translated) from participants to substantiate my interpretations. I then used references to the literature that framed the study in the first place (*cf*. Merriam 2002:6-7) to make sense of the findings, and to place it within the current body of knowledge in order to reveal how it substantiates existing knowledge or brings new understanding to the body of knowledge (Nieuwenhuis 2016:120). Moreover, when qualitative researchers use a theoretical lens, they can form interpretations that call for action agendas for reform and change (Creswell 2014:249). In the case of this study it is suggested that school practices in historically disadvantaged communities could assist learners to achieve academically, leading to the realisation of social reform and change.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I provided and described the methodology, research methods, context and ethical principles that governed the research and its approach. The next chapter engages with reporting and interpreting the data in order "to answer" the research question.

CHAPTER 5: UNCOVERING SCHOOL PRACTICES THAT CAN MEDIATE LIFE WORLD KNOWLEDGES OF LEARNERS AND CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SCHOOLS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the study dealt with the methodology of the research. In this chapter I will introduce and discuss the findings of the study under the themes which emerged from the data (Nieuwenhuis 2016:120). The research question that guides this chapter is *"Which school practices in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities could mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school, towards learner achievement?"* In order to make sense of the data, I drew from the theoretical framework provided in Chapters 2 and 3. While some of the data can be aligned with the theory, I also gained new insights that could enhance existing theory.

In South Africa as a whole, historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities are positioned through the trajectory of history, particularly the apartheid and other oppressive practices, at the margins of social spaces. The broader political, social and economic influences adversely position these communities and other similar communities in positions "without", at the lower ends of society (Mills & Gale 2010:33). Subsequently historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners and their schools suffer the effects of these circumstances, and this can be observed in their lower academic achievements at school.

In the context of the Coloured rural communities of the Western Cape, recognition of the voices in the community will aid the continuation of the discourse of educational inequalities and social justice. In the context of my study, the authentic voices of Coloured people (learners, parents, principals, teachers and community members) are necessary in this quest for learners to succeed in life. There is a need for experiential knowledge to be recognised and valued in order to enhance Coloured learners´ academic success (*cf.* 2.4.2). To understand the experiences of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners, Stanfield (Delgado Bernal 2002:107) suggests that raced and raced-gendered epistemologies directly challenge the broad range of popular contemporary research paradigms, from positivism to constructivism and liberal feminism to postmodernism. These draw from a narrow foundation

of knowledge that is based on the social, historical and cultural experiences of Anglo Saxons. On the contrary, Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001:313) argue that CRT and LatCrit is part of a system of knowledge which challenges the predominant deficit frameworks used to explain Chicana and Chicano educational inequality (*cf.* 2.4.3.1). In the findings of this research, the transdisciplinary approach of CRT and LatCrit theory, together with GTR, highlights the cultural knowledge or life world knowledge of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners in order for them to achieve academic success in a semi-urban school setting. This particular theoretical lens is used to capture these learners' experiences and transformative resistance strategies within their own contexts to show how they navigate their way on a daily basis.

5.2 FINDINGS

Towards answering the secondary question, I used empirical data from different role players in these communities to introduce the context where these role players live and work and where learners learn. This was done in order to uncover school practices in historically disadvantanged Coloured communities which could contribute to the mediation and integration of the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school towards learner achievement. As the interviewees responded in Afrikaans I translated their responses, but I included the original Afrikaans. Pseudonyms were used to protect all participants (*cf.* 4.3.2). I first provide the English translations (in red), after which I provide the original Afrikaans quotes (in blue) to give authenticity to the voices of the people who participated in the research.

I used the CRT, LatCrit and GTR lenses obtained through chapters 2 and 3 to interpret the data, which helped me in the discussion at the end of the chapter to identify the life world knowledge of learners, the cultural capital of schools and school practices that can mediate the two.

In the following section, I engage with the interview data to eventually connect the quotations with the theories in the study and possibly generate new insights from its use.

5.2.1 *POVERTY AND COMMUNITY LIFE*

Poverty in these areas remains a reality for most of the inhabitants as seen in descriptions given in the methodology chapter (*cf.* 4.3.1). A teacher-participant communicated the struggle due to poverty in these communities as follows:

Poverty is the main cause [of the problems which learners experience]. School is rather a haven, a safe haven. Many learners are dependent on the school; they live alone in RDP houses [governmental housing scheme], [and depend] on the school to survive (Armoede is die hoofoorsaak [van die probleme wat leerders ondervind]. Die skool is 'n redelike hawe, veilige hawe. Baie leerders is afhanklik van die skool, hulle bly alleen in HOP huise [staatsbehuising], [en is afhanklik] van die skool om te oorleef) (# TEACHER 9).*

Poverty and concomitant related problems have a huge impact on the context of these learners and their families. Parents who are employed are mainly working in semi-urban areas, resulting in children living on their own. The conditions under which they work are far from ideal.

5.2.1.1 WORKING CONDITIONS

Inhabitants of historically disadvantaged areas mainly work as labourers on farms, and as general workers and attendants in the tourist and service sectors. From the interviews, it became clear that people in the community often work under very difficult working conditions. These include long hours (*I am quitting here, because the work hours are too long. I have still a baby at home (Ek maak nou klaar hier, oor die werksure wat te lank is. Ek het nog 'n babatjie by die huis* (# PARENT 5)), working regularly on weekends (*We're only off for one weekend per month (Ons is net een naweek af in die maand)* (# PARENT 4)) and working on public holidays such as Christmas (*I enjoy what I do, but days like today [a public holiday] and Christmas you also want to be with your family, but you have to work (Ek geniet dit wat ek doen, maar dae soos vandag ['n openbare vakansiedag] en Kersfees wil jy ook maar by jou familie wees, maar dan moet jy werk)* (#PARENT 4)).

It further emerged that people in the communities that formed part of my study do not have much choice in terms of their working conditions. One parent explained her frustration in this regard as follows: (*I am sure the manager can make arrangements. But what can you do – the owner makes the decisions. We have to work because we have guests. We cannot feed ourselves spiritually (Ek dink tog die bestuurder kan reëlings tref. Maar wat kan jy maak, die eienaar maak die besluite. Omdat ons gaste het moet ons werk. Ons kan ons nie geestelik voed nie)* (# PARENT 4)). They shared how they hold on to jobs although the conditions are often not satisfactory, as one parent narrated: *I live in Rivers, my two sons and I. It is a valley;*

if you have a job, you should keep it. (Ek bly in Rivers, ek en my twee seuns. Dis ´n vallei, as jy ´n werkie het moet jy dit maar hou) (# PARENT 5)).

One parent highlighted the desperation, as the circumstances at work did not change after the dawn of democracy in the country:

> *Areas are still the same. The white people are still living in the town and we live here. Nothing has changed – not the salary, nothing yet. The foreigners come and tell us "I pay my people so and so", but in the end, they are just the same. We do not get any salary increase, we do not get extra money for public holidays. Conditions still have not changed (Gebiede is nog dieselfde. Die blankes bly nog in die dorp en ons bly hier onder. Niks het verander nie – nie die salaris nie, nog niks nie. Die ´foreigners´ kom sê ek betaal my mense so en so, maar aan die einde is hulle maar netso. Ons kry nie verhogings nie, ons kry ook nie vakansie-dae ekstra geld nie. Toestande het nog nie verander nie)* (# PARENT 3).

As a result of the long working hours, children are left on their own after school, and some have to care for younger siblings at home and do house work (*Mostly it is very difficult for girls, when they arrive home, they must clean the house and care for younger siblings, when do they get time to do their school work? (Veral meisiekinders het dit swaar, hulle moet wanneer hulle by die huis kom, huis skoon maak en na die jonger kinders omsien, wanneer moet hulle hulle skoolwerk doen?)* (# TEACHER 4)).

Social groups, as determined by how much material assets you possess, have different ways of living their lives. Circumstances such as living in poverty, poor working conditions and the fact that you have a minimum say over your own life, are distinctive features of those in society who are dominated by others (*cf.* 2.3.1). Inside this controversial matter of privacy and property, Williams (1991:23) comments: "In the insistence on equation, more money eventually comes to equal the right to more intimacy, to have family. Yet since there is never 'enough' money, family becomes out of reach, increasingly suspect as undeserved". Poor parents work longer hours for low paying jobs, and as a result have fewer hours in the day to support their children. Mills & Gale (2010:111) comment on this issue and suggest that rather than attributing blame to these parents, there is the recognition that family and other commitments (including the limited time and disposable income of lower and working-class parents) make it difficult to supplement and intervene in their children´s schooling (*cf.* 1.1).

The broader political, social and economic contexts have a negative effect on families living in historically disadvantaged rural areas in the Western Cape. The hope that once existed for a better future in new democratic times has slowly faded for these people in recent years.

5.2.1.2   COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

In historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities there are many kinds of community initiatives to assist community members. For instance, in one of these towns a community centre, "Vissersanker", was established.

For certain learners in this town life centres around this community centre, organised by a trust. Some participants shared how the community centre fulfils a number of roles which the family traditionally should live up to. For example, the centre structures learners' free time, creates an environment for them to do their homework, and provides some meals. One learners shared: *After school, I go to Vissersanker, for homework. They give us food (Ek gaan ná skool Vissersanker toe, vir huiswerk. Hulle gee vir ons voeding)* (# LEARNER 7). Another learner commented on the difficulties he experiences in his household to study, so he studies at the centre (*I go to the centre to study in the afternoons. There is a baby at home who is very noisy. To study among other children motivates me (Ek kom in die middag by die sentrum leer. Daar is mos ´n babatjie by die huis wat baie raserig is. Om tussen ander kinders te leer motiveer my)* (# LEARNER 6))*.

However, not all feedback about the centre is positive. Some community members do not feel welcome at this centre, and many believe that it does not benefit the poorest*:*

> *Now the centre is there, but it is only for certain individuals. It seems to me it is oriented more towards certain families. If you work there – you get the benefit. At first, it was open to everybody. Here in the community there are many disadvantaged people, but at the centre, only some people are disadvantaged. People's families that are not as disadvantaged as the really disadvantaged, now have the benefit of the centre (Die sentrum is nou daar, maar dit is net vir sekere individue. Dit lyk my dit is meer net vir sekere families-georiënteerd. As jy daar werk – kry jy die voordeel. Aan die begin was dit vir almal oop. Hier in die gemeenskap is daar baie agtergeblewe mense, maar by die sentrum is net sekere mense agtergeblewe. Die mense se familie wat nie so agtergeblewe is as die rerig agtergeblewenes kry nou die voordeel van die sentrum)* (# PARENT 4).

Learners realise that for them to succeed they have to take the opportunities that come their way, and they also come up with creative ways to assist them in their endeavours to be academically successful. Many learners demonstrate the skill, willingness and self-confidence (agency) to achieve and be successful in their schooling. They actively seek support and through social networking in the community arrange to obtain resources to support them which they do not freely have in their households. As an example, one of the learner-participants described his agency within the community in the following manner:

> *The community's resources you have used [enable you to be more successful]. Also the confidence that you have had and the encouragement from different people [supporting me]. The applications for all universities and colleges start this month. I can ask the people at the centre, and at home as well [to assist me obtaining and completing the application for further studies]* (Die gemeenskap se hulpbronne wat jy gebruik het. Ook die selfvertroue wat jy gehad het en die aanmoediging van verskillende mense. Hierdie maand begin die aansoeke van alle universiteite en kolleges. Ek kan die sentrum-mense vra, en by die huis ook) (# LEARNER 2).

Yet with regard to community support he feels that more can be done at community centres:

> *More study classes can be offered, which they can offer weekends where you can go to study. At the centre and community halls where children can be encouraged to study. 'Study' by [community] halls* (Meer leerklasse kan aangebied word. Wat hulle naweke kan aanbied waar jy kan gaan leer. By die sentrum en gemeenskapsale waar die kinders aangemoedig kan word om te leer. ʹStudyʹ by [gemeenskaps]-sale) (# LEARNER 2).

In spite of some negative perceptions, it appears that the community centre seems to play a significant role in many of these learners´ lives.

Other examples emerged of how learners take up opportunities through initiatives provided by an array of people, even from the larger community. For instance, some learners use opportunities of private transport to get to "better" schools. These schools are also in historically disadvantaged communities, where parents perceive their children can be more successful. These are often the schools that parents attended themselves. Sometimes these are further away from home (*Learners are privately transported by the farmer (Leerders word privaat vervoer deur die plaasboer self)* (# PRINCIPAL 1)). Another example of support in the community is where people at times help learners with tuition fees. In this regard, one learner explained that a community worker from a government organisation is paying his school fees:

> *A woman in Rivers offered to pay my school fees. She asked whether my school fees have been paid. I said we were not privileged enough to do so. Her name is Emily (´n Vrou in Rivers het aangebied om my skoolfooie te betaal. Sy het gevra of my skoolfooie betaal is. Ek het gesê ons is nie so bevoorreg om dit te doen nie. Haar naam is Emily)* (# LEARNER 2).

Some farmers also contribute to the education of the children of farm workers:

> *Many of the children succeed, because the farms invest in their children (the Boshoffs). These children go on to study at CPUT [Cape Peninsula University of Technology], Huguenot College and Boland College through scholarships. Farms invest in their disadvantaged learners, and then they achieve success and continue their studies despite their disadvantaged situation (Baie van die kinders slaag, want die plase belê in hul kinders (die Boshoffs). Dié kinders gaan dan by CPUT [Cape Peninsula University of Technology], Hugenote Kollege en Boland Kollege studeer met beurse. Leerders met agterstande, plase belê in hul leerders, en tog behaal hulle sukses en studeer verder)* (# PRINCIPAL 4).

Church-related organisations are also helpful. One such organisation is the "Brigade", a youth organisation providing orchestral music for special church occasions, which a particular participant talked about as follows: *I am with the Brigade. I do my homework there, any subject I don't understand. The University's students come and help. I want to focus on the future and work hard, they can support me (Ek is by die Brigade. Ek doen my huiswerk daar, enige vak wat ek nie verstaan nie. Die Universiteit se studente kom help. Ek wil fokus vorentoe en hard werk, hulle kan my ´support´)* (# LEARNER 12).

Within the framework of GTR the study opens up ways to perceive how learners use their own agency and also agency within the community to obtain the resources to advance in life (*cf.* 2.5.2.4). Through these avenues young people encounter their worlds and the worlds of their schooling. They get an idea of what they can become as they exercise their capacity to aspire in the light of their educational and broader social practices (Fataar 2010a:44). A large percentage of historically disadvantaged learners engage in one or other community initiative as a resource to assist them in their school endeavours. According to Balfour *et al.* (2008:102; also Nkambule *et al.* 2011:351), the effective deployment or use of resources is largely dependent on the influence of forces and agencies, and the extent to which these might delimit not only their availability but also their use (*cf.* 2.5.2.4).

One example of agency, that is transformational resistance, can be noticed in the following quote:

> *We took hands with Women on Farms. Last year [2015] learners from four rural towns handed a petition to the Parliament in Cape Town. When you stay more than 5 km from school, then you can access transport, however when you stay less than 5 km then you have to walk. This is very dangerous especially when it is dark in the morning when you have to walk. It is also dangerous to walk on highways to get to the school – there is no traffic control. The busses are involved in accidents, the government has to supply the busses with safety belts (Ons het hande gevat met Women on Farms. Laasjaar [2015] het ons leerders van vier plattelandse dorpe ´n versoek oorhandig aan die Parlement in Kaapstad. As jy meer as 5 km wegbly van die skool, kry jy vervoer, maar minder as 5 km moet jy stap. Dis baie gevaarlik veral in die winter om soggens vroeg in die donker te loop. Dis ook gevaarlik om oor hoofpaaie te stap om by die skool uit te kom – daar is geen ´traffic control´ nie. Busse maak ongelukke, die regering moet busse verskaf wat veiligheidsgordels het)* (# LEARNER 16).

Coloured farm learners from four specific towns in the Western Cape demonstrated agency to access a better school transport system. This is an example of external transformational resistance. External transformational resistance is overtly visible and operates outside traditional systems (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:626). Learners can build on these forms of resistance and apply this in other domains in their lives to better their position in the social sphere.

Bourdieu (1985:736) elaborates on "social groups and the effect of the homologies" (*cf.* 2.3.4). Rural learners form coalitions with other more powerful groups within dominated groups to exhibit resistance towards oppressive structures to better their positions within social space. In this particular case secondary learners use their connections with an organisation called "Women on Farms" to exercise action that is political and collective, and in the process demonstrate external transformative resistance.

It is important to note that in this case it is a dominant group within the dominated (Women on Farms), which forms alliances with working-class learners to offer this group more power within social space. In this study, this is an extension of Bourdieu´s theory (1985) which makes provision for the effect of homologies between dominant groups within the dominated and a

dominated group (working-class learners) to extend their legitimate vision of the world in order to strengthen their particular interest.

It is clear from this discussion that some learners exert agency and make use of the support systems in the community to follow certain paths to survive and progress in life.

5.2.2 GAZE ON HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS AT HOME

The study enabled me to provide a gaze on the homes of the historically disadvantaged learners.

5.2.2.1   HOME LIVES

According to Bourdieu (2013:296), social groups and especially social classes, exist twice in the objectivity of the first order. The first is that which is recorded by distributions of material properties (between social groups), and they also exist in the objectivity of the second order, that of the contrasted classifications and representations produced by agents on the basis of a practical knowledge of these distributions. Consequently, the practical knowledge of these distributions will eventually be expressed in the lifestyles of the different social groups (*cf.* 2.3.1). The following section is a gaze on the lives of these learners, to get an understanding of their lifestyles as the working class.

Given the above, the next section of the study deals with the home contexts of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners to elucidate their places of marginality. Cultivating culture in these homes correlates to the dominated in societies. Children in working-class families are offered "the populist project of decreeing the legitimacy of the cultural arbitrary of the dominated classes as constituted in and by the fact of its dominated position, canonising it as ´popular culture´" (Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:24).

One of the learner-participants reflected on his unique family life:

> *We are seven in the house. My mom and dad. My dad works at Tweespruit. My two aunts and my cousins live here. I'm the only one who is in high school. The other one has already left school. Two of my cousins are still in primary school (Ons is sewe in die huis. My ma en pa. My pa werk op Tweespruit. My twee tannies, niggies en nefies woon hier. Ek is al een wat op hoërskool is. Die ander een is al klaar met skool. Twee van my nefies is nog op laerskool)* (# LEARNER 6).

From this short excerpt it is clear that learners in historically disadvantaged communities have alternative home lives to that of traditional and normative notions of what traditional family life entails. These extended households are a reality of most of the participants in the study. The culture which schools expect from learners, such as the support of parents at home, is not usually cultivated in these households, as one participant explained:

> *If I don't understand something [about the school work], they [the adults] help me. They can't help me with everything. If I don't understand, I leave it for the next day at school, then the teacher has to explain it some more (As ek nie iets [omtrent die skoolwerk] verstaan nie, dan help hulle [die grootmense] my. Hulle kan my nie met alles help nie. As ek dan nie verstaan nie, los ek dit vir môre by die skool, die onderwyser moet dit dan verder verduidelik)* (# LEARNER 6).

Another learner confirmed the way extended families reside together:

> *I'm in grade 11. My mother and I live in my brother's house. My mother actually looks after my brother's child. But most of the time he is at the crèche. My brother is married (Ek is in graad 11. Ek en my ma bly onder my broer se dak. My ma kyk eintlik na my broer se kind. Maar hy is ook meeste van die tyd in die crèche. My broer is getroud)* (# LEARNER 5).

One learner-participant shared her discontentment with the living arrangements in her home. She displayed some form of resistance, decided to leave and is currently residing with family friends on another farm:

> *For me it is very different if they ask for money among themselves. If they get paid on Friday nights, they don't use their money correctly. They spend more money on wine and debt. My dad is part of them too. That's why I don't live at home. I live with other people on another farm. They are friends of my dad's, where I live. It's not family. I told him I don't want to live at home anymore. He is very rude. He is rude to my mother too. I love my mother. My mother is not like that (Vir my is dit baie anderste. As hulle geld vra onder mekaar. As hulle Vrydae aande pay gebruik hulle nie hul geld reg nie. Hulle spandeer meer van die geld op wyn en skuld. My pa is ook deel van hulle. Dis hoekom ek nie by die huis is nie. Ek bly by ander mense op 'n ander plaas. Dis vriende van my pa-hulle, waar ek bly. Dis nie familie nie. Ek het vir hom gesê ek wil nie meer by die huis bly nie. Hy is baie onbeskof. Hy is onbeskof met my ma ook. Ek hou baie van my ma. My ma is nie so nie)* (# LEARNER 4).

A community worker confirmed the state of affairs:

> *There is a disadvantage. They struggle because their parents and grandparents are not educated. Children struggle in schools, their parents cannot help them. Many of the parents work on farms. They come home late. Mom has to cook dinner and take care of the younger children. No one helps with school work in the afternoon, children have to do chores anyway (Daar is ´n agterstand. Hulle sukkel want hul ouers en grootouers het nie die opvoeding nie. Kinders sukkel in skole, ouers kan hulle nie help nie. Baie van die ouers werk op plase. Hulle kom laat by die huis. Ma moet kom kos maak en na die jonger kinders omsien. Niemand help in die middag met skoolwerk nie, kinders moet in elk geval huistake doen)* (# COMMUNITY WORKER 1).

The fact that parents are not always present in their children's lives to support them as learners has a negative impact on learners. Learners are attached to their grandparents, but they need the presence and care of their parents as well.

Contrary to most learner-participants' experiences, for the more advantaged learners in these communities the parents assist with homework. These learners take teachers´ explanations into account in order to understand the school knowledge which is offered to them. One learner-participant acknowledged her mother's involvement in her academic work: (*my mother regularly checks my books. She helps me when I need help (My ma kyk gereeld in my boeke. Sy help my waar ek hulp nodig het)* (# LEARNER 17)).

Within these extended families and households, learners develop knowledge, skills and indispensable attitudes and networks to survive and ultimately excel in life. Examples of these are ways of being within particular households or families, and how these learners manage to deal with unbearable life circumstances. Within the tradition of CRT, these learners accumulate community cultural wealth such as aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital, and later bring these sociological worlds into the classroom (Yosso 2005:84). Their struggles and complex living arrangements give them that place of alterity or a space of multi-reality. Consequently, this space of multi-reality could be used to perceive many perspectives or views in life which could be seen as an advantage to excel and enable social mobility. Learners' counter-storytelling enlighten the non-majoritarian viewpoints, and in this way their life experiences and knowledge can also be known and valued. Delgado Bernal (2002:116) suggests that by incorporating the method of counter-storytelling, a story can be told from a non-majoritarian perspective, and we could learn to listen to and hear these messages contained in counter-stories (*cf.* 2.4.3.3).

Within the positioning of CRT and LatCrit theory, Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001:314) mention that a CRT and LatCrit framework recognises that the experiential knowledge of students of colour are legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analysing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education (*cf.*2.4.3.2 and 2.4.3.3). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017) agrees to the full embracement of the idea that all human beings are born into valid, usefull, relevant and legitimate knowledge systems. CRT and LatCrit educational studies view experiential knowledge or life world knowledge (as discussed by the above participants) as a strength and an asset, and draw explicitly on the lived experiences of the students of colour by including methods such as storytelling, family history, biographies, scenarios, parables, chronicles, and narratives (Bell in Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:314; Delgado Bernal 2002:109). This specific theoretical framework of CRT and LatCrit is important for the understanding of the experiences of Coloured learners in historically disadvantaged communities. Experiential knowledge should be recognised for the understanding and incorporation of diverse knowledge sets, particularly for the education system (*cf.*2.4.3.4, 3.2.3 and 3.5).

Bourdieu (1985:725) writes about groups and classes, and states that sets of agents who occupy similar positions, are subjected to similar conditionings, and have similar dispositions and interests. Such sets of agency are likely to produce similar practices and similar stances in life. Bourdieu & Wacquant (2007:12-13) are also of the opinion that cumulative exposure to certain social conditions instils an ensemble of durable and transposable dispositions in individuals. These dispositions relate to the internalisation of the external social environment, which is subsequently inscribed as the social condition inside agents. The implication is that if the structures of the objectivity of the second order (habitus) are the embodied version of the structures of the objectivity of the first order (the social environment), then the analysis of objective structures logically carries over into the analysis of subjective dispositions (Bourdieu & de Saint Martin in Bourdieu & Wacquant 2007:13). The social circumstances of these historically disadvantaged learners therefore give them a certain kind of disposition in life, and eventually also a particular type of habitus. As already demonstrated, these learners' family backgrounds and life circumstances differ compared to the lifestyles of middle-class families (*cf.* 2.3.2). Life within extended families and in rural historically disadvantaged communities are far removed from the lives of privileged, middle-class families in town centers. As previously discussed (*cf* 5.2.1.1), parents are working long hours, often in far off places, leaving the children behind at home.

According to Ferrare & Apple (2012:8), the habit-forming force of these social topologies consists of a structured space of positions and position-taking. In other words, these social topologies are the places that these learners internalise, with a habitus of the working class, according to their living arrangements in historically disadvantaged rural spaces. Learners in these rural areas adopt ways of being and doing, resulting in the internalisation of their external social environments, and eventually the externality of the internality. Within this frame (of being the working class in a rural environment) these learners cultivate valuable dispositions which could help them navigate their way through life. Working-class learners also foster values, experiences and habit-forming forces, even though these differ from those of middle-class learners (*cf.* 1.4.1.1).

5.2.2.2   THE MEANING OF SUCCESS FOR PEOPLE IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

People in these communities perceive success differently than the normative notions of what it means to be successful. During a discussion with a parent, the participant shared that completing school is what signifies success (*I was satisfied with the education my children received. Both finished matric and none of them failed a grade (Ek was tevrede met die onderwys wat my kinders gekry het. Altwee het matriek klaar gemaak en nie een het ´n graad herhaal nie)* (# PARENT 2)). She continued and noted how each of her children made a success in their own way:

> *My child does hip-hop. The admission fee was too high, R9 000.00 to register. He could then have taught other children to dance. Now he has a dance group. His group performs in different towns and they have performed with a famous artist. They have also performed on TV. My other son is in the Police. At first he worked at Parliament, but he has been transferred to this town (My kind is in hip-hop. Die toelatingsgeld was te hoog, R9 000.00 om in te skryf. Hy sal dan die ander kinders kom leer dans het. Nou het hy ´n dansgroep. Sy groep tree op in verskillende dorpe en hulle het al met ´n bekende kunstenaar ook opgetree. Hulle het ook al op die tv opgetree. My ander seun is in die Polisie. Hy het eers by die Parlement gewerk, nou het hy ´n oorplasing na hierdie dorp gekry)* (# PARENT 2).

Success, as indicated by another parent, is *to become something in life. (Ek wil graag hê my kind moet iets wees).* She indicated that her child *has to finish school and be able to work for herself (sy moet klaar leer en vir haarself kan werk).* That means that *she should be educated (sy moet geleerd wees)* (# PARENT 9).

While they might lack the cultural capital required by the school, parents, in their own way, support learners to be what they perceive as successful. For example, one mother intended supporting her son through getting another job with a shorter, fixed working day from 07:00 to 16:00. She explained that she needs to do this to be at home more to support her child through his last years of secondary school (grades 11 and 12).

> *I'm looking for extra hours when I can take care of the boy, so I'm looking for a job where I can spend more time at home. I have to watch what my son is doing in the afternoons, because he is very unwilling to study. In the afternoons I see his books lying open, but he isn't there. He failed grade 10. Next year he will be in grade 11. We have to see to it that he studies, because he must make us proud in these two years (Ek soek ekstra ure wat ek na die seun kan omsien, daarom het ek 'n werk gesoek dat ek meer by die huis kan wees. Ek moet dophou wat my seun in die middag doen, want hy is baie traag vir leer. Middae sien ek sy boeke lê oop maar hy is dan weg. Hy het graad 10 herhaal. Volgende jaar is hy graad 11. Ons moet nou mooi kyk dat hy leer, want hy moet ons in die twee jaar trots maak)* (# PARENT 5).

The data contradicts the deficit assumption that ethnic minorities in the United States of America (and by implication Coloured parents in the Western Cape) are not interested in their children´s education (Lockwood & Secada in Gonzàlez 2001:642). Within international terms, the context of ethnic groups and white Anglos differs (*cf.* 2.4.3.2).

With regard to success in rural areas, Guenther (2013:167) maintains that there is a strong case to be made for considering what defines success in remote education (*cf.* 2.5.1). Similarly, the above discussion illustrates how achievements for learners in historically disadvantaged rural communities take on a different meaning than the general, Western norm of what counts as success. The ultimate success in these communities is whether children find their niche in life, progress and make a living for themselves.

5.2.2.3   FUTURE PLANS AND CAREER POSSIBILITIES

In this part of the study, learners and their parents comment on the career options of these particular learners. As seen in the methodology chapter (*cf.* 4.3.1) career possibilities for inhabitants are limited to the agricultural and service sectors in these regions. One parent-participant confirmed that work is scarce and that there might not be work for the youth (*There's no work for us, let alone for the youngsters (Daar is nie werk vir ons nie, wat nog te sê vir die jonges)* (# PARENT 5)).

According to GTR people make use of time, space and resources differently in rural spaces than in urban spaces in an attempt to transform the rural environment, rather than be subjected to it (Balfour 2012b:9). For instance, one participant in his final school year reflected on his limited career options in the following way:

> *The matriculants mostly enter at Shep Co. My brother and sister in law told me I have to go on the road to work. There's no money to study after school. There is no money on the farm to pay for studies (Die matrikulante gaan maar in by Shep Co. My broer en skoonsuster het gesê ek moet maar op die lang pad gaan werk. Daar is nie geld vir verder studeer nie. Daar is nie geld op die plaas om studies te betaal nie)* (# LEARNER 5).

In spite of the limitations and challenges, learners in the community have high aspirations:

> *I would like to make a success of my school year, because my parents don't have confidence in me. I want to show them that I can make a success. I haven't yet applied to do social work. We haven't done career guidance yet. Or I'll see if I can enter the police service next year (Ek wil graag 'n sukses van my skooljaar maak, want my pa-hulle het nie vertroue in my nie. Ek wil hulle wys dat ek 'n sukses kan maak. Ek het nog nie aansoek gedoen om maatskaplike werk te doen nie. Ons het nog nie beroepe navorsing gedoen nie. Of ek gaan kyk of ek nie volgende jaar by die polisie kan inkom nie)* (# LEARNER 4).

The abovementioned learner wanted to show her parents that she will make something of her life. According to CRT and LatCrit, this learner-participant exhibits a kind of agency towards her parents to prove them wrong about the negative ideas they have of her. Yosso (2002) built on a model of resistance that is "to prove others wrong". The writer extended transformational resistance to include "resilient resistance". Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001:320) maintains that transformational resistance within the CRT and LatCrit tradition allows one to look at resistance among students of colour that is political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual and social change is possible (*cf.* 2.4.3.4).

Some learner-participants adjust their aspirations according to their realities (*Well, I want to go into law enforcement for 6 months. That is, to be a traffic officer. Actually I want to be a History teacher (Wel, ek wil in 'Law Enforcement' gaan vir 6 maande. Dit is vir 'n 'traffic officer'. Eintlik wil ek 'n Geskiedenis-onderwyser word)* (# LEARNER 2)).

Some parents have particular aspirations for their children and direct them as such. One parent shared the following advice to her child: *First do psychology and study for social worker.*

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My child wants to model and sing. I tell her, "First enter a profession where you can be independent, then you can go into modelling and dance. I'll help you where I can" (Doen eers Sielkunde en leer vir 'n sosiale werker. My kind wil model en sing. Ek sê vir haar gaan eers in 'n beroep waar jy onafhanklik kan wees, dan kan jy in model en dans gaan. Ek sal jou help waar ek kan) (# PARENT 3). Yet another parent also advised her child to dream unrestrictedly: *I tell my child, you can enter the Police, be a plastic surgeon or a pilot (Ek sê vir my kind, jy kan in die Polisie gaan, 'n 'plastiekchirurg' of 'n loods wees)* (# PARENT 10).

Various people in the larger community influence the learners (also see 5.2.3) to give voice to their aspirations and expectations in life: *I can feel that I am a success. I want to study political science at UCT [University of Cape Town]. When I came to the school I didn't have a lot of self-confidence. The school, the principal and the LO [Life orientation] teacher gave me the self-confidence. I tell myself to make good choices. (Ek voel ek is 'n sukses. Ek wil 'political science' by UCT [Universiteit van Kaapstad] gaan doen. Toe ek by die skool kom het ek nie baie selfvertroue gehad nie. Die skool, die skoolhoof en die LO [Lewensoriëntering] juffrou het my die selfvertroue gegee. Ek sê vir myself om goeie keuses te maak)* (#LEARNER 18). Another participant sketched his reality: (*We are six in the house. Me, my auntie, her husband, her son and her husband's brother and sister. They have a positive influence on me. My auntie motivates me and gives me time to do my school work. I want to become an accountant. I take extra classes after school and over weekends (Ons is ses in die huis. Ek, my 'antie', haar man, haar seun en haar man se broer en suster. Hulle het 'n positiewe invloed op my. My antie motiveer my en gee my tyd om my werk te doen. Ek wil 'n rekenmeester word. Ek doen naskool- en Saterdag klasse)* (#LEARNER 13)). The learner-participant tells that he is very content within his extended household *[I get the best clothes and food. I'd like to go to the navy. I would do a lot better if I got more motivation from home, because I did not do well in the previous exam] (Ek kry die beste klere en kos. Ek wil graag 'Navy' toe gaan. Ek sal baie beter doen as ek meer motivering van die huis af kry, want ek het swak in die laaste eksamen gedoen)* (#LEARNER 15).

While these young people display an understanding of their limited choices in life, they do dream within these limits. This is the kind of experiential knowledge shared by people of colour. Parents often steer their children towards more traditional career options, rather than careers in the creative industries where there is little work security. For these learners, social mobility seems nearly impossible.

5.2.2.4   FORMS OF ENTROPY IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

As much as forms of agency are demonstrated in historically disadvantaged communities, forms of entropy are also visible (*cf.* 2.4.5.3). One of the teacher participants suggested that *a lot of discussions take place with regard to values and careers* (*Daar word baie met die leerders gepraat oor waardes en beroepe* (# TEACHER 3)). *Most of them [the learners from small rural towns and surrounding farms] are under the impression that they should go back to the farm [work on the farms like their parents] Die meeste van hulle [die leerders van klein plattelandse dorpe en omliggende plase] het die indruk dat hulle terug plaas toe moet gaan [werk op die plaas soos hul ouers]* (# TEACHER 3). This state of affairs is confirmed by a community worker (# COMMUNITY WORKER 2) at one of the schools who shared that the Life Orientation teacher *assists with careers and applications and bursaries (Die LO [Lewensoriëntering] onderwyser help met beroepe en aansoeke en beurse).* The teacher finds it difficult, however, to know who to assist (*The children must ask for assistance, when they do not ask, the teacher then does not know who needs assistance. Many children do not ask, [they have the] mentality of not asking. We come from the farm, do not talk. They have to reach out, speak and ask for help (Kinders moet hulp vra, as hulle nie vra nie sal die onderwyser nie weet wie het hulp nodig nie. Baie van die kinders vra nie, [hulle het die] mentaliteit van nie vra nie. Ons is van die plaas, praat nie. Hulle moet uitreik om te praat en hulp te vra)* (# COMMUNITY WORKER 2).

Contrary to some learners that displayed forms of entropy, many of the learners in historically disadvantaged areas recognise that they also have to rely on other support systems within the community (*cf.* 5.2.1.2).   Learners who exhibit agency connect with individuals and organisations for support to advance in life. Within the framework of GTR, all learners should take a position where their rural social life is understood as active rather than passive in shaping their future (*cf.* 2.4.5.4). Consequently, schools have to acknowledge these systems within communities, working towards strengthening these support centres and extend school systems with community-based systems for learners to benefit more. Learners in historically disadvantaged communities have to think differently and follow different pathways in order to counter this entropy, or other negative dispositions that will not benefit them.

5.2.3 ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

Another theme that emerged from the analysis is the issue of role models and mentors. Learners in historically disadvantaged communities do not have many normative role models

to demonstrate what they can become in life. They identify mostly with teachers who inspire them. Teachers are seen as exceptional individuals who can inspire learners. Parents, grandparents and other community members, however, also influence their lives.

5.2.3.1 TEACHERS AS ROLE MODELS

Through the interviews with the participants it is clear that learners rely strongly on the capital of teachers to guide them and to inspire them (*cf.* 1.1*).* Specific teachers were named by the participants:

> *In primary school I had a teacher, Miss Lorna. We still have contact with each other. She supported me and motivated me to have perseverance. She told me to go to Soutrivier, because it's a good school. I think that's the reason why I chose to come to Soutrivier. She is still an inspiration for me (Op laerskool was dit ´n onderwyser, Juf. Lorna. Ons is nog steeds in kontak met mekaar. Sy het my ondersteun en motiveer om uithouvermoë te hê. Sy het gesê ek moet Soutrivier toe gaan, want dit is ´n goeie skool. Ek dink dis die rede hoekom ek gekies het om Soutrivier toe te kom. Sy is steeds ´n inspirasie vir my)* (# LEARNER 1).

Learners mentioned specific ways in which teachers helped them, for instance by showing interest (*Miss Louw encourages [us] and talks to us. She doesn't teach me any subject, but will always ask what I'm doing. I had her for grade 9 Natural Science (Juffrou Louw moedig ons aan en praat met ons. Sy gee nie ´n vak vir my nie, maar sal altyd vra wat doen ek. Ek het graad 9 NW [Natuurwetenskap] by haar gekry)* (# LEARNER 6)). The teachers inspire learners in different ways (*All the teachers motivate us in some area. We formed a prayer group. The school plays a very important role (Al die onderwysers motiveer ons op een of ander gebied. Ons het ´n gebedsgroep gevorm. Die skool speel ´n baie groot rol)* (# LEARNER 10)). They also challenge learners to strive for more (*Miss Valmay encourages me to be in school and to reach for my dreams (Juffrou Valmay moedig aan my aan om in die skool te wees en om jou drome te bereik)* (# LEARNER 2)). Teachers build the self-esteem of learners (*When I arrived at the school, I did not have any self-confidence. The school, principal and the LO [Life Orientation] teacher gave me the self-confidence. I tell myself to make good choices (Toe ek by die skool kom het ek nie baie selfvertroue gehad nie. Die skool, die skoolhoof en die LO [Lewensoriëntering] juffrou het my die selfvertroue gegee. Ek sê vir myself om goeie keuses te maak)* (#LEARNER 18)).

Another learner explained the influence of teachers as follows:

> *The teachers means a lot, to think outside the town. To strive for greater things. To strive beyond challenges. Some teachers' classrooms have a homely atmosphere; it makes you feel welcome. You feel safe in the class and then you want to do better (Die onderwysers beteken baie, om buite die dorp te dink. Om te streef na groter dinge. Te streef bo die uitdagings. Sekere onderwysers se klaskamers het 'n ´homely´ atmosfeer, laat jou welkom voel. Jy voel veilig in die klas en dan wil jy beter doen*) (# LEARNER 8).

The positive role of teachers was confirmed by yet another learner:

> *Someone who inspires me, is Miss. Kelly. She encourages the children through her faith, she motivates them. I'm not in her class myself, but I have heard how the children speak about her (Iemand wat my inspireer is Juff. Kelly. Sy moedig die kinders aan deur haar geloof, sy motiveer hulle. Ek kry self nie les by haar nie, maar ek het gehoor hoe praat die kinders van haar)* (# LEARNER 11).

One learner-participant talked about how teachers encourage him to do his best:

> *Teachers share how they have achieved success. What we have to do to achieve success. Which subjects we have to take for what we want to become in life. And they tell us what our pass marks should be to enter a profession. They ask about problems at home and whether they can help (Onderwysers vertel hoe hulle sukses behaal het. Wat ons moet doen om ook sukses te behaal. Watter vakke ons moet het vir wat ons moet word in die lewe. En hulle sê hoe ons slaagsyfer moet wees om in ´n beroep te gaan. Hulle vra oor probleme by die huis en of hulle nie kan help nie)* (# LEARNER 2).

A learner shared the interest that the principal took in him:

> *The principal, Mr. Kenny. He knows me through cross-country running. He asks if I have problems at school. (Die prinsipaal, mnr. Kenny. Hy ken my deur die landlope. Hy vra of ek probleme by die skool het)* (# LEARNER 2).

Within the framework of CRT and LatCrit theory, learners´ experiential knowledge provides ways of perceiving how these young people´s dispositions give them direction through people who inspire them (*cf.* 2.4.3.2). Teachers are often identified as motivators and spiritual leaders. Against the background of CRT and LatCrit theory, transformational role models are visible members of one´s own racial/ethnic and/or gender group who actively demonstrate a commitment to social justice, whereas transformational mentors use traits and their own experiences and expertise to help guide the development of others (Blackwell in Solorzano &

Delgado Bernal 2001:322). The data shows that teachers and principals actively inspire learners to make certain choices in life, give them the confidence to act on their own behalf, and provide direction through their own experiences and successes to help guide the youth in these communities.

5.2.3.2 DISTINCTIVE INFLUENCES OF GRANDPARENTS, PARENTS AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Not only teachers, but also other members of the community and family members inspire learners. These people actively illustrate how to bring about change in communities. They are role models and mentors who influence and support young people, through participating in learners' socialisation and development. One participant referred to a community member who made a huge success of her life (*To see what others achieve. Like role models. To see what they have achieved, Mary-Jane Afrika. She's a lawyer. She's in England now (Om te sien wat ander mense bereik. Soos rolmodelle. Om te sien wat hulle bereik het, Mary-Jane Afrika. Sy is 'n prokureur. Sy is nou in Engeland)* (# LEARNER 6)). Some participants are more inclined to identify people at home who enthuse them, such as their grandparents (*My grandmother and grandfather. They are my mentors and my spiritual leaders. My grandparents and I talk about the Word of God and about life when we relax (My ouma en oupa. Hulle is my mentors en ook my geestelike leiers. Ek en my ouma en oupa praat ook oor die Woord van God en oor die lewe as ons ontspan)* (# LEARNER 10)) and their parents (*My father is my role model, we watch movies together. Saturdays we take it easy, we just chat with each other (My pa is my rolmodel, ons kyk movies saam. Saterdae is ons rustig, dan gesels ons net met mekaar)* (# LEARNER 11)); (*My mom and dad inspire me. My mother didn't pass matric. My dad was at college when they found out that my mother was pregnant, then he had to leave to take a job. That motivates me to do well (My ma en pa inspireer my. My ma het nie matriek behaal nie. My pa was op die kollege toe vind hulle uit dat my ma swanger is, toe moes hy los om te gaan werk. Dit motiveer my om goed te doen)* (# LEARNER 9)).

A learner explained how parental involvement motivates him (*When they attend meetings. To attend sport activities. The fact that they are there to support me makes me feel happy that they are there (Wanneer hulle daar is om vergaderings by te woon. Om sportaktiwiteite by te woon. Die feit dat hulle daar is om my te ondersteun. Laat jou gelukkig voel dat hulle daar is)* (# LEARNER 2)).

A prominent category of role player in these communities is the grandparents, especially the grandmother, who often performs the role of the main caregiver of the children in the household. Often parents are too young to take up the responsibility of being a parent, or they are working and living somewhere else, and so grandparents take up the role. One of the learner-participants noted that he is not living with his parents and his grandparents take care of him. He narrated as follows:

> *My parents can do more, my grandparents raised me. My grandparents were converted [took on a rigorous Christian faith] and me too (My ouers kan meer doen, my ouma en oupa het my groot gemaak. My ouma-hulle is bekeer [hang 'n streng Christelike geloof aan] en ek ook)* (# LEARNER 10).

One participant appreciated how his grandmother financially assists him to get to school over weekends (*She [my grandmother] helps me with money for the taxi if I have to go to school over the weekend (Sy [my ouma] help met geld vir die taxi as ek naweke skool toe moet gaan)* (# LEARNER 2).

Another participant sketched how the extended family motivates him (*We are six in the house. Me, my auntie, her husband, her son and her husband's brother and sister. They have a positive influence on me. My auntie motivates me and gives me time to do my school work (Ons is ses in die huis. Ek, my 'antie', haar man, haar seun en haar man se broer en suster. Hulle het 'n positiewe invloed op my. My antie motiveer my en gee my tyd om my werk te doen)* (#LEARNER 13)). The learner-participant tells that he is content within his extended household but needs more motivation: *[I get the best clothes and food. I'd like to go to the navy. I would do a lot better if I got more motivation from home, because I did not do well in the previous exam] (Ek kry die beste klere en kos. Ek sal baie beter doen as ek meer motivering van die huis af kry, want ek het swak in die laaste eksamen gedoen)* (#LEARNER 15)). Yet another participant shares how his grandmother motivates him: *Encouragement [My grandmother encouraging me]. Telling me I should study (Aanmoediging. Sê ek moet leer)* (# LEARNER 2).

A lack of positive role modelling also came to the fore. At times, even when parents live with their children, the children feel that their parents do not support them as much in their schooling as they should. One learner, for instance shared:

> *I did not pass the June exam. It wasn't my parents' influence. They aren't really interested that much, because they let me do things on my own. They just say, "Go to school and do well." It's my fault that I did poorly. It's not worth it to do well in school. I believe that I will get a job. At the moment I just go with the flow (Ek het nie Junie*

eksamen geslaag nie. Dis nie my ouers se invloed nie. Hulle stel nie so baie belang nie, want hulle laat dinge op my eie doen. Hulle sê net gaan skool toe en doen goed. Dis my skuld dat ek sleg gedoen het. Dis nie die moeite werd om goed op skool te doen nie. Ek glo dat ek 'n werk gaan kry. Op die oomblik beweeg ek maar saam met die stroom) (# LEARNER 11).

Another reflected that:

I don't live with them [my parents]. My parents don't support me with my school work as I expect them to. I want the parental effect, 100% assistance and input, but that isn't always the case (Ek bly nie by hulle [my ouers] nie. My ouers ondersteun my nie in my skoolwerk soos ek dit verlang nie. Ek soek die ouerlike effek 100% bystand en insit wat nie altyd van toepassing is nie) (# LEARNER 10).

The majority of the learners feel that parents and grandparents do not have the knowledge or skills to assist their children or grandchildren with their schoolwork. This is a reality which learners named as the one key factor where parents and grandparents fall short. Adults in historically disadvantaged working-class rural environments are usually people living on the margins of society, with no traditional cultural capital, but which the school assumes they have. Delpit (1988:286) suggests that what schools fail to understand is that if parents were members of the culture of power and lived by its rules and codes, they would transmit those codes to their children (*cf.* 1.1). The appeal in this case is therefore that schools should mediate and integrate experiential knowledge and scientific knowledge in order for social justice to come about.

It has been mentioned that grandparents are also named as learners' mentors and religious leaders. Parents, too, are identified as people who inspire learners, even though in some cases it is specifically a negative family history that fills some learners with the driving force to be successful in life (*cf.* 2.4.3.3). The data indicates that the concept of role models and mentors differs distinctively from its normative meaning. Transformational role models and transformational mentors raise learners´ consciousness in historically disadvantaged communities, and encourage them to become what they want to be as an individual and as a member of the community.

5.2.4 LIFE AT SCHOOL AND HABITUS

To highlight the context of historically disadvantaged rural communities is a way of working towards producing knowledge that is the opposite of the Eurocentric model. This is especially

the case in South Africa. Bourdieu (2007:84-85) adds insightful contributions to the debate regarding those who are the dominant and those who are the dominated in the social universe:

> Verbally to deny evaluative dichotomies is to pass a morality off for a politics. The dominated in the artistic and the intellectual fields have always practiced that form of radical chic which consists in rehabilitating socially inferior cultures or the minor genes of legitimate. To denounce hierarchy does not get us anywhere. What must be changed are the conditions that make this hierarchy exist, both in reality and in minds. We must – I have never stopped repeating it – work to universalise in reality the conditions of access to what the present offers us that is most universal, instead of talking about it.

Different theorists have commented on the cultural deficiency of minority and other ethnic groups. To counter these beliefs Bourdieu (2007:84-85) points to the rehabilitation of "socially inferior" cultures and appeals to the transformation of such evaluative dichotomies. In the South African context, this implies the decolonising of the production of knowledge. To reveal the life of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural people is to make it part of universal knowledge. In this regard, to decolonise knowledge is to change the conditions that make the "hierarchy" exist. This is an opposition of the notion that cultures, which are not white, are socially deficit in nature.

GTR accounts for learners´ subjectivities and lived experiences, in how they experience their social realities in rural and semi-urban contexts within historically disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, GTR elucidates learners' subjective experiences and how they make use of time, space and resources to advance their educational journey (*cf.* 1.5.1.3 and 2.5.1). In the next section the context of the historically disadvantaged Coloured rural schools is offered as part of universal knowledge (*cf.* 2.4).

5.2.4.1 RURALITY AS FORCE, MOVING IN AND MOVING OUT

Learners in rural areas move from the farms or the small towns to semi-urban areas in order to attend schools in disadvantaged Coloured communities. At the end of the school day they then go back to the rural areas - on a daily basis. For these learners the experience is a natural move, they know they have to do it, because most rural areas only make provision for primary schooling. When learners complete their primary schooling in the farm school or small town, they have to attend secondary school in a larger town. These historically disadvantaged Coloured learners make use of government-subsidised transport services to get to school in

the mornings and return home in the afternoons. The fact that the rural areas do not provide for secondary education pushes inhabitants out of rural areas into semi-urban spaces, and then back to the rural again. Due to the unique and distinctive nature of the rural, Nkambule *et al.* (2011:344) suggested the need to conceptualise a different theory of rurality that might account for a context in which these learners live and learn, and ultimately could achieve the success they desperately aim for. The theory of rurality accommodates how learners navigate their way to access resources in this distinctive context (*cf.* 2.5.2).

One of the learner-participants narrated her journey to school and back as follows:

> *I walk half an hour to catch the bus in the morning. In the winter I get up at five o'clock to get ready to catch the bus. Five-thirty in the summer, it's lighter nowadays. The bus comes earlier in the winter. I arrive home around a quarter to three in the afternoon (Ek loop 'n halfuur om die bus te kry in die oggend. In die winter staan ek vyfuur op om my reg te kry om die bus te kry. Halfses in die somer, dis ligter nou se tyd. Die bus kom vroeër in die winter. Ek kom so kwart voor drie in die middag by die huis aan) (#* LEARNER 3).

Another learner shared a similar story:

> *I get up at five-thirty. By six o'clock I have to be at the bus stop. When I stay with my parents I need to get up at five o'clock. I have to walk 15 minutes. From my parents it's 35 minutes. If I'm at my parents' house, I arrive home by three o'clock. [When I'm] with my friends I arrive home by two (Ek staan halfses op. Sesuur moet ek by die busstop wees. As ek by my ma-hulle bly moet ek vyfuur opstaan. Ek moet 15 minute loop. Van my ma-hulle is dit 35 minute. As ek by my ma-hulle is kom ek drie-uur by die huis. By my vriende kom ek oor twee by die huis aan)* (# LEARNER 4).

For these young people, the journey out of the rural is difficult at times. They have to get up early in the morning, and often the school expects them to attend classes in the afternoon and during weekends. To be more **time** efficient, learners sometimes opt to stay in school hostels (using it as a resource), a deliberate decision by parents and learners, instead of using private or government transport services (*Many learners from the farms stay in the school hostel in order to attend the extra classes of the school (Baie van die leerders van die plase bly op die skool se koshuis om die ekstra klasse van die skool by te woon)* (# PRINCIPAL 4)). Balfour *et al.* (2008:99) note that movement between the rural and urban is variable and dynamic. They argue that the rural is rural precisely in terms of its dispersion from three dynamic

variables available to address its challenges, namely forces, agencies, and resources (*cf.* 1.4.1.3).

When the learners move to semi-urban spaces, albeit still in disadvantaged Coloured communities, they have to navigate school life. The context of historically disadvantaged learners as a **place** is the real situation in which people live their lives.

5.2.4.2   THE CONTEXT OF SCHOOLS IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED COLOURED COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE EYES OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Schools in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities in larger towns comprise middle-class learners, who are better off, and then working-class learners, who are not even in a position to buy essential stationery for school (*In one class you have richer and poorer children [the disadvantaged children], who don't have everything* *(In die klasse self is daar die gegoede kinders en minderbevoorregte kinders, hulle [die minderbevoorregte kinders] het nie alles nie)* (# TEACHER 1))*.* One of the realities of historically disadvantaged schools is that many learners struggle academically *(The overall majority of learners must be helped, these are the learners who struggle (Die oorgrote meerderheid van leerders moet maar aangehelp word, dis die leerders wat maar sukkel)* (# PRINCIPAL 2)); (*There is a big gap in their academic performance [they do not well academically]. There is no difference between a child from town and the child from a farm (Daar is ´n groot gaping in hul skolastiese vordering [hulle doen nie skolasties goed nie]. Daar is geen verskil tussen die dorpskind en die plaaskind nie)* (# PRINCIPAL 1)). Another principal agreed: *[The children from farms and from the areas around the school, basically perform the same. We have children here with a general academic deficit. Many of the children can't excel due to fetal alcohol syndrome] (Die kinders van die plase en die kinders in areas rondom die skool wat hier skoolgaan, se skolastiese vlak is maar dieselfde. Hier is kinders met ´n algemene akademiese agterstand. Baie van die kinders kan nie vorder nie, as gevolg van fetale alkohol sindroom)* (# PRINCIPAL 4).

One teacher feels that the problems at home and in society spill over to the schools. One such a problem is teenage motherhood (*How many girls themselves have children already. They are often absent because their children are maybe ill or have burnt (Hoeveel meisiekinders het nou self al ´n kind. Hulle [skoolmeisies] is dan baie afwesig omdat hul kinders siek is of byvoorbeeld gebrand het)* (# TEACHER 1)). Many learners lack motivation as a result of circumstances at home (*Circumstances at home drains their motivation for attending school. Their social lives cause many problems. We [the teachers] have to support them, because their own parents*

need to work. They would easily stay at home for a week. Four children have already left the school because of this (*Huislike omstandighede maak [veroorsaak] dat hulle nie meer gemotiveerd is om skool toe te kom nie. Die kinders se sosiale lewe [veroorsaak baie probleme]. Ons [die onderwysers] moet nou vir hulle ondersteun, want hul eie ouers moet werk. Hulle bly dan somaar vir 'n week by die huis. Vier kinders het die skool as gevolg daarvan al verlaat* (# TEACHER 1)). In the disadvantaged Coloured community fetal alcohol syndrome is a problem as substance abuse is rife: *Then we have the fetal alcohol syndrome children who can't excel, and is very attention-seeking in class* (*Ons praat dan van die fetale alkoholsindroom kinders wat nie kan vorder nie, nou doen hulle alles in die klas om aandag te trek)* (# TEACHER 1)). Substance abuse, together with gangsterisim, is a reality in the schools that were included in this study (*Also rampant drug and alcohol issues among the children cause problems at school (Ook dwelmprobleme en drankprobleme wat algemeen onder die kinders voorkom is 'n groot probleem by die skool)* (# TEACHER 1)); (*There are plenty of gangs in the schools in town (Op die dorp is daar bendes op die skool)* (# PARENT 7)).

Discipline seems to be a significant problem, and some of the teachers seem to have a negative view about the rural children. One teacher noted that (*rural learners are susceptible to fights (Plattelandse kinders is vatbaar vir baklei* (# TEACHER 3)). He further pointed out that ([*t*]*here is a lot of jealousy at the school, quarrels between learners from the town and those from the farms (Daar is baie jaloesie op die skool, onderonsies tussen die dorp en die plaas leerders* (# TEACHER 3)).

In view of the above challenges the parent community feels that the school should provide a nurturing environment for learners so that learners can feel safe. One parent, for instance, explained that (*there should be respect between the teacher and the child. The approach should not be "You are not going to succeed", but rather "You are going to make it (daar moet respek tussen die onderwyser en die kind wees. Die benadering moenie wees "Jy gaan nie regkom nie" eerder "Jy gaan dit maak"* (# PARENT 10)). Some parents believe that the schools are not doing enough to create a disciplined environment. One, for instance, shared that (*children are outside the classroom during school hours. Teachers do not worry, they do not care about the children, and they allow the children to fight (Die kinders is skooltyd buite die klas. Onderwysers 'worry' nie met die kinders nie, hulle gee nie om nie, die kinders kan maar baklei op die skool)* (# PARENT 9)).

Parents were not altogether satisfied with the schools in the larger towns. One of the parents compared the school on the farm with the school in town:

> *The school on the farm was good. It is a pity that they cannot go to grade 12 [provide tuition to grade 12). The child still had direction, the right ambition. The school on the farm does a lot to motivate the child (Die plaasskool was goed. Dis net jammer dat hulle nie tot graad 12 gaan nie [tot graad 12 onderrig gee nie]. Die kind het nog ´n rigting gehad, regte ambisie. Die plaasskool motiveer die kind baie)* (# PARENT 7).

Parents feel that the teachers are not really interested in their children (*At one school in town, there the teachers just earn their money. They feel that they are done with their education, they are not bothered with the children, the good ones excluded (By die een dorpskool verdien die onderwysers net sy geld. Hy voel hy het klaar geleer, hulle gaan nie sukkel met ons kinders nie, die goeies uitgesluit)* (# PARENT 7)). Some parents feel that the teachers in the larger schools do not know how to work with rural children (*The teachers at the school in town do not have a proper way to work with children (Onderwysers by die dorpskool het geen maniere om met die kinders te werk nie)* (# PARENT 9)). On the other hand, teachers have their own challenges. One principal, for instance, pointed out that teachers cannot give individual attention to learners as the classes are too full (*The classes are overcrowded. Teachers are unable to provide individual attention to the learners (Die klasse is oorvol. Onderwysers kan nie individuele aandag aan die leerders gee nie.)* (# PRINCIPAL 1)). Furthermore, the school perceives the parents to be disinterested in the school (*Parents do not give enough attention to their children at home and we [the teachers] receive hardly any collaboration from parents. There is a lack of collaboration and parents do not show any interest in the education of their children (Daar is geen huislike aandag nie en ons kry weinig samewerking van die ouers. Daar is ´n gebrek aan samewerking van die ouer en geen belangstelling in die kind se akademie nie)* (# PRINCIPAL 1)).

This is the hard reality of experiences in places of marginality. A critical engagement in communities and the recognition that the existing state of affairs do not exhaust all possibilities could offer positive implications for social actions (*cf.* 2.2). Bell hooks (in Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001:336) agrees that people of colour are often in the margins, and that they know more about the margin as a site of deprivation or domination. The writer rather considers marginality as a site of resistance. Stephan Haymes in Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001:336) suggests further that marginalised spaces are counter-spaces with their role

as a place of comfort and nurture, and as a place of building communities of resistance. This is especially true in what parents and learners desire from schools in historically disadvantaged areas.

5.2.4.3 LIFE EXPERIENCED BY LEARNERS AT SCHOOLS IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

While the preceding section focused on how the adults in the study perceived the school, learner-participants share their experiences in this section. Some learners are doing well, as one learner-participant revealed:

> *The education at Soutrivier is of very good quality. I feel that the things I learn there will be good. It will be suitable to use for the university one day [Die opvoeding by Soutrivier is van baie goeie gehalte. Ek voel die goed wat ek daar leer sal goed wees. Dit sal geskik wees vir gebruik vir die universiteit eendag]* (# LEARNER 1).

Some learners were positive about the effort that teachers put in (*[I am]Positive [about school], teachers put in everything. It's how you receive it. Learners interrupt the quality of the lesson. ([Ek is] positief, onderwysers sit alles in. Dis hoe jy dit gaan ontvang. Leerder onderbreek die kwaliteit van die les)* (# LEARNER 10)).

Learners from disadvantaged rural communities who attend schools in semi-urban areas show insight in terms of school routine. One learner explained how classes are managed: *I listen to the explanations in class. The exercise is just to see if we understand the work. We work out the activity in class, and do some activities for homework as well (Ek luister na die verduidelikings in die klas. Die oefening is maar net om te kyk of ons die werk verstaan. Ons werk in die klas die aktiwiteit uit en ook vir huiswerk, die aktiwiteite)* (# LEARNER 2). Another shared how she would go through the drills just to survive (*I arrive at the school, the bell rings, I go to class, wait for the lesson to finish (Ek kom aan by die skool, die klok lui, ek gaan klas toe, wag tot die les klaarkry)* (# LEARNER 11)).

Still, it seems as if many of the learners are struggling. One learner, for instance, shared how she is experiencing too much pressure (*There is a lot of pressure from the teachers. Teachers should help you, but they are always in a hurry. So, I just want to relax, switch off from that (Daar is baie druk van die onderwysers. Onderwysers moet jou aanhelp, maar hulle is meer gejaagd. Daarom, ek wil net ´relax´, my afskakel daarvan)* (# LEARNER 11)), while another lamented that for disadvantaged learners school is a struggle (*I'm not a success. I am*

completely broken. It's the negativity of others' words, at the rich schools, parents are involved in everything. Parents are involved 24/7. Children are motivated. That's why they are such a huge success at Die Vallei school (Ek is nie 'n sukses nie. Ek is heel gebreek. Dis die negatiwiteit van ander se woorde, vergelyk by die ryk skole, ouers is betrokke by alles. Ouers is 24/7 betrokke. Kinders is gemotiveerd. Dis hoekom hulle so 'n groot sukses is by Die Vallei skool) (# LEARNER 11)).

In particular, learners from disadvantaged rural areas struggle to adapt to school in the semi-urban school environment. One learner shared:

> *I don't do well in my school subjects. If they explain something to me about two/three times, I will understand. On the farm we didn't have Economics. There is much more you have to do here (Ek doen nie te watswonders nie in my skoolvakke nie. As hulle vir my so twee/drie keer verduidelik sal ek verstaan. Op die plaas was daar nie Ekonomie nie. Hier is daar baie meer wat jy moet doen)* (# LEARNER 5).

This particular learner shared his experiences in the classroom and how he tries to cope:

> *I won't tell the teacher that I don't understand at that level. I'm a bit shy to say that I don't understand in front of the others. I'm just one of the guys who joke around in class. If they are trying to explain, I won't joke, but if the teacher tells a joke, I will tell one or two jokes. If the teacher gives an example, and it's a long story and he returns to the work, then I don't understand anymore (Ek sal nie op daai vlak vir die onderwyser sê dat ek nie verstaan nie. Ek is 'n bietjie skaam om voor die ander te sê dat ek nie verstaan nie. Ek is maar een van die outjies wat grappies maak in die klas. As hulle besig is om te verduidelik sal ek nie grappe maak nie, maar as die onderwyser so 'n grappie maak, sal ek ook so een of twee grappies maak. As die onderwyser 'n voorbeeld maak, en dit raak 'n lang storie en hy kom dan terug na die werk, dan verstaan ek nie meer nie)* (# LEARNER 5).

He recounted how he navigates ways to assist him in his schoolwork, drawing from the knowledge in his own community:

> *Look, if I didn't understand something in class, I'll ask my sister in law if she doesn't understand it. She also works on the farm. She does housework. She finished grade 11 and couldn't go on (Kyk, as ek nou nie iets in die klas verstaan het nie, sal ek vir my skoonsuster vra of sy nie iets daarin verstaan nie. Sy werk ook maar op die plaas. Sy doen kombuiswerk. Sy het graad 11 klaar gemaak en kon nie verder gaan nie)* (# LEARNER 5).

In line with the theory of Bourdieu (2003:352) middle-class contributions for middle-class children warrants school success. Contrary to this is the case of the working-class situation – poverty and subsequent parent absenteeism due to working circumstances, add to the fact that parents cannot cultivate the cultural capital learners need to engage in the matters of the school.

In relation to Bourdieu´s thinking (2007, 1989) learners from working-class environments (for example "# Learner 5") do not usually access cultural capital at home. They also do not demonstrate a habitus compatible to what the school expects from learners. Consequently, to the reasoning of Bourdieu (*cf.* 2003:351), this is why working-class learners do not achieve academically. However, as mentioned in the research earlier (*cf.* 1.5.1.1), critics are of the opinion that the work of Bourdieu offers very little room for radical thinking in order to bring about change in society. This study therefore engages in CRT and LatCrit theory, as well as in GTR, to work towards social justice for historically disadvantaged rural learners (*cf.* 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5).

Parents' minimum engagements with their children's schooling and their expectation that their children should navigate their own way through school are also concerns and issues with which learners struggle. In this regard, Mills & Gale (*cf.* 2010:14; also Bourdieu 1998b) note that Bourdieu and others who employ his theoretical concepts have made significant contributions in understanding the role that schools and school systems play in reproducing social and cultural inequalities. Privileged groups manage to maintain their dominant position, and through this systematically marginalise dominated groups within the system. This is because the schools´ internal and external functions correlate to the interests of the middle class (*cf.* 2.3.5). Working-class schools and middle-class schools respond differently to these forces, whereas middle-class schools obviously have the upper hand.

5.2.4.4 RESISTANCE IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS

A large percentage of learners act out and resist the kind of education that is offered to them (*cf.* 3.4). These learners resist the curriculum content and pedagogies in schools, ultimately working against their own and other learners´ progression. Some learners suggested that measures should be put in place to counter these negativities in schools.

Many of the learner-participants commented on the breakdown culture, overall negativity and a "spirit" of carelessness. This kind of school resistance has an overwhelming impact on the

whole culture of the school in historically disadvantaged communities, and on those learners who want to progress.

One particular participant found it extremely difficult to deal with the curriculum and the school's environment that is different from the smaller rural primary school. Another learner shared that she found the school environment to be "wild" and not "normal" (*I only want peace and quiet, it's so wild at school, I like peacefulness, peacefulness is not encouraged at school. You are not normal [compared to] the other's normal (Ek soek net kalmte, dis so wild by die skool, ek hou van kalmte, kalmte word nie by die skool aangemoedig nie. Jy is nie "normal" met die ander se "normal" nie)* (# LEARNER 11)). She complained that the behaviour of others negatively influence their peers (*The academics is being ruined. A large portion of the children are not focused, the ones who are focused, can be counted on your fingers. There's a huge negativity among the learners. They don't care about their future. The school sees this, but they just want to finish the curriculum (Daar is 'n afbreek van die akademie. 'n Baie groot gedeelte van die kinders is nie gefokus nie, die kinders wat gefokus is, kan jy op jou vingers tel. Daar is 'n groot negatiwiteit onder die leerders. Hulle gee nie om vir hul toekoms nie. Die skool sien dit raak, maar hulle wil net met die kurrikulum klaar kry)* (# LEARNER 11)). She perceives that the teachers appear not care about the chaos, and only focus on the curriculum (*The school sees this, but they just want to finish the curriculum (Die skool sien dit raak, maar hulle wil net met die kurrikulum klaar kry)* (# LEARNER 11)). Still, this learner showed pespective regarding the bigger picture (*You have to pick yourself up again, no one has a goal. You just always have to reach beyond the school. (Jy moet jouself maar weer optel, niemand het 'n doel nie. Jy moet altyd net verder reik as net by die skool)* (# LEARNER 11)).

Another learner-participant (# LEARNER 4) similarly complained that the unruly behaviour of other learners makes it impossible for her to learn. What she mentioned in particular was the conflict between learners (*The conflict between the children in the class has the result that I don't do as well as I want to. (Die konflik tussen kinders in die klas maak dat ek nie goed doen soos ek wil nie)*), learners not interested in schoolwork (*There are children who aren't interested in their schoolwork. That is a disturbance to those of us who want to learn (Daar is kinders wat nie belangstel in hul skoolwerk nie. Dis 'n steurnis vir ons wat wil leer)*), and learners constantly playing on their cellphones (*Children have their phones in class and play on their phones in class (Kinders sit met "phones" in die klas en speel in die klas op "phones")*).

Many learners from the larger town seem to act defiantly towards the teachers:

> *The children from town take advantage of the teachers, they leave the class at any time. They talk back to the teacher. It makes us feel bad. Nothing is done to some children, they just tell the teacher they will fetch their parents. If the teacher stands in front and teach, they will interrupt the teacher. If the teacher reprimands them, they laugh at the teacher. These children aren't taught right at home. Or they don't get enough attention from their parents* (*Die dorpskinders vat baie "advantage" van die onderwysers, hulle stap sommer uit die klas. Hulle gee vir die onderwyser tale [praat teë]. Dit laat ons nie lekker voel nie. Aan sekere kinders word daar niks gedoen nie, hulle sê sommer vir die onderwyser hulle gaan hul ouers haal. As die onderwyser voor staan en les gee, sal hulle somaar tussenin praat. As die onderwyser hulle aanspreek, dan lag hulle die onderwyser uit. Dis die kinders wat nie reggeleer word by die huis nie. Of hulle kry nie genoeg aandag by hul ouers nie*) (# LEARNER 4).

Teachers seem to handle this negative behaviour by sending the learners to stand outside class, but they even make more noise there. (*Children who are thrown out, they make a noise just outside the classroom door so that their friends will get thrown out as well. (Kinders wat uitgesit word, hulle sit en raas net voor die klasdeur om ander maats ook uit die klas te kry)*). This participant wished that those learners could just be removed from school (*If only they can remove those children who are so stubborn from the school, and keep those of us who want to learn (As hulle die kinders wat so hardkoppig is net uit die skool kan kry, ons wat wil leer daar hou)* (# LEARNER 4)).

Another learner similarly commented on school resistance in the following way:

> *When the teacher is teaching a lesson and the children interrupt the lesson. It's not nice when the teacher is busy, and he/she is interrupted. They don't do homework. And if we don't want to give them our books [so that they can copy from our home work], they disrupt the class* (*Wanneer die onderwyser besig is met 'n les en die kinders onderbreek die les. Dis nie lekker as die onderwyser besig is, en hy/sy word onderbreek nie. Hulle doen nie huiswerk nie. En as ons nie ons boeke vir hulle wil gee nie [sodat hulle kan afskryf van ons tuiswerk], dan gaan hulle aan in die klas [ontwrig die klas)* (# LEARNER 6).

The situation described by the learner-participants was confirmed by one of the teacher-participants:

> *Teachers are demotivated, learners are undisciplined. Classes are overcrowded and the workload is enormous. Time is needed to finish the curriculum outside the usual class time. It is a struggle with the children who act out more and more* (*Onderwysers*

> *is gedemotiveerd, die leerders ruk hand-uit. Klasse is oorvol en die werkslading is geweldig. Tyd is nodig om die kurrikulum buite die gewone klastyd af te handel. Dit is ´n stryd met die kinders wat al hoe meer ongeskik optree)* (# TEACHER 6).

While many of the participants were critical of the learners who show resistance, some insight was provided:

> *Children don't get enough attention at home or school. They don't have an aim in life. Domestic conditions and community life. How people behave in the community. Drugs and alcohol, they don't know how to get out of that. Negative things in the community (Kinders kry nie genoeg aandag by die huis of skool nie. Hulle het nie ´n doel in die lewe nie. Huislike omstandighede en gemeenskapslewe. Hoe mense in die gemeenskap optree. "Drugs" en die "alcohol", hulle weet nie om daar uit te kom nie. Negatiewe goed in die gemeenskap)* (# LEARNER 9).

Another learner-participant reflected on the issue in the following manner:

> *We look at the home environment. Is the child being abused? Looking for attention from the teacher. Perhaps the child is behind, sometimes the teachers go too fast. We who do well, don't always follow either. Sometimes everything is done quickly so they can get everything done. It's the term in which all the work should be completed (Ons kyk na huislike omstandighede. Word die kind "abuse". Soek aandag by die onderwyser. Miskien is die kind agter, soms gaan die onderwysers te vinnig. Ons wat goed doen, volg ook nie altyd nie. Soms word alles vinnig gedoen sodat hulle kan klaar kry. Dis die kwartaal wat al die werk afgehandel moet word)* (# LEARNER 10).

Research shows that the lack of alignment between life world knowledge and school knowledge is to be blamed for the situation (*cf.* 3.5 and 3.6). Learners of working-class backgrounds cannot relate to the school curriculum, and so they display intense forms of resistance as mentioned by participants. Ultimately these actions of resistance (defiant behaviour) towards oppressive structures (the school and curriculum) are working against social justice. Self-defeating resistance refers to learners engaging in behaviour that helps to re-create the oppressive conditions from which it originated (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:317). Moreover, Delgado Bernal (2001:625) believes that resistance theories do not emphasise the importance of working towards social justice. The implication is that school resistance does not help learners to advance in life.

Some of the participants had particular ideas with regard to dealing with school resistance. For instance, # LEARNER 6 reflected on the situation in the school and gave her view on how

to return positivity to the classroom: *There should be more rules in the class. Discipline and respect too. Especially the children in the class. Some of the children don't respect the young teachers (Daar moet meer reëls wees in die klas. Ook dissipline en respek. Veral die kinders in die klas. Van die kinders respekteer nie die jong onderwysers nie)* (# LEARNER 6).

LEARNER 11 was critical about the school's expectations, and its way of handling the situation:

> *They expect the parents to "tune" the children. The school expects it, but they don't do anything, but they see it. The school looks past all of this, they are not that strict. I think the school should take discipline step by step, until the child is no longer dependent on that support system. I think parents should build a relationship with teachers at the school to get the focus. Contact the parents about it, the whole place has is "nevermind". There is a "nevermind spirit" in the whole community (Hulle verwag die ouers moet die kinders "instel". Die skool verwag dit, maar hulle doen nie iets nie, maar hulle sien dit. Die skool kyk bo-oor dit alles, hulle is nie so streng nie. Ek dink die skool moet die dissipline stap vir stap doen, tot die kind nie meer afhanklik is van daai "support system" nie.   Ek dink ouers moet 'n verhouding bou met onderwysers by die skool om die fokus te kry. Kontak die ouers rondom dit, die hele plek is "nevermind". Daar is 'n "nevermind spirit" in die hele gemeenskap)* (# LEARNER 11).

One learner-participant felt that a stronger connection between the learner, the teacher and the parent (the child, the school and the home) is desirable and made the following suggestion:

> *Perhaps this can help. Parent meetings mention more interventions, discipline at the school, and the matric farewell. They should ask the children what they need to do so that the child can do better. What both should do to succeed. (Miskien kan dit help. Ouervergadering praat meer van intervensies, dissipline by die skool, en die matriekafskeid. Hulle moet die kinders uitvra wat hulle moet doen sodat die kind kan beter doen. Wat kan albei doen om sukses te behaal)* (# LEARNER 9).

This was echoed by # LEARNER 11: *There should be a relationship between the school and the parents. If they had that relationship, it would have been much better, the school would have been far better (Daar moet 'n verhouding wees tussen skool en die ouers. As hulle daai verhouding gehad het, sal die baie beter wees, die skool sal ver beter gewees het).*

In the framework of CRT and LatCrit theory, learners give voice to their aspirations and expectations as well as their difficulties in the context of historically disadvantaged rural spaces (*cf.* 1.5.1.2). They use their voices to speak about school resistance and how this influences their life in schools. Some learners also show the need to offer advice in confronting the problem. This is of particular significance in the Critical Race Theory tradition, emphasising the concept of "naming one´s own reality" or the concept of "voice" as opposed to objectivity and neutrality, especially in the domain of education, in order to free yourself (*cf.* 2.4.2). Learners want to do well and experience success in spite of adverse circumstances at home and school.

5.2.4.5 PEDAGOGIES AND SCHOOL PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS

At the opposite end to school resistance are the aspirations, will and determination of many learners in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities who aspire to learn, and who aim to be successful in spite of a curriculum they cannot relate to. They value the extra classes, which are parallel to the private classes that white or more privileged learners receive. These learners count on the cultural capital of teachers to clarify the middle-class knowledge of the curriculum. In fact, these learners have an intense need for their teachers to explain the curriculum content. Often a second or third explanation is needed (*cf.* 5.2.3.2.2), and this is also why additional classes are vital for historically disadvantaged rural learners.

In line with the above discussion, the school again has a contradictory role to play in the lives of these learners. On the one hand the school seems to provide a curriculum so foreign that it is difficult for most of these learners to comprehend it. On the other hand the school has to compensate for this, and play a role inmaking the curriculum understandable for all learners (who come from different levels of life) in an attempt to help them succeed.

Some learners recounted positive engagements with the content of the curriculum and the teachers' pedagogies:

> *Teachers explain in such a way that you understand well. Now if someone doesn't understand, they come back to the person who doesn't understand. My Mathematical Literacy teacher, I like how she explains the work. Also my Business Studies teacher and Drama [Dramatic Arts] teacher. Every Friday we write class tests [Mathematical Literacy] to see how far we've come (Onderwysers verduidelik dat jy lekker kan verstaan. As iemand nou nie verstaan nie kom hulle terug na die persoon wat nie*

verstaan nie. My WG [Wiskundige Geletterdheid] juffrou. Ek hou van hoe sy die werk verduidelik. Ook my BS [Besigheidstudie] meneer en Drama [Dramatiese Kunste] juffrou. Elke Vrydag skryf ons toetsies [Wiskundige Geletterdheid] om te kyk hoe ver ons al gekom het) (# LEARNER 7).

While there is pressure on both the teachers and learners, teachers do try to make the work accessible for the learners (*At Bergstroom the teachers make time to explain again, because sometimes everything is done in a hurry (By Bergstroom maak die onderwysers tyd om oor te verduidelik, want alles word soms vinnig gedoen)* (#LEARNER 10)). Some learner-participants indicated that teachers have to know them (*The teacher should lower to the children's level. A teacher should be able to read the child during the lesson; if I look confused, they should ask, if there is anything I don't understand (Die onderwyser moet daal op die kinders se vlak. ´n Onderwyser moet tydens die les die kind kan lees, as ek verward lyk moet hulle vra is daar iets wat jy nie verstaan nie)* (#LEARNER 11)).

The learners made suggestions on how pedagogies and practices in schools can help (*Teachers should just do their job. Explain more, explain in more detail so that children can understand better, and add something extra [Onderwysers moet net hulle werk doen. Meer verduidelik, meer in detail verduidelik sodat die kinders meer kan verstaan en iets ekstra insit].* Teachers should explain individually but should also provide clarity on issues (*I think to explain it individually, if the teacher feels up to that [Ek dink om dit individueel te verduidelik, as die onderwyser kans sien]* (# LEARNER 1)).

Another participant suggested extra classes and gave details of what she meant by it: (*Extra classes. To ask to repeat the questions. Business questions [Business Studies] should be repeated and explained again (Ekstra klasse. Is om te vra om die vrae te herhaal. Besigheidsvrae* [Besigheidstudie] *moet herhaal word en weer verduidelik word)* (# LEARNER 3)). Learners repeatedly mentioned that they struggle with certain subjects (*Especially Business Studies, the questions that I do not understand. They should repeat (the work) and explain it again. You should show interest to tell them (Veral met Besigheidstudie, die vrae wat ek nie verstaan nie. Hulle moet dit herhaal en weer verduidelik. Jy moet genoeg belangstelling toon om dit te sê)* (# LEARNER 14)).

In another statement, a learner-participant (as part of a group) demonstrated agency because he is aware of the fact that his progression in Accountancy is rather slow, and because of that he asked for help:

> *Last year all of us who struggled with Accounting asked for extra classes. Grade 12 has extra classes. We can have extra classes too. Especially if we didn't have enough time to copy the question from the board (Verlede jaar al het ons wat so bietjie stadig was met die Rekeningkunde gevra vir ekstra klasse. Graad 12 kry naklasse. Daar kan naklasse vir ons ook wees. Veral as ons nie genoeg tyd gekry het om die vraag wat op die bord is af te skryf nie)* (# LEARNER 5).

Extra classes certainly help, and it became clear from the data that some schools understand the difficulties of children, and so they find ways to support them. How teachers act as role models has already been discussed in 5.2.3.1, and this section links with that. In addition, examples of support for learners from disadvantaged communities include the following:

Due to the lack of relevant support and resources in many homes, teachers realise that assignments should rather be done in class, so that support and resources are on hand (*Assessment tasks are done in class (Asseseringstake word binne die klas gedoen)* (# TEACHER 4)), *Learners use resources such as library books and internet sources, which are provided by the teacher (Leerders gebruik die hulpbronne, soos biblioteekboeke en internetbronne, wat die onderwyser verskaf)* (# TEACHER 1).

Teachers provide extra classes after formal school hours (*There are afternoon classes (Namiddag klasse word gehou)* (# PRINCIPAL 2)), and provide transport home afterwards (*Learners who make use of bus transport are taken back home after the afternoon classes (Leerders [wat middagklasse bywoon] word spesiaal vervoer na hul huise indien hulle busryers is)* (# PRINCIPAL 5)).

Another strategy regularly used is a guardian system, where learners are assigned to a specific teacher to look out for them (*The school makes use of a guardian system. Every teacher has for example two learners that he or she supports academically and emotionally. They also contact the parents if needed (Die skool maak van ′n voogstelsel gebruik. Elke onderwyser het byvoorbeeld twee leerders wat hy/sy akademies of emosioneel ondersteun. Hulle kontak ook die ouers as daar enigsins probleme ondervind word)* (# PRINCIPAL 1)).

Additional classes for these learners focus on the more difficult subjects such as Mathematics, Accountancy, Physics, Life Sciences and also Afrikaans and English. The learners' need is that teachers should focus on the more difficult parts of the subject, and attempt to make the content clearer. They want to better understand the work and for the teacher to explain more, or again, or to strengthen new content that was dealt with in class.

Learners do not need a facilitator to learning. They need a teacher to explain and make the work clear to them. This is the opposite of what OBE embraced, which was to start with the existing knowledge of the child and from there the child should explore on his/her own and with peers (*cf.* 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

A critical concern in this context is why learners place so much emphasis on the practice that teachers must explain and clarify the work. Could the answer be that learners find it difficult to engage in this curriculum that they cannot relate to? The implication is that the curriculum does not resonate learners in these schools. There is no or little connection to their life world or everyday home knowledge in combination with the integration of the scientific knowledge of the school. Most historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners cannot relate to the curriculum (*cf.* 3.4). Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Passeron 2014:199) speaks of schools that build on the cultural capital of the middle class. According to Bourdieu (2014:7) PW of middle-class families correspond to SW of the school, while working-class pedagogical work do not relate to the pedagogies of schools (*cf.* 2.3.5.2)

Working-class learners sometimes resist this form of education (forms of school knowledge *cf.* 3.1.3), and this might possibly be why they do not care for and appear not to have any goals to further their secondary education. The schools have actually lost them a long time ago, and it is just a matter of time before they drop out or will be confronted by the fact that they are failing, or do not meet the requirements for admission to tertiary education. Within the context of curriculum and pedagogy, a mediation and eventually an integration of all knowledge should form part of knowledge production and curriculum selection to serve all learners and offer means of equality in education (*cf.* 3.6). In addition, a move to utilise ethics in education to cater for marginalised people has begun to take root (*cf.* 3.4 and 3.5).

5.2.4.6   Internal transformational resistance of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners

Some forms of internal transformational resistance, as part of moving towards social justice, came to the fore. This study uses the work of theorists in the CRT and LatCrit tradition to engage in questions as to how Coloured learners´ cultural knowledge (and transformative resistance strategies) can contribute to their educational success (*cf.* 2.4.3). According to Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001:324) the behaviour expressed as internal transformational resistance appears to conform to institutional or cultural norms and expectations, however individuals are consciously engaged in a critique of oppression. Transformational resistance is motivated by a sense that social justice is possible through resistant behaviour contrary to school resistance, which fails to emphasise the importance of working towards social justice (*cf.* 2.4.3.4).

One participant reflected on internal transformative resistance as opposed to school resistance in the following way:

> *To give us extra homework. We don't get homework every day. If I don't have homework, I read the prescribed books (Om ekstra huiswerk vir ons te gee. Ons kry nie elke dag huiswerk nie. As ek nie huiswerk kry nie dan lees ek die voorgeskrewe boeke)* (# LEARNER 6).

One learner-participant recounted her experience in school to progress in order to become someone in the following way:

> *If I have to take extra classes in the afternoon. All subjects. The subject teachers present the classes. All grade 12s stay behind. This week it may be two subjects. Another week there are other subjects. It helps to ask to repeat the questions. Business questions should be repeated and explained again (As ek naklasse in die middag moet vat. Alle vakke. Die vakonderwysers gee die klasse. Al die graad 12s bly agter. Hierdie week is dit miskien 2 vakke. Die ander week is dit weer ander vakke. Dit help om te vra om die vrae te herhaal. Besigheidsvrae moet herhaal word en weer verduidelik word)* (# LEARNER 3).

Another learner-participant also commended on her strategy of resistance:

> *I should have respect. I don't do what my friends do. I want to please my mom and dad by doing well. I am the top student in the class. I'm not easily influenced because I have a goal (Ek moet respek hê. Ek doen nie wat my vrinne doen nie. Ek wil my ma*

en pa tevrede stel om goed te doen. Ek is die klas se toppresteerder. Ek is nie beïnvloedbaar nie, want ek het ´n doel) (# LEARNER 9).

She reflected on her goal to give back to her community by becoming a teacher:

By achieving my goal. I want to be a tourism teacher. My mom, dad, neighbours and teachers support me (Deur my doel te bereik. Ek wil ´n toeriste onderwyser word. My ma, pa, bure en onderwysers ondersteun my) (# LEARNER 9).

Complimentary to what the learners´ opinions are, the following teacher reflected on learners´ "social, cultural and personal consciousness" as internal transformational resistance in the following fashion: (*To not leave the child rigid in his way of thinking. More exposure to a sophisticated lifestyle. Also the development of the emotional, so that the child isn't afraid to enter the world) (Om die kind nie eng in sy denkwyse te laat nie. Meer blootstel aan 'n wêreldwyse leefstyl. Ook die ontwikkeling van die emosionele sodat die kind nie bang is om die wêreld te betree nie)* (# TEACHER 2)).

This teacher-participant's intention is to heighten learners´ consciousness of the world. She is of the opinion that schools should allow learners to be creative, imaginary and think beyond whatever their circumstances are. Learners can eventually display attitudes of resilience, a sense of collectedness and a certain sense of consciousness, and this makes social change possible (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:320). Internal transformational resistance within learners illustrate the right values, goals and attitudes to prove others wrong, and it encourages learners to take up all opportunities to advance in life (*cf.* 2.4.3.4). In this way, places where learners live and learn become spaces of "the understanding of resistance as a site of possibility and of human agency" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001:337). In a sense, schools and other places in the community become localities where people demand acknowledgement of their ways of being in the world.

5.2.4.7   RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

An important tension that came to the fore in the study is the cultural capital expected of parents (from the school), and their world life knowledge.

Parents are expected, for instance, to attend parental meetings from time to time, usually in the evenings, and that is problematic. (*The school sends letters with the children for parent meetings. I work late and do not have transport (Die skool stuur briewe saam met die kinders vir ouer-vergaderinge. Ek werk laat en het nie vervoer nie)* (# PARENT 9)).

Some teachers perceive the parents' attitude as a form of entropy, and do not acknowledge the practical constraints the parents encounter when they try to provide the necessary support for the learners and the school.

> *There's a bad connection, very slight, between the parent, child and educator. This relationship should be established and strengthened. It's about the child and the progress of the community. The school is seen as an entity on its own. The child is placed in the school; the parent doesn't see the significant role that he plays in his child's education. The parent sees the child as the school's responsibility. Parents seldom take a look in the books, because they don't have knowledge of the syllabus. The parent also knows little concerning the school. Few parents have a relationship with the school (Daar is ´n swak verbintenis, baie dun, tussen die ouer-kind-opvoeder. Hierdie verhouding moet gestig en hegter uitgebou word. Dit gaan oor die kind en die vooruitgang van die gemeenskap. Die skool word gesien as ´n entiteit op sy eie. Die kind word by die skool gesit; die ouer sien nie sy belangrike rol wat hy speel in die kind se opvoeding nie. Die ouer sien die kind as die skool se verantwoordelikheid. Die ouer kyk weinig in die boeke, want hulle dra nie kennis van die sillabus nie. Die ouer weet ook min wat in die skool aangaan. Min ouers het ´n verhouding met die skool)* (TEACHER 2).

Parents, on the other hand, expect the school to acknowledge their realities, and are used to the way the farm schools and other rural schools accommodate them. The parent community feels that attempts from the school to reach out to the parents are merely a sort of one-way communication. The school's agenda appears not to be what the needs and expectations of rural learners and parents are. # PARENT 4 commented as follows:

> *We, as parents, have to go into town [where the school is located]. Only when your child is in matric, do they come to the village for one night. It's difficult when you have to go to meet your child's teachers or go to budget meetings. We as parents are never there. People work on farms or my time is not my own. Especially in the hospitality industry (Ons as ouers moet uitgaan dorp [waar die skool geleë is] toe. Net wanneer jou kind in matriek is kom hulle een aand uit na die dorp. Dis moeilik wanneer jy moet gaan om jou kind se onderwysers moet gaan ontmoet of vir begrotingsvergaderings. Ons ouers is nooit daar nie. Mense werk op plase of my tyd is nie my eie. Veral in die gastebedryf)*.

Along the same lines # PARENT 1 complained:

> *The school doesn't come [to us], we have to go to the school. It also wasn't a parent meeting, more of an event where the children received diplomas. Miss Smith gave a*

short speech about children and the school. On Saturday the teachers come to collect the registration fees of the children for the new year. That's all, they don't come out like in the old days. That's what I'm saying, that's where the difference lies between the teachers of the old days and now (Die skool kom nie, ons moet skool toe gaan. Dit was ook nie 'n ouervergadering nie, meer 'n geleentheid waar die kinders diplomas gekry het. Juffrou Smith het so bietjie gepraat oor kinders en die skool. Saterdag kom die onderwysers om die registrasiegelde van die kinders vir die nuwe jaar te kom optel. Dis al, hulle kom nie meer uit soos eerste tyd nie. Dis wat ek sê, dis waar die verskil lê van die outydse en nou se onderwysers)

It is clear that a lack of parental involvement is not always a matter of disinterest, and that other factors play a role in the situation. Still, one parent-participant indicated that she would like to contribute to the school (*I would like to give back to the community, I want to be involved in the local school. I want to help problem children to sing. I want them to sing in different voice inflections (Ek wil graag terugploeg in die gemeenskap, ek wil betrokke wees by die dorpskool. Ek wil probleem kinders leer sing. Ek wil hulle leer om in stemme te sing)* (# PARENT 8)).

Parents specifically commented that the parent-teacher partnership (as resource) is not ultilised to its full potential and to the benefit of the learners. Schools appear not to display a thorough understanding of the context of the rural. Consequently, they plan teacher-parent meetings without the necessary considerations for rural people. This has the effect of projecting an image that schools do not assist rural communities in dealing with real problems. Similarly, the parents perceived their position as a confirmation that many schools do not show enough insight into the context of their primary interest, namely their children. The same is assumed for educational policy makers. In a sense the school has to reconnect to the real context of people living in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities.

5.3 DISCUSSION

From the first part of the chapter it is clear that social and cultural reproductive theories may shed light on reasons why historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners are adversely placed at the margins of society (*cf.* 5.2.4). Learners' background as being from the working class (the dominated group in society) has the effect that they access this cultural capital within their home environments (*cf.* 5.2.1; 5.2.2 and 5.2.3). On the other hand, schools expect middle-class cultural capital from learners (*cf.* 2.3.5.2). Bourdieu (1989:16) points out that

cultural capital can been seen as forms of cultural knowledge, competencies or dispositions (*cf.* 2.3.1; 2.3.2 and 2.3.3). It was clear from the interviews that the learners from historically disadvantaged Coloured communities are living in poverty (*cf.* 5.2.1; 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2). They do not possess the resources that they need, and the result is that they lack the cultural capital that is implicitly required by schools (*cf.* 5.2.4.5). According to Bourdieu (1989:16), learners are placed in a specific position in the social space according to their material posessions (in the first dimension). As a result of the representation and categorisation of these possessions, they are placed in the social space (in the second dimension) (*cf.* 2.3.1; 2.3.2; 2.3.3 and 2.3.5.1). Middle-class learners, on the other hand, do have the cultural capital that warrants them success at school (*cf.* 5.2.4.3).

Within the positioning of CRT and LatCrit theory, as well as GRT, the research opens up ways to perceive how these learners live and learn (*cf.* 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.4.3; 2.5.1 – 2.5.6). Learners particularly build on what the school can offer them regarding curriculum matters, school and parent connections, and community strengths in the form of community assets to support them in their school work (*cf.* 5.2.1.2). Historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners, however, have community cultural wealth (*cf.* 5.2.2.1) due to the experiences that they have in these communities. The lack of accumulated material goods gives working-class learners a certain disposition in life, and this can also be observed as symbolic property (*cf.* 2.3.1; 2.3.2; 2.3.5.1 and 2.4.2). Community cultural wealth such as aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistance capital helps learners in their growth and participation in the cultural field (*cf.* 1.5.1.1 and 2.3.1). Learner family capital can be seen for instance in how families live together in non-normative ways (*cf.* 5.2.2.1), and in the way that family history motivates learners to do better in life (*cf.* 5.2.3.2), how they support each other (*cf.* 5.2.4.3) and how they stand together (*cf.* 5.2.1.2). The data points to social capital in historically disadvantage Coloured communities. Examples include how different interested parties transport learners to places where they will receive good education, and how they support learners financially or otherwise to complete their schooling. There is also support regarding financing young people in the community to study further, and the support from community centres, to name but a few (*cf.* 5.2.1.2).

From the data it is clear that aspirational capital exists, albeit on different levels. Some learners from the disadvantaged communities have very high aspirations, and in the end they actually reach these (*cf.* 5.2.2.3). Other learners have dreams, but also realise that they have

to adjust their dreams according to the realities in their community. These learners show aspirational capital, which is part of their life world knowledge (*cf.* 5.2.2.3; 5.2.3.1; 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.4.6). Navigational capital is evident firstly when looking at how learners from the disadvantaged rural areas have to move to semi-urban areas where secondary education is provided (*cf.* 5.2.4.1). Learners from these communities are able to navigate their way through schooling, sometimes drawing from community cultural wealth at home (*cf.* 5.2.3.2). Learners also navigate their way in communities to obtain resources in order to be successful (*cf.* 5.2.1.2). Data revealed how the resistance capital of the learners come to the fore, for example moving to spaces where they are able to learn (*cf.* 5.2.1.2 and 5.2.2.1). Some of the forms of resistance can be perceived as negative, such as school resistance (*cf.* 5.2.4.4), while transformational resistance helps learners to overcome their circumstances (*cf.* 5.2.1.2 and 5.2.4.6). Many learners draw from role models and mentors in their families and the community, but also use them as a form of internal transformational resistance (*cf.* 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.3.2) to raise their consciousness of the world. The working-class environment of historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners provide these learners with a certain kind of disposition in life which educationalists and policy makers should take notice of (*cf.* 2.4).

To some extent school practices in the disadvantaged Coloured communities do manage to mediate the cultural capital needed to be successful, and the life world knowledge of learners, in an attempt to support them in school. The schools, for instance, use a guardian system and allow learners to complete assignments in class (as opposed to the practice in most privileged schools). The schools even provide the resources with which learners can do their assignments. Schools also provide additional classes and even provide transport for learners to attend these additional classes (*cf.* 5.2.4.5).

With regard to school practices, opportunities for home and school to connect and expand knowledge are endless. For example, the contexts of family lives, community lives, the journey from home to school and back, life at school and circumstances in semi-urban areas, places of work of parents and religious and spiritual practices at home and in schools as co-curriculum activities, all link with each other (*cf.* 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3). Educational policy makers and curriculum planners should take into account these contexts, and make the link with home ecologies and scientific practices in the classroom. These connections in schools should ultimately fit historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners and heighten the particular group of learners´ socialisation, development and consciousness of the world. The

work done by different individuals, organisations and community-based initiatives should be acknowledged, strengthened and built on in the endeavor to accomplished social justice.

The practice at school which explains and elaborates on positive relationships and strong teacher and learner relationships is a good example (Mills & Gale 2010:65). This is found to have positive influences on educational outcomes. In this research I found positive results in instances where teachers and principals showed interest in and communicated sincerely with learners as individuals. Teachers, parents and other community members are, in many instances, seen as transformational role models and transformational mentors (*cf.* 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.3.2). Within this historically disadvantaged context the fact that teachers and principals inspire learners to be someone in life, can have very positive results. To inspire and motivate others can be a very conscious, deliberate and sincere strategy to bring out the best in marginalised young people. Positive relationships with the school community should be established and developed in formal processes of educational decision-making.

Extended participation with parents in establishing new ways of communication and dealing with issues of interest and importance could also foster more productive relationships (*cf.* 5.2.4.7). The real context of the rural parent should be taken into consideration, and communication channels should be opened. Schools have to see parents in a new light, as an unmistakable partner which is valued for respected inputs and the improvement of the school. It is recommended that schools engage authentically with parents and learners in their rural disadvantaged contexts in order to understand their realities and needs without judging them (*cf.* 5.2.4.7). During such engagements the parents and learners must be receptive to also gain insight into how they can assist in mediating the divide.

Parents must also start to see their roles in their children's schools differently. They have to be there for their children, especially for support, and not merely to send the children off to educational experts. Parents have to take their role more seriously, and be ready to talk to teachers as a formal and informal method of outreach. They can also do more by controlling homework, assignments and helping with schoolwork, where possible, while trying to seek alternative ways to support their children. Importantly, parents have to create a safe and nurturing environment at home where children can become the persons that they are meant to be.

In the context of disadvantaged schools, additional classes could be more effective when life world knowledge and school knowledge codes align more clearly with each other (*cf.* 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5 and 3.6). As soon as educationalists and policy makers mediate and integrate life world knowledge and scientific knowledge, that is taking into account the context of historically disadvantaged rural in curriculum selection and pedagogies, these groups of learners will benefit from educational provision together with community initiatives (*cf.* 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5 and 3.6).

The needed mediation also goes beyond the level of the school and the community. The contexts that disadvantaged rural learners come from needs to be considered by the policy makers and curriculum planners at both provincial and national level. Social community problems cannot be solved by schools, and support from other government departments such as the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and the Department of Social Development should take hands with the schools. To better the circumstances in rural areas seems to be a combined and integrated process.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to uncover school practices in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities that could mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school, towards learner achievement. In order to accomplish this, data was interpreted and connected with various themes which emerged during the process of data analysis. These themes gave a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of the low academic achievement of learners in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural schools. However, the findings show that success in historically disadvantaged rural areas differs from the normative, Eurocentric notion of success. In addition, curricula and pedagogies in these schools have to acknowledge and recognise the experiential knowledges of these learners, and in particular the internal transformational resistance strategies that these learners display. Ultimately, there should be a mediation and integration of life world knowledge and powerful scientific knowledge by *inter alia* drawing from capabilities stemming from experiential knowledges and community capital in disadvantaged communities. If such mediation, some of which has already been uncovered in this chapter, can take place, it will result in school practices that could lead to better learner achievement.

In the chapter that follows, I build on the school practices that were uncovered in this chapter to offer critical comments regarding the mediation and integration of learners' life world knowledge and the existing school cultural capital towards learner achievement.

CHAPTER 6: COMMENTS, IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this final chapter is twofold, namely to answer my research question and to reflect on my research undertaking. The aim of this study was to consider *how* school practices can mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of schools in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities towards learner achievement. I first give a brief exposition of the way in which the chapters of this thesis feed into one another in order to provide a gradual build-up towards my attempt to answer my main research question. Following this exposition, I consider three ways in which school practices could mediate and integrate life world knowledge and existing school capital towards learner achievement. By implication, my comments will also feed into implications for schools in disadvantaged communities, and for the broader South African school curriculum. I conclude this chapter with a reflection on my research endeavour by indicating the challenges experienced, ideas for further research and personal and scholarly insights gained from this study.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER COHERENCE

The first step towards answering my research question was to present Bourdieu's theory on how the production and reproduction of social and cultural systems can lead to the creation and perpetuation of inequalities in society (*cf.* 2.3.2 and 2.3.5.2). Bourdieu´s work offers particular insights into the working-class context and, by implication, the context of learners living and learning in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured environments (*cf.* 2.3.1 – 2.3.4). The theoretical framework offers an explanation of how the perceived misalignment between working-class and middle-class knowledge codes, which adversely places working-class learners in ambiguous positions, develops (*cf.* 2.3.5). While middle-class cultural knowledge correlates with the knowledge codes cultivated in schools, such knowledge codes are in dissonance with the everyday knowledge of historically disadvantaged Coloured learners (*cf.* 2.3.5.2). This thinking of Bourdieu sheds light on why learners in marginalised working-class spaces do not excel at school (*cf.* 2.3.5.1). As critics argue that Bourdieu's theory leaves little room for radical thinking to bring about change in society, I also included Critical Race Theory,

Latina/o Critical Theory and the Generative Theory of Rurality (*cf*. 1.5.1.2, 1.5.1.3 and 2.2). By means of these theories, I was able to foreground various ways in which the subjectivity of historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners can be perceived (*cf*. 2.3; 2.4 and 2.5). Counterstorytelling by members of non-dominant groups is highlighted as a way to interrupt the transmission of official knowledge and dominant ideologies, while emphasising the importance of foregounding the diverse knowledges of historically disadvantaged rural people (*cf.* 2.4.1; 2.4.2 and 2.4.3.3).

Against the theoretical exposition of ways of thinking about historically disadvantaged rural Coloured people, I engage in a discussion of middle-class knowledge embodied in schools in Chapter 3 (*cf.* 3.2.3). The aim of this chapter was to reveal the theoretical underpinnings of knowledge production through South African school curricula, and to show how the misalignment between working-class life world knowledge and middle-class knowledge is perpetuated. With regards to the transformation of the racialised apartheid curriculum, the change to an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach signaled a break with a discriminatory past (*cf.* 3.2.1). However OBE, with its underlying theoretical basis of relativism, failed due to a preoccupation with everyday, cultural knowledge. As a consequence, it did not sufficiently prepare learners to engage with scientific forms of powerful knowledge so as to participate in society as a whole (*cf.* 3.2.1). After OBE the newly adopted *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)* introduced a different theoretical basis, namely social realism (*cf.* 3.2.3). The main criticism agains social realism is that a scientific, neutral and objective approach to curriculum implies that marginalised people cannot benefit from that curriculum. This is due to the fact of the misrecognition of their social, cultural and historical contexts (*cf.* 3.3.1). It is this misrecognition of the humanness of the learner in his/her educational "becoming" that foregrounded the appeal of Critical Realism as a more accurate and less distorted account of humans (*cf.* 3.3 and 3.4).

Taking into account the fact that schools have to connect to the life world and subjectivities of marginalised learners, I describe and justify the data-gathering method used in the study in Chapter 4. In this methodology chapter, I sketch the context of the historically disadvantaged surroundings of the small and larger towns in which the schools and communities are located (*cf.* 4.3.1 and 4.3.2). By doing research within a critical qualitative approach, I show how social, political and larger contextual factors can affect the ways in which individuals construct reality.

I opted for semi-structured interviews in order to highlight the perspectives of people in historically disadvantaged rural spaces.

After giving prominence to the context of historically disadvantaged rural people, Chapter 5 addresses the findings from the data generated through semi-structured interviews. In this chapter, I foreground the context of historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners to give a more nuanced understanding of their living spaces, and to uncover school practices which could integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of the school (*cf*. 1.3). The data revealed the life world knowledge of learners, that is learners´ ways of being, and how various school practices in historically disadvantaged environments can incorporate these learners' particular ways of being (*cf.* 5.1 – 5.4).

6.3 HOW SCHOOL PRACTICES CAN MEDIATE AND INTEGRATE THE LIFE WORLD KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNERS AND THE EXISTING CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SCHOOLS

In order to answer my research question, I considered various ways in which school practices can mediate and integrate the life world knowledge of learners and the existing cultural capital of schools. In my unpacking of these, I draw on the various chapters of this thesis to strengthen my understanding thereof, but also to critically comment on implications for the South African school curriculum. My discussion centres on three themes that has a bearing on the way in which school practices could integrate the life world knowledge of historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners and middle-class cultural knowledge of schools towards learner achievement, namely

- strengthening and extending community initiatives in the school;
- establishing renewed relationships between the child, parents and the school; and
- embracing transformational role models and transformational mentors in schools and the community.

Although school practices can contribute towards the mediation of life world knowledge and the cultural capital of the school, we should also consider certain implications for the school curriculum. The school curriculum has to provide the necessary support for such mediation

and I therefore conclude this section by focusing on certain implications for the school curriculum.

6.3.1 STRENGTHENING AND EXTENDING COMMUNITY INITIATIVES WITH THE SCHOOL

Poverty in rural areas not only position people to live at the margins, but is mainly visible in the daily struggles of historically disadvantaged Coloured people (*cf.* 5.2.1). In the absence of material possessions, and lacking the right kind of cultural capital and coinciding symbolic capital, the historically disadvantaged poor is socially positioned as the dominated in society (*cf.* 2.3.3). Issues such as hardship and a sense of hopelessness not only accompany a dominated position but are also translated into the school context. The life worlds of learners in rural environments do not align with the middle-class knowledge codes of the school and, by implication, the school remains responsible for the reproduction of social inequalities (*cf.* 2.3.5). Learners do not have the accumulated cultural capital to engage in the culture of the school, and due to this misalignment, they struggle to keep up academically. Most learners in disadvantaged communities display intense forms of resistance towards the school, and this further hinders their academic development. Schools in rural areas therefore have to strive for achieving success among all learners in order to counter failure, and concomitant hardship and hopelessness (*cf.* 2.5.1). This should be reached through different means and perspectives by different stakeholders. The issue of education in rural environments holds no straightforward answers.

One way to address the problems in rural areas is by means of community involvement in education, as it is perceived that the local context could have an impact on knowledge construction (*cf.* 2.5.1). It is therefore important for disadvantaged communities to be actively involved in their own struggles for the betterment of social conditions (*cf.* 2.2). In this regard, Critical Social Theory gives weight to history and culture, and a critical engagement in one´s own social world so as to contribute towards the transformation of oppressive practices. In addition, it can be assumed that school practices, which take the local context into consideration, could generate solutions relevant to the needs of rural learners (*cf.* 2.5.1 and 3.5).

In this particular study it was found that a whole spectrum of community initiatives is present in historically disadvantaged rural spaces (*cf.* 5.2.1.2). One example of such involvement is the operation of community centres that offer safe spaces and opportunities to advance learners' educational endeavours during school terms and holidays. For rural children on farms, support structures exist in the form of after-school support where they can do their homework under supervision, access computers and the internet, and do reading activities (*cf.* 5.2.1.2). After-school support and programmes offered by community centres during school holidays help to broaden learners' horizons and provide a blend of experiences and cultural capital that fosters their dispositions in life. Other forms of support comprise assistance with transport to and from school, the paying of school fees, bursaries for tertiary education, and university outreach programs, where tutors help with homework (*cf.* 5.2.1.2). Such initiatives are resources both within and outside the community, and are aimed at the development of young people´s leadership skills so that they will eventually be able to develop problem-solving strategies in their communities. Learners with a transformational habitus demonstrate agency towards utilising such assets to develop their potential and possibilities, which would, in turn, shape their self-confidence and enhance pockets of resilience (*cf.* 2.4.3.4).

Despite community initiatives and support, some learners choose not to participate, or find it difficult to participate. This is often the case with young girls who have to care for younger siblings at home, do house work and prepare meals for the family (*cf.* 5.2.2.1). Not all rural areas have this kind of support in their communities, and learners sometimes engage in negative behaviour such as violence drug and alcohol abuse, all of which impede their development (*cf.* 5.2.4.2). Parents and grandparents are often not educated and do not have adequate knowledge and skills to assist their children/grandchildren on their paths to higher education (*cf.* 5.2.3.2). Studying in the living spaces of historically disadvantaged places is also often difficult and not conducive, especially over weekends, due to loud music and the late night activities of neighbours (*cf.* 5.2.4.4). Learners who want to achieve academically find the school resistance of their peers particularly challenging, and they seem frustrated with the school's often seemingly non-involvement regarding negative forms of school resistance (*cf.* 5.2.4.4). The lack of support holds numerous consequences. One of these is that the problems and life issues which learners are confronted with in their home environments are often far

removed from the context of the school. Learners often find themselves in two different worlds, with little resemblance to each other.

In this study it was found that community initiatives and other support initiatives inside and outside these communities correspond to the life situations of historically disadvantaged rural learners. Such practices not only address the needs of rural learners in the form of providing food and places to do homework, but different stakeholders with an interest in these communities also contribute towards better learner achievement and excelling in life (*cf.* 5.2). As a consequence, I suggest that practices of community support should be strengthened and extended.

It is suggested that individual government organisations form links with schools and provide financial support to those learners who struggle financially. This should however not be a simple once-off payment to learners. It is suggested that relationships are built with these learners in the form of mentoring programmes, and the monitoring of their progress at school. It is assumed that support of this kind can serve to transform an often hopeless situation for learners, by developing a heightened consciousness about the world. It is imperative, however, that networks with community-based centres and organisations are based on the identification of academic needs by learners, parents and teachers. The relationship between these parties should be based on multi-dimensional communication networks to support learners in various ways in order to help them achieve academic success. It is assumed that although rurality is often perceived as passive and backward, the strengthening of such ties could draw on the perception that rurality can also be seen as transformative, and capable of changing behaviour and affecting the motivation of people (*cf.* 2.5.2.3). By drawing on the vitality of rurality, agency can be evoked as a series of behaviours and dispositions that can point to activism. Learners in rural areas usually do not have access to cultural capital in their home environments. It is therefore imperative to create the spaces for individual learners to express a kind of agency. In this regard it is suggested that university students from urban centres visit these areas in order to tutor learners so that they can gain access to the knowledge or culture capital of these tutors. As such, learners can obtain knowledge which their parents, grandparents or guardians do not possess.

There are, however, important implications to be considered for the strengthening and extension of community initiatives. It is vitally important for rural communities to identify and name their specific problems and struggles. Rural communities will only be able to meaningfully engage in initiatives with communities when they understand how such support systems can address their distinctive needs (*cf.* 2.5.3). As such, large-scale participation, including interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary discussions in local communities, is critical to confront the challenges of the rural. Schools should not only name their realities, issues and problems, but they should also acknowledge their own sets of properties which give them strength and power (*cf.* 2.3.1). Schools and communities have to be extremely creative in attaining and utilising resources to not only counter failure, hardship and hopelessness, but to also facilitate academic achievement (*cf.* 2.5.1). While hidden resources within rural spaces should be uncovered and utilised for development to take place, schools must also recognise the work of different community centres, trusts and other establishments towards improved learner achievement. It is assumed that by fostering strong relationships with intermediates within the community, schools can enable the ability of learners to sustain themselves both as subjects of the environment and as agents who are able to transform the environment (*cf.* 2.5.2). Schools should therefore exhibit agency by drawing on hidden resources and existing networks to the benefit of learners and their environments. Another important prerequisite is that partnerships between schools and different stakeholders, whether inside or outside the community, should be formally organised. Connections with regards to, for example, transport for learners, bursaries to pursue tertiary studies, and sport and other support, should formally be a built-in part of schools in disadvantaged communities. In other words, these networks should be made part of the governance of these schools.

Community initiatives have the potential to not only support learners from poor families, but also to assist them in creating a conducive environment within which to achieve academic success. Community initiatives originate from powerful social groups who can offer accumulated capital to the the working class so as to help them to fulfill their potential, and to progress in life (*cf.* 2.3.4). While more powerful groups in society can form alliances with working-class groups (*cf.* 2.3.4) and subsequently provide resources, schools and learners in disadvantaged rural communties need to take up these opportunities to build on their life world knowledge and cultural capital, and to cultivate a particular disposition in life.

Consequently, these community initiatives provide learners with the culture, which is not readily found in their home environments, to be able to mediate and integrate their life world knowledge with the knowledge codes in school to achieve academic success.

6.3.2 ESTABLISHING RENEWED RELATIONS BETWEEN CHILD, PARENT AND THE SCHOOL

Community involvement in schools assumes that parents should be involved in the process of their children´s schooling (*cf.* 2.5.1). This is mainly in the form of assisting with homework, attending teacher and parent meetings, and supporting fundraising events of the school. It seems from this study that parents, guardians and grandparents in historically disadvantaged communities support their children in other ways, and not necessarily in the way that the school expects from them. Parents are often willing to change jobs to be home more. They also try to provide the best food and clothes, and help with money for transport to enable children to attend additional activities at school (*cf.* 5.2.2.2; 5.2.2.3 and 5.2.3.2). Some parents show will and determination to support their children, and are willing to organise transport to get them from their homes on farms to attend important school meetings (*cf.* 5.2.3.8). Although parents are sensitive to the needs of their children, they experience difficulties when it comes to supporting their children. It seems that parents and guardians are not always in the position to spend enough time with their children, or are often unable to create a climate of learning in their homes due to their working conditions (*cf.* 5.2.2). Parents from rural areas often have difficulty in attending teacher and parent meetings, and when attending these meetings, they regularly find that the school does not consider and address their distinctive needs (*cf.* 5.2.3.7). It has also been revealed that parents, grandparents and guardians do not always have the necessary cultural knowledge and skills to help their children with their school work, yet they hold high expectations for their children to achieve academically (*cf.* 5.2.2.3).

Despite the above-mentioned difficulties, both teachers and children have certain expectations regarding parental involvement in the schooling of their children. The general expectation is that there should be more involvement (*cf.* 5.2.4.3 and 5.2.4.7). Parental support is very important as it is key for the development and academic success of the child (*cf.* 2.5.1). Learners indicated that they need more from their parents and do not simply want to be told that they have to perform well in school (*cf.* 5.2.3.2). In fact, they are reliant on the interest and total support of parents, or of grandparents, who in many instances have to play

a parental role (*cf.* 5.2.4.2). Traditionally it is expected from parents to assist their children at home. Parents struggle to support their children with regards to the current curriculum, however, because most parents and guardians do not have the cultural capital that the school requires (*cf.* 5.2.3.2). The findings indicate that teachers take up additional responsibilities and provide learners with learning and research resources during class times in order to help them to complete assessment tasks (*cf.* 5.2.4.5). The school and community have to establish closer relations so that possibilities for the mediation and integration of working-class life world knowledge and the school's middle-class knowledge can be realised so that learners can achieve academically.

In order to mediate life world knowledge and school knowledge, it is important that renewed relations are established between the child, parents and the school. Central to such an establishment is the importance of voice. A deficit notion of marginalised people´s culture feeds into the silencing of people´s voices, and they are often excluded from the decision-making processes of the school (*cf.* 2.4.3.2). In order to counter pervasive notions about people living at the margins, the authentic voices of Coloured people (learners, parents and teachers) are necessary in the quest for learners to succeed in life. While the voices of parents or guardians are required for the establishment of sound relationships (*cf.* 2.4.3), parents and the school should not assume they know the needs of the children. Children should also be given the opportunity to give voice their needs and difficulties in life.

Another issue is the parent-teacher disjoint. Parents feel that the school does not actually care enough. On the other hand, teachers have a perception of low parental involvement. Schools should therefore aim to create a space where parents can feel that their perspectives, especially as rural parents, are acknowledged and understood. Such recognition is imperative for sound relationships, because the social order is maintained and perpetuated by racial subordination and the perception that marginalised people in society are not valued, heard and included in the same measure as the dominant in society (*cf.* 2.4.1). In addition, such recognition can also assist parents to not experience the school as an institution that acts according to its own agenda. I am of the opinion that more positive relationships with the school community should be established and developed in the existing formal processes of educational decision-making and governance. The voices of parents and learners should be

heard, but there should also be an acknowledgment of the rural realities of the disadvantaged. It is assumed that although poor families are still captured in adverse circumstances in certain rural areas, such relationships could support parents and learners in exhibiting agency to transform their life circumstances. In this regard, renewed platforms should be established in existing structures which could provide learners, parents and teachers with a voice to counter views regarding their positions of marginalisation. By doing so their ways of knowing could also be included in the system of world knowledge. Additionally, these different role players should feel safe to voice their expectations and concerns in an environment conducive of mutual respect and caring in order to foster stronger relations with each other.

Central to the establishment of renewed relationships is the acknowledgment that parents' life world knowledge is crucial in understanding issues and problems in disadvantaged environments. What counts for success for parents living in historically disadvantaged spaces is an important indicator of how parents support their children. In order to transform the education system, the different role players need to resist structures of domination and rather build on environments which signal caring. Schools and communities therefore have to work together, from the inside and the outside of communities, to build on renewed relationships to create environments which are transformative in such a way that the mediation and integration of life world knowledge and middle-class knowledge of the school can take place. As a result, learners could benefit from these renewed relationships – especially through school governance - to ultimately achieve academic success.

6.3.3 EMBRACING TRANSFORMATIONAL ROLE MODELS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL MENTORS IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITIES

Role models play a significant part in the development of children, as they help to give direction and demonstrate to individuals of what they can become in life. Of particular importance, role models demonstrate certain attitudes, especially when someone has to take important decisions regarding life situations and choosing a career path (*cf.* 5.2.3.2). Learners in historically disadvantaged rural communities, however, do not have many role models who can emphasise the importance and value of education (*cf.* 1.1). The data reveals that the absence of traditional role models in certain rural areas might be one of the reasons why many learners do not pursue paths of tertiary education and often remain on the farm to become

farm workers like their parents (*cf.* 5.2.2.4; 5.2.4.2). To remain on the farm means that they will most probably also become trapped in the cycle of poverty.

Many young people in marginalised spaces have transformational mentors who use their own experiences and expertise to help guide their socialisation and development. The data revealed that transformational role models and mentors are often parents, grandparents and teachers who inspire learners and provide them with the tools to act with human agency (*cf.* 5.2.3.1). Teachers and principals often actively inspire learners to make certain choices in life, give them the confidence to act on their own, and provide direction through their own experiences and successes. Parents, grandparents and sometimes community members play a significant role in influencing young people through their family histories, religious practices and spirituality to follow certain pathways in life to achieve academic success and to ultimately progress in life.

Despite positive experiences with role models by learners, it remains important to fill the gap between life world knowledge and school knowledge codes. Given the importance of a strong commitment to social justice, existing practices which children share with their parents and grandparents could be extended to recreational programmes in schools. Through such programmes learners can be offered healthy options as opposed to engagement in drug and alcohol activities, gang-related activities and all other negative issues present in poverty-striken areas. In addition, it is important to create the space where transfromational role models and mentors can offer a liberating or transformative response to racial, gender and class oppression (*cf.* 2.4.3.2). Although the findings indicate that religious and spiritual practices at home and at prayer groups at school supplement each other (*cf.* 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.3.2), the extention of such practices and the inclusion of camping tours, hiking clubs and other opportunities that the school offers as part of their co-curricular programme, can heighten the consciousness of these learners in the world. As sport and cultural activities can facilitate important values and help to build strong character (*cf.* 5.2.4.6), the inclusion of such co-curricular activities offers learners the opportunity to imagine other worlds, and this could possibly inspire them to do better.

Another implication for the school is to counterbalance learners' struggle to engage in a curriculum that is Eurocentric and which does not speak to their life world and experiences (*cf.* 3.4). While historically disadvantaged rural learners cannot relate to this kind of curriculum (*cf.* 5.2.4.2 and 5.2.4.3), the important transformational role of teachers is foregrounded. The findings reveal that schools do intervene and assist learners with additional classes as an intervention strategy during the week and over weekends in the more difficult subjects (*cf.* 5.2.4.5). It is however important for transformational role models and mentors to not only think of rurality as a space where people live. The importance of transformational role models really come to fruition when learners in disadvantaged communities are perceived as active and capable of constructing their own knowledge that is different from urban experiences in order to find solutions to problems (*cf.* 2.5.3). As such, a transformational response to racial, class and rural oppression is to actively seek resources, use hidden resources, and work from both inside and outside communities. By embracing transformational role models and mentors, learners can be engaged in additional and co-curricular activities. This will help them to accumulate cultural capital (from transformational role models and mentors) and community cultural wealth (from people within communities) to mediate and integrate life world knowledge and middle-class knowledge of the school.

6.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM

Throughout the history of the South African curriculum the *human* in curriculum matters was continuously denied. Particularly during the colonial and the succeeding apartheid regimes, people of colour suffered the consequences of racially discriminative practices (*cf.* 3.4). Despite transformation by the newly democratic government to achieve egalitarian ideals, numerous curriculum designs did not bring about the intended outcomes for all population groups. Although the current curriculum, *CAPS,* envisioned to bring about educational justice through powerful scientific knowledge to all learners, it only advances middle-class learners as it is the middle-class culture that strongly correlates with the culture of the school (*cf.* 3.2.2.1). The main critique against *CAPS* is subsequently that the formal scientific knowledge constituted in the curriculum aligns with the culture of the middle class (*cf.* 3.2.2.1). As a result, the working-class culture of marginalised learners does not correlate with the culture of the school. By implication marginalised learners do not have the same opportunities as middle-class learners to achieve academically.

In Chapter 3 it was suggested that the misrecognition of the humanness of the learner in his/her educational "becoming" should be foregrounded by a strong appeal for a more accurate and less distorted account of humans. In this regard, Critical Realism offers insights into social and historical accounts that place humans in adverse positions (*cf.* 3.3.2). It therefore becomes important that school practices, as examples of life world knowledge, have to be unmasked in order to align the culture of the school more closely with the context of learners in historically disadvantaged schools. The focus should be to observe the *human in context.* As such, democratic debates in education have to think *through* the human, and a lesser number of inaccurate social beliefs of the human could allow for more democratic values in society (*cf.* 1.3.1; 3.3). In order for learners to be able to relate to the culture of the school, a curriculum that contemplates ethics has to be developed. This would be a curriculum that includes other ways of being, contrary to the normative western norms of living (*cf.* 2.4.3). The context of historically disadvantaged people, in particular, has to be exposed, told and retold, which will signal strategies of resistance and caring (*cf.* 2.4.1). Additionally, through the frame of GTR, the life experiences and subjectivities of people living on the margins of society need to be underscored in curriculum selection and pedagogies (*cf.* 2.5.2.1 – 2.5.2.4).

This study highlights how better school practices, in relation to the life worlds of historically disadvantaged people, can mediate and integrate life world knowledge and scientific forms of knowledge within the school curriculum. While a critical engagement in one´s own social world can recognise that the current state of affairs does not exhaust all possibilities (*cf.* 2.2), the possibilities for social interventions in historically disadvantaged rural communities are legio. Framed against this denial of the working-class culture in the current curriculum, it becomes imperative that the school practices indicated in the preceeding exposition (cf. 6.3.1 – 6.1.3) should be considered as part of the life world knowledge of people in historically disadvantaged communities. School practices such as the strengthening and extending of community initiatives with the school, establishing renewed relationships between the child, parents and the school, and embracing transformational role models and transformational mentors in schools and the community are examples of life world knowledges which should be included in systems of knowledge in an attempt to universalise all kinds of knowledge. Such school practices have the potential to better align the life world knowledge of learners with the culture of the school. The mediation and integration of the life world knowledge of people

in disadvantaged communities with scientific forms of knowledge could help to construct environments where learners can engage in additional and co-curricular activities so that they can foster dispositions which could support them to connect to the culture of the school. By implication, a closer connection to the culture of the school could assist learners to achieve academically (cf. 3.4). It is my contention that such school practices, experiences and life worlds should form part of curriculum selection. It is therefore imperative that policy makers should take notice of these practices and life world knowledges, in order to make it part of the life world of the middle class, which is currently strongly represented in curricula. In this way, the integration of the standpoints of marginalised learners in the curriculum will not only enable them to relate to the curriculum, but will also give them an equal chance to progress in life.

It should be noted that in order for marginalised people´s life worlds to be featured more strongly in curriculum debates, historically disadvantaged people have an obligation to share their stories and reveal their experiences of racial histories (*cf.* 2.4.1). By naming the experiences and views of marginalised people's specific worlds not only places the human as a racially oppressed being at the center, but enables an understanding of oppressive and exploitative practices which forced historically disadvantaged people to the margins of society (cf. 3.5). Such an understanding is imperative for establishing a connection between inaccurate beliefs about people and socially unjust practices, and the motivation for societal change, including aligning the life world knowledge of historically disadvantaged learners with the culture of the school. The contention is that the strengthening and extending of practices in schools and communities which differ from normative, westernised school practices (that fit the needs of these learners and tackle injustices of the past), could ultimately enhance learner achievement in historically disadvantaged communities. Connections between schools and communities should inform curriculum content and pedagogies to align more clearly to the educational becoming of the historically disadvantaged rural learner. Policies and practices need to acknowledge marginalised learners´ universalised life world knowledge that is their cultural capital, to enhance historically disadvantaged Coloured rural learners´ academic achievements. The appeal is therefore for a different kind of curriculum in which the life experiences of racialised people and the assets of the rural become features of curriculum design and knowledge production.

6.5 IN REFLECTION

As with research studies in general, the undertaking of this study was met with certain challenges and limitations. While the challenges provided the space for creative solutions in order to address and overcome them, the limitations of the study opened up new opportunities for research. At the same time, I consider it important to reflect on my journey as a scholar and on personal insights obtained during this journey.

6.5.1 CHALLENGES

In the undertaking of this study I experienced various challenges, ranging from logistic matters to challenges with regards to the actual generation of data, challenges concerning my insider status and issues regarding my theoretical framework.

One of the immediate challenges I experienced was the fact that I am currently residing in the Free State Province, while I undertook my study in the Western Cape Province. As my research involved working with schools in the Western Cape, especifically Coloured learners living on farms and in small towns attending semi-urban schools in historically disadvantaged Coloured communities, I had to solicite funding to enable school visits. Fortunately, the Postgraduate School of my university launched an initiative which funded my study, enabling me to undertake the research. The funds allowed me to take leave from my work as an academic and to do my empirical study in the various towns where the schools were located and the participants resided. As a Thuthuka grant holder of the National Research Foundation, funds allowed me to present parts of the theoretical framework of this study on national and international platforms.

When visiting the five schools in the Western Cape, I was confronted with many difficulties regarding the data generation process. In the first place I was confronted with limited time to do the interviews. I also experienced that some principals were reluctant to give access to their worlds, despite having agreed to the research request. Some principals made it extremely difficult to set up an appointment - they would agree to a meeting, then cancel, causing much frustration on my side to obtain access to the school.

Another challenge was that one of the principals was inclined to attempt to watch over the interviews from time to time, especially when the interviews were conducted with learners. I was initially surprised that the specific principal tried to "interfere" with the reseach process, although she was supposed to be familiar with research procedures. I realised that the principal had concerns with regards to her reputation as a school principal, and during my interview with this particular principal I tried to persuade her not to feel threated in any way, as I intended no harm. I reiterated the aim of the research so as to place the focus on the value of the study.

I taught for many years at a local secondary school in one of the communies. As a result, the parents in that particular community were very cautious of what they as parents, were communicating about their families. As an insider in most of the cases, I had to be extremely cautious not to be biased because of my prior knowledge of the people and the community life. I had to be deeply reflexive throughout the study about my own views and positionality (*cf.* 4.2.1.3). I also had to remain aware of how the participants projected themselves, particularly in terms of their loyalty towards their famlilies. To counter bias, I interviewed a relative large proportion of different sets of participants to obtain more trustworthy accounts of the realities of the participants.

I also experienced challenges when I conducted interviews with some learners. Some participants were not entirely honest. Some, for example, mentioned that in the afternoons they have to care for siblings or other younger relatives, while in reality it may be their own child they have to care for. Most learners were also silent with regards to personal problems experienced at home. As a researcher I had to be patient, persistent and professional to eventually win the trust of the participants. Conducting the interviews in the home language of the participants was helpful in gaining their trust, and it also had the advantage of immediately comprehending the issues under discussion.

Another interesting challenge, but also an opportunity for new insights, relates to my theoretical framework. When I was granted the opportunity to do the empirical study, the theoretical framework of the study was not yet completed. At first I felt that it was a burden to work on the theoretical framework while I was busy with the empirical study. During my interactions with the participants I discovered that the traditional black/white paradigm in

examining race and race relations did not correspond with the experiences of Coloured learners. The participants explicitly stated that they do not encounter white people in their daily lives, but only in their working environments and then mostly only as employers and clients. Consequently, the data that I received from my empirical study did not relate at all with regards to direct race relations and racial oppression in a theoretical sense. Nonetheless, while I was expanding my readings on CRT, I encountered a connection with CRT and LatCrit theory, and realised that this theory captures the experiences of historically disadvantaged Coloured learners more accurately. I subsequently realised the significance of CRT and LatCrit theory for understanding the life world experiences of these learners, their strategies of resistance, and how these strategies can help them to attain academic success.

An additional challenge was the fact as that as a "new" theory of rurality, the literature on GTR is limited in relation to publications. I had to rely strongly on a small number of journal articles that were available for my use in this regard. The studies on the theoretical basis of *CAPS* were also extremely limited. I could only find the study of Zipin, Fataar and Brennan (2015b) to inform me about Social Realism and *CAPS.* However, this challenge gave me the opportunity to contribute to knowledge generation in this particular field.

6.5.2 Suggestions for further research

In this research I foregrounded the perspectives of learners, parents, teachers, principals and community workers to explore how life world knowledge and scientific knowledge can be integrated in order for the historically disadvantaged learner to achieve academic success. A suggestion for further research is to obtain the perspectives from school governing body members, district officials and possibly officials from the provincial educational department. The purpose of such a study would be to extend the scope of the research focus, and to indicate how other role players could enhance thinking on the integrating of life world knowledge and scientific forms of knowledge in the school curriculum.

I further propose that research is undertaken in other historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities, and also in historically disadvantaged black communities in the country. The aim of such a study would be to investigate occurances in these communities which could feed into the improvement of the academic endeavours of marginalised learners.

While the focus of this particular study was on school practices as forms of life world knowledge to enhance educational performances of learners in historically disadvantaged spaces, research could be extended on other aspects in marginalised places. Research on other facets of schooling could support the integration of life world knowledge with scientific forms of knowledge so that the marginalised can achieve academic success.

6.5.3 SCOLARLY AND PERSONAL INSIGHTS

Through conducting this research, I grew immensely as an academic. This research enhanced my ability to logically reason my academic arguments, and to develop the capability to write in a logical, critical and reflective manner. I also learnt to deal with constructive feedback from my supervisors, which assisted me in my academic development. As a lecturer employed at a tertiary institution, this newly gained academic knowledge and skills will be handy in providing study guidance to my own postgraduate students. I realised that perseverance, hard work and determination are necessary to proceed in accomplishing personal goals.

On a more personal level, while conducting the interviews I experienced the daily life experiences of learners and parents living in historically disadvantaged rural localities first-hand. Although I enjoyed insider status in the sense that I had previously taught in a disadvantaged communty, my middle-class status prevented me from gaining real insight into the actual life world of my disadvantaged learners. Experiencing the hardships of living in disadvantaged localities made me realise that parents in these spaces do not have the means of professionals and middle-class people. However, I also come under the impression that these parents and guardians have their own sets of indicators for what counts as success for their children. My experience was that parents in these communities will do anything they can so that their children can also achieve academically and be successful in their lives. Another important insight gained from my study is that most children will work hard if the environment is conducive for them to succeed and live fulfilling lives.

6.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this study was to consider how school practices could integrate the life world and scientific knowledge of historically disadvantaged rural Coloured learners to achieve academically. In order to reach this aim, the study unfolded in different chapters, each feeding

into the other in order to work towards answering the research question. Although the exposition of the overview of this study (*cf.* 6.2) indicates the interconnection between the various chapters, it should be noted that each chapter corresponded and responded to a specific research question. A literature study was undertaken (*cf.* Chapter 2) in response to the question "How can Bourdieu´s social theory, as well as the work of other theorists in the CRT and GTR positions be understood in the context of school education?". The second question, namely "What school knowledge is embodied in the theoretical underpinnings of resent and current curriculum provisions?", was probed in Chapter 3. In an attempt to answer this question an additional literature review was embarked on to offer an account on relativism, social realism and critical realism in order to uncover knowledge codes in curricula. In line with the third question "Which school practices in historically disadvantaged Coloured rural communities could integrate the life world knowledge of learners and existing cultural capital of schools, towards learner achievement?", data was generated from semi-structured interviews. The empirical part of this study generated various insights from learners, parents, teachers, principals and community workers on school practices that could narrow the gap between the life world knowledge of learners and school knowledge codes (*cf.* Chapter 5). The last research question, namely "What critical comments can be made regarding the mediation and integration of learners´ life world knowledge and the existing school cultural capital towards learner achievement?" was answered in Chapter 6. Comments were presented with regard to the mediation and integration of life world knowledge and school knowledge codes, specifically to integrate diverse knowledge into curricula in order to enable democratic debates in education. By suggesting various ways for the mediation and integration of life world knowledge and school knowledge codes, comments and implications were presented. Although suggestions with regards to particular practices have the potential to improve learner achievement, it remains important that curriculum debates should consider a different kind of curriculum that acknowledges and incorporated the assets of the rural and the life experiences of historically disadvantaged and marginalised people. Following from the logical sequence of the preceding chapters, I considered three issues for addressing the main research question in this chapter. In this regard I commented on strengthening and extending community initiatives with the school, establishing renewed relations between the child, parents and the school, and embracing transformational role models and transformational mentors in schools and the community (*cf.* Chapter 6).

I conclude by recognising the considerable strengths, assets and hidden resources in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities which are educative and supportive with regard to learners in schools. Schools and community members should take on initiatives to jumpstart or to extend existing support systems. These strengths should be made part of formal processes in schools and community resources by acknowledging, extending and working with these practices. When the diverse knowledges in historically disadvantaged rural Coloured communities are linked to scientific and powerful knowledge, a focus on ethics could bring about social justice in society.

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