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*Experiences and Choices: A Battle of the Habitus –  
Working Class Pupils and Positive Outcomes*

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Doctor of Education

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## Abstract

The importance of supporting and acknowledging the potential barriers young people from socially disadvantaged areas face has always been of importance in educational research and policy in Scotland, and the UK; for example through the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge and the work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This research aims to understand young people's aspirations from the lens of Bourdieu's *Theory of Reproduction*, in particular his concept of *habitus* and its associated dispositions. This research develops the work on aspirations in relation to understanding how factors such as family, school and social class influence young people's *habitus*, dispositions and aspirations. A clear link is found between a young person's *primary habitus* and the role of the school in transforming this *habitus*. Furthermore, this research also contributes to literature and knowledge on using Bourdieu's theory as method, where a unique approach to using Bourdieu's concepts is developed to give a theoretical, methodological lens with which to analyse data under three high-level themes: dispositions, educational field and *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations. This research finds that it is possible for a young person to move between these types of aspirations and that the school and its associated partners are key in transforming young people's *habitus* by using the school's institutional *habitus* and opportunities offered by *Developing the Young Workforce* policy in Scotland. Various example of good practice are identified where this has been successful and key recommendations in relation to supporting youth transitions are made in relation to ways the school can support young people to transform their *habitus*, should this be appropriate for individual young people. This is demonstrated through one participant whose *habitus* was transformed in order to achieve his goals.

This research is situated within an interpretivist paradigm, focusing on quantitative methods, considering liberal and neoliberal influences on policy and education. The above aims are achieved through one-to-one semi-structured interviews using pre-prepared vignettes, involving young people aged 16-17 years old from a school in Glasgow where over 90% of the pupil population and their families live in the two poorest socio-economic groupings, as highlighted by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The aspirations of the individual participants are also considered in relation to their intended and actual aspirations and related to *doxic*, *habituated*, and *emergent* aspirations. The research in this dissertation is contextualised within the personal and professional experiences of the researcher and how their background was a catalyst for carrying out this research.

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## Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abbreviations

- CES (Career Education Standard)
- CfE (Curriculum for Excellence)
- DYW (Developing the Young Workforce)
- Ed.D. (Doctor of Education)
- EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance)
- ESRG (Education Services Research Group)
- EU (European Union)
- JRF (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- GCPH (Glasgow Centre for Population Health)
- NPA (National Progression Award)
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
- OS2 (Open Studies Two)
- PA (Pedagogic Action)
- PAu (Pedagogic Authority)
- PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)
- PW (Pedagogic Work)
- QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis)
- RAE (Research Assessment Exercise)
- REF (Research Excellence Framework)
- RUK (Rest of United Kingdom, taken to mean England, Northern Ireland and Wales)
- SEP (School-Employer Partnership)
- SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)
- TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey)
- UN (United Nations)
- WPS (Work Placement Standard)
- WTO (World Trade Organisation)

# Chapter One

## Introduction and Background

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This Chapter explores the background to the dissertation including the research questions and focus of the research. Personal and professional relevance will be outlined to provide context, including the challenges the researcher faced growing up in an area of social deprivation in Glasgow and how education acted as a catalyst for change. This will be linked to the current study. Furthermore, an outline of the dissertation will be given.

### 1.1 Research Introduction and Summary

This section details the background and focus of the research, defining key terms in relation to Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction* and his concept of *habitus*. The impetus for carrying out this research is due to the ever-increasing focus on raising attainment and increasing positive destinations that is evident in Scottish Government education policy, particularly around the development and implementation of *Developing the Young Workforce* (DYW). Indeed, Reay (2018) commented in the foreword to *'Internationalising Perspectives on Theorising Aspirations'* that aspirations are currently misunderstood and Stefan Collini stated that the early twenty-first century should be known as *'The Aspirational Age'* (p. xvii). In Scotland, DYW policy is contributing towards this aspirational age by aiming to prepare young people for the world of work regardless of their aspiration (Scottish Government, 2014).

Moreover, Reay (2018) commented that with the increasing dominance of neoliberal policy, young people's aspirations are increasingly being considered from the viewpoint of the individual and closely related to social class. Reay (2018) stated a key aspect of aspirations defined from a Bourdieusian perspective is that: aspirations must consider the political, economic and social contexts, where aspirations mean different things to different people depending on these contexts. Thus using Bourdieu provides a framework with which to address the research questions below to develop a Bourdieusian methodological approach. Furthermore, Stahl *et al.* (2018) stated that while Bourdieu saw aspirations as socially embedded, his concepts, or tools, allow researchers to investigate how individuals come to understand aspirations that either match their thinking and

histories, or that ‘*are not for the likes of us*’ (p. 7). This links with *habitus* as Bourdieu suggested, that aspirations are reproduced by the *habitus* through the dispositions; the way of acting, thinking and taken-for-granted assumptions and values, that guide the way individuals operate in the social world (Stahl *et al.* 2018). It is in this sense that this dissertation investigates the issue of aspirations in relation to young people’s dispositions and the way they are affected by the economic, historical, social and political contexts in an area of low socio-economic status in Glasgow, contributing to the work on ways that the school can help young people transform their *habitus*. This research seeks to address two research questions:

1. How are young people’s dispositions, associated with *habitus*, affected through factors such as the school, social class and the family in relation to their aspirations, in an area of low socio-economic status in Glasgow?
2. To what extent can the school assist young people in transforming their *habitus*?

Policy and those who lead on policy, according to Reay (2018), frequently tell us that the aspirations of the working class are low and need to be raised while those in the middle and upper classes are aspirationally rich, which is not necessarily the case as will be highlighted in the discussion section of this dissertation. Throughout this dissertation reference will be made to various positive destinations, for example Higher and Further Education, apprenticeships and employment to highlight key points and areas of good practice. It is important to point out that no one of these positive destinations is seen as a better option compared to another, for example, an apprenticeship or training is just as valid and positive as Higher or Further Education. Reay (2018) also linked research on aspirations to *habitus*, in that it is important to understand how the dispositions associated with an individual’s *habitus* affect aspirations. This dissertation will consider this through a brief examination of the policy environment in Scotland and the economic and social background of the school and the individuals involved in the study. The policy context of the dissertation is outlined in Section 1.3.

Murphy and Costa (2016) described these dispositions as being produced, or reproduced, as a result of the economic, social and cultural structures that individuals may either identify with or distance themselves from. Furthermore, coming from an area of low socio-economic status the researcher has a personal interest in the battles, challenges and constraints that young people from these areas must face in order to realise their aspirations. This is explored further in Section 1.4. Indeed, it was facing up to and

overcoming these challenges that inspired the researcher to a career in teaching, so that he could help similar young people maximise their aspirations. This is easier said than done due to the complexity of everyday life for some of these young people. The barriers and constraints young people may face are considered as a running theme through the dissertation.

Costa *et al.* (2018) stated that, with reference to the work of Pierre Bourdieu, while much work has been given over to Bourdieu's theoretical concepts, less work has been given over to the methodological use of Bourdieu's concepts, for example *habitus*. This was confirmed by Murphy (2018) who edited a collection of papers that considered how to methodologically apply Bourdieu's theory to study aspirations. This is considered more in Chapter Four. Dumais (2002) stated that much work using Bourdieu's tools has focused on the concept of cultural capital and has ignored *habitus*. Therefore, an aim of this dissertation research is to expand the knowledge and practice on using Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as a methodological framework, in particular the dispositions associated with *habitus*; that is the way of thinking, acting and behaving that can affect individual aspirations. Moreover, this dissertation will contribute to the knowledge on *habitus* by identifying how *habitus* is affected through social class, family and the school and these will be related to Zipin *et al.*'s. (2015) concepts of *habituated*, *doxic* and *emergent* aspirations to transform the *habitus* and hence type of aspiration. These concepts are developed more in Chapter Three. In determining how to operationalize *habitus* as a methodological tool, and not just as a concept that is applied to research findings, the researcher considered the work of other Ed.D. researchers who have used Bourdieu's theory as method. This is highlighted by the work of Rawlinson (2017) who used the concept of *habitus* to analyse the '*deeply held values and attitudes*' (p. 56) that participants have, that can be used to justify their actions and practice. Rawlinson's (2017) study was examining Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, *capital* and *field* in relation to the impact of a dual-sector institution that offers both HE and FE courses on non-traditional, working class, students' relevance, how well they valued this education and how well they fitted in to such institutions.

Stahl (2015a) described *habitus* as a tool that can be used at a time of increasing neoliberal influences on policy to explore aspirations in relation to social context by taking account of individuals' past and present experiences. Costa *et al.* (2018) reminded researchers that the dispositions under investigation are open to interpretation. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* has been chosen because, as explained by Costa *et al.* (2018), it allows

one to explore the processes of social reproduction and transformation, while taking into account the historical and external factors that can influence change, both from the point of view of inhibiting and encouraging change. Furthermore, Gale and Lingard (2015) cited Diane Reay and her utilisation of *habitus* as a concept that can be used to link individuals inner world of the self with the social and structural processes that shape their position in society. Gale and Lingard (2015), in a study into aspirations, further stated that Bourdieu is one of the most widely applied sociology of education theorists, and that his theory can be used to push the boundaries of research in sociology of education. *Habitus*, according to Costa *et al.* (2018), is also a flexible concept that is driven by the research questions of a particular research project. The construct of Bourdieu's (1977) theory of social reproduction is examined in more detail in Chapter Three along with an in-depth review of the literature relating to factors that affect aspirations of young people, in both a limiting and empowering sense.

Stahl (2015a) stated that an individual's *habitus* works within the constraints they are bound by to decide what is possible. This can be applied to aspirations, where young people will consider what they wish to aspire to within the constraints of the way they behave, act and think possible: their dispositions. To this end, *habitus* can be seen to be in a state of flux: a battle between the individual's *habitus* and that of the institution. Connolly *et al.* (2016) stated that there is a gap in the research literature examining how an individual's *habitus* is affected by social space, which could include the school environment. This research will address this by considering how an individual's *habitus* can be transformed by the school's *habitus*. It is important to note that this struggle is very individual: different individuals will have different challenges and constraints, where individual context needs to be taken into account.

The application of *habitus* and *institutional habitus* as explanatory concepts is well developed in the literature in relation to youth transitions, for example, by Cairns (2015) and Smyth and Banks (2012). This dissertation will contribute to studies in youth transitions by looking at the policy context in Scotland and highlighting areas of good practice that exist. Key recommendations will be detailed in the concluding chapter that could be used to enhance youth transitions of young people from low socio-economic areas, building on the work of Smyth and Banks (2012). Smyth and Banks (2012) investigated the role of the school in developing young people's agency in terms of providing young people with necessary information with which to perhaps transform their *habitus* and transition to their post-16 destination.

Chesters and Smith (2015) suggested that in the modern, post-industrial world, where a knowledge economy predominates much of education policy and the pathways that young people take from compulsory pre-16 education to post-16 destinations can be complex and uncertain. Indeed, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) described the changing nature of education in terms of increasing participation in non-compulsory education, noting the increase in the minimum school leaving age in 1972; and stated that nowadays relatively few people leave school at the minimum school leaving age, currently 16 years old in Scotland and the rest of the UK. For the purpose of this study a post-16 destination is defined as either: university, college, training, apprenticeship or employment.

Reid and McCallum (2014) highlighted that there is a correlation between socio-economic status and achievement and implicitly also with aspirations. In this study the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) indicates that the socio-economic enrolment of the school in this study has over 90% of pupils and their families living within SIMD 1 and 2, which are the two areas of lowest socio-economic status (Scottish Government, 2017a). Furthermore, the school's positive destination rates are increasing year on year, with the latest figure for 2017 being 91% of school leavers achieving a positive destination, with increasing numbers moving to Higher or Further Education (Education Scotland, 2018).

## **1.2 Outline of Dissertation**

Chapter Two will provide a critique of a liberal and neoliberal education philosophical approach to education and policy. A liberal approach will be considered under three headings of: autonomy, non-instrumental purpose of education and breadth of learning. Neoliberalism will be critiqued in relation to: the knowledge economy, governance and the role of supranational organisations such as the OECD and its associated PISA programme, due to the emphasis on developing skills in Scottish Education policy and practice at present, in relation to current and future labour markets. Chapter Three provides a critique of the current literature, linking work surrounding aspirations and the transformation of aspirations to the work of Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction*. This will include an in-depth discussion of Bourdieu's key concept of *habitus* and its transformation. Chapter Four will examine the theoretical paradigmatic approach of this dissertation, which is interpretivism, and use previous literature on how *habitus*, aspirations and dispositions have been used methodologically by other researchers is discussed. From this a Bourdieusian methodological and theoretical lens will be developed which will be used to analyse and explore the data generated in this research.

This will be linked to the aims of the research and provide a framework with which to answer the research questions. This is relevant to this research as it seeks to expose and critique the underlying assumptions about young people's backgrounds and their chosen post-16 destination. Here a rigorous approach to research is presented where an emancipatory aspect of knowledge can bring about changes and challenges to everyday assumptions, for example, the assumption that many working class young people do not or can not aspire or progress to positive and successful destinations.

Chapter Five will consider the design of the data collection methods used: interviews and a researcher's journal; and, provide the context of the school and participants in the study. This Chapter will also outline the method of data analysis utilising the previously developed Bourdieusian framework of data analysis in Chapter Four. It should be highlighted at this early stage that the method of data analysis is one that follows thematic analysis. A discussion of ethics and ethical issues will also be presented. Chapter Six presents a discussion of the results of thematic analysis of the data obtained following the Bourdieusian methodology of data analysis. This discussion is linked to, and focused on, the concept of *habitus*, dispositions and relevant sociological theories. Finally, in conclusion, Chapter Seven addresses the overarching research questions and gives recommendations and areas of good practice. Ideas for future work will also be discussed together with limitations of the approach adopted in this dissertation. This concluding Chapter will also provide an opportunity for professional reflection on carrying out research for this dissertation and during the Ed.D.

From the above outline the work in this dissertation is taking a cross-disciplinary approach involving aspects of sociology of education and aspects of philosophy of education. The reason for this is, according to Troyna (1994), that it provides a deeper critical exploration into the topic in question and also provides the researcher with a greater range of analytical and conceptual tools with which to investigate the issue thoroughly.

### **1.3 Policy Context in Scottish Education**

This section will provide the policy context in Scottish Education surrounding supporting young people into positive and sustained post-16 destinations and the mechanisms that are in place to achieve this. Policy is defined by Trowler (2003) and Garrat and Forrester (2012) as a statement which outlines intentions or practices that are made from specified principles which, when followed, realise desired goals. Ball (2013)

suggested that education policy reform in the UK has continued with one aim since the Conservative Government in 1979, through New Labour in 1997 to the present day; that is to develop the economy as oppose to developing society. The reason for this has been the increase in the introduction of policies geared towards neoliberalism and its associated knowledge economy; this will be expanded on in Chapter Two.

In Scotland education provision, policy making and implementation is devolved to the Scottish Government, which means policy drivers are different in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK (RUK). Indeed, Ozga and Lingard (2007) highlighted the '*continuation of Scottish distinctiveness in education*' (p. 74). Stephen Ball's research is very geared towards the RUK; this is an important caveat that must be taken into consideration when reading Ball's (and others) research. In Scotland the main education policy drivers highlighted by Education Scotland<sup>1</sup> are: Getting it Right for Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), the Child Poverty Strategy, Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy, Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education. However, a study by St. Clair *et al.* (2013) demonstrated that education policy in Scotland did not explicitly target young people's aspirations as much as English education policy, where the school played a more central role. Moreover, St. Clair *et al.* (2013) argued that for young people from low socio-economic areas, it may be more appropriate to focus on the daily job of improving the learning of these young people so they can attain to the best of their ability; this learning should also include ways of supporting young people towards their aspirations.

When policy is developed it must be done so with a view to looking at the future. The *future* is a concept difficult to define, as we are reminded by Brier (2005) who discussed the *future* in relation to time horizons. Brier's (2005) paper outlined the various notions of the *future* used by various academics and researchers, but concluded with the idea from de Jouvenel (1967) that, notionally for many researchers, the *future* is 20-50 years, taking account of slow changes in society and economic and technological changes. There are two important points that need to be acknowledged. First, it is important to highlight that since policy documents give national information and instructions to actors to implement at a local level, the policy details an ideal-type situation that may not be realistic in local situations. Second, it is important to acknowledge that when policy is

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<sup>1</sup> Education Scotland is an executive body of the Scottish Government that is responsible for delivering quality and improvement in Scottish Education. Getting It Right for Every Child is a policy geared towards support and inclusion of young people in education.

created and issued, there is a time lag between policy implementation and expected outcomes.

Ball *et al.* (1999) stated that policy developments in the UK in relation to vocational and further education have created a market in post-16 training and education. In terms of Scotland these policy developments in relation to vocational and further education have been recognised in a report by the Scottish Government (2015b) for the OECD. Ozga and Lingard (2007) commented that Humes and Bryce (2003) stated that Scottish education is provided by public, as oppose to private, bodies and that achievement and ability rank higher than class or status. Furthermore, they stated that Scottish education is provided free of charge to every young person in the community and that every young person should have the right to education. Moreover, in describing policy changes Ball (2013) commented that governments use terms such as ‘transformation’ and/or ‘modernisation’ to describe their policies. This transformation and modernisation of polices can be related to what Dale (1999) described as *policy borrowing*, meaning the intentional decision to replicate a policy, or in whole or part, that a country wishes to take from another country’s policy, at the sector or institutional level. Enslin (1999) stated over recent decades countries have adopted policy borrowing to build a common curriculum based on competencies. It could be said that in order for Scotland to maintain a high standing position in the world economy it has used reports from the OECD to inform its policies (Dale, 1999). For example, in 2015 the OECD commissioned an Education Policy Review in Scotland (OECD, 2015) that gave the Scottish Government an opportunity to reflect on the implementation of CfE and future challenges. Furthermore, the OECD/Scottish Government (2015b) report stated a key driver of DYW is to prepare young people for the current and changing labour market. Moreover, this report was used to gain advice from the OECD during the important period of implementation of CfE.

Within CfE the *Building the Curriculum* series detail the aims and design principles of CfE. Specifically *Building the Curriculum 4* is centred on skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. (Scottish Government, 2009). Education Scotland (2015a, b and c) publications on DYW specifically highlight the development of young people’s skills and cite *Building the Curriculum 4* as the foundations on which DYW should be built: skills development inside the classroom through varied and active learning and outside the classroom through engaging with employers and partnerships. Examples of this will be detailed in the Chapter Six discussion. The Scottish Government (2009) clearly outlined the importance of the development of young people’s skills, from age 3 to 18, in order to

achieve the four capacities of CfE; that is to enable young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Moreover, the Scottish Government stated that the development of skills should be a progressive task through all curricular areas involving parents, carers and partnerships. Specifically, the Scottish Government (2009) defined skills for learning, life and work as: literacy, numeracy, personal and learning skills (including leadership skills) vocational skills, the five core skills (communication, numeracy, problem solving, information technology and working with others) and essential skills that comprise of all the skills listed above. The Scottish Government, in *Building the Curriculum 4*, were careful to point out that this definition is not exclusive and should be used to reflect future changes to society and the economy, perhaps in preparing young people for jobs of the future which have not been invented yet.

The key policies that will be considered in the discussion are the DYW policies: *Career Education Standard* (Education Scotland, 2015a), *Work Placements Standard* (Scottish Government, 2015b) and *School-Employer Partnership* (Scottish Government, 2015c). The DYW policy is part of a seven-year strategy from 2014 to 2021 that, according to Education Scotland (2017), aims to build on CfE in terms of developing young people's skills and reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021 and prepare all young people from ages 3 to 18 for the world of work (Scottish Government, 2014). The Scottish Government has set key milestones for each of the seven years of implementation through the Youth Employment Strategy; with a focus on inclusion, STEM and equality, with over 33% of the milestones relating to these three areas (Education Scotland, 2017). The themes identified include: providing flexible routes for young people to different post-16 destinations, engaging with employers for work-based learning and experiences, to develop young people's knowledge of the world of work, providing career advice based on labour-market information, engaging with colleges to develop partnership working and expanding the range of vocational opportunities for young people as part of their education (Education Scotland, 2017).

*Developing the Young Workforce Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy* (Scottish Government, 2014) was published as a consequence of the 2013-14 commission on Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, chaired by Sir Ian Wood. This Strategy identified the importance of raising the value of vocational education, to add to the strengths of Scotland's universities, to provide relevant work-based experiences and the importance of employers in Scotland's education system, in terms of providing positive

partnerships that enhance the curriculum delivered under CfE. The importance of these is repeated in *Career Education Standard*, which sets out quite specifically the expectations and the role that schools, employers, young people and colleges have to play in delivering the seven-year strategy.

The *Opportunities for All* (Scottish Government, 2012) agenda aims to ensure that all young people, aged between 16 and 20 years old, who are not in education, are given personal support to enter training or employment to secure a place in education or employment. The rationale is to ensure that young people maintain a positive attitude to education, training or employment and develop essential skills and knowledge to be able to progress in life. These young people can be identified through the *More Choices More Chances* Teams present in Scottish Secondary schools. The aim of these teams is to identify all young people who are at an appropriate age to leave school and those who are disengaged from education, perhaps through poor attendance or health. A variety of partners, for example Skills Development Scotland careers advisers and work coaches, attend these meetings to identify the best way to support young people into education, training or employment. Young people who are identified through the *More Choices More Chances* Team are tracked by their work coach to ensure that they continue to engage with training and employment providers and provide further support, if needed. This is indicative of the unified approach to careers education and support in Scotland, which demonstrates a cradle to grave service unlike the RUK.

Linking with the above policy is the *Post-16 Transition Policy* (Scottish Government, 2012b). The key difference between this policy and *Opportunities for All* (Scottish Government, 2012a) is that this policy is aimed at the partners that are supporting young people into a positive-destination. The policy clearly defines partners as: parents, carers, young people themselves and their families, including agencies that will work with young people, for example, Skills Development Scotland, Education Scotland and Local Authorities and that these partners should work with young people at key transition points: from S3 into S4, S4 into S5 and S4/5/6 into their chosen post-16 destination; through appropriate careers guidance. The *Post-16 Transition Policy* also highlights the importance of supporting young people who may be disengaged into a positive destination. The level of support given is either through formal or non-formal arrangements. Non-formal arrangements might be a young person who is clear on their chosen career path, but needs some careers guidance and is capable of applying to college or university with minimal or medium support. Formal arrangements might include young people who are

disengaged and need to go through the *More Choices More Chances* Team, where a formal plan is drawn up to support the young person. This includes carrying out home visits for those with attendance/disengagement issues. However participation is voluntary and no conditionality is placed on families or young people to engage with these services and they can opt out of any help offered to them. It is interesting to note that parents and families are included as partners; this demonstrates the need for parents and families to show an active interest in their young person's post-16 destination. The policy does not, however, state what to do if parents do not engage. Moreover, the importance of increasing the number of young people in a positive destination is highlighted through the Scottish Government's National Indicators and states that this should be related to young people developing the four capacities of CfE in addition to receiving formal qualifications.

#### **1.4 Personal and Professional Relevance**

Oltmann and Boughey (2012) stated that it is important for myself as researcher to consider my own social history and experiences and the way this may impact on this research. For this reason, I detail a brief history of my experiences of growing up in an area of low socio-economic status in Glasgow from the 1980s until the early 2000s. The research topic is significant in my professional capacity as Principal Teacher of Pastoral Care, in a Secondary school in Glasgow, with responsibility for coordinating school-college partnerships, post-16 destinations, careers advice and advising young people during subject choices. Furthermore, I am the school's co-ordinator for DYW, providing opportunities for young people and implementing national policy to become local practice, having strategic leadership on the implementation of DYW.

Growing up in a deprived area of Glasgow was always going to be challenging. Through my Primary school years, I would not have described myself as academically able. I would say I had a pretty common experience of Primary school, an experience that was shared with many of my peers. During Primary school I do not recall any experience of university being discussed. At this time my only experience of university was passing the University of Strathclyde. I remember asking questions about university: who goes to university? and what happens there? Towards the end of my Primary school, my mother embarked on a part-time Higher National Certificate course at the local college, having left school at 16 years old with few qualifications to enter full-time employment. My experience of this was my mother working in the evenings with her books and typewriter. This caught my attention and she would allow me help out when I could. I remember talk about the value of education and how she wished she had done better at school. Preparing

for my transition to secondary school, I recall having many conversations and asking questions around the differences between Primary and Secondary school. I took part in visits to different Secondary schools. At Secondary school I remember finding it fascinating going to different teachers and different subjects. This was the start of my journey in considering my post-school options. By the time I was in Third Year and choosing my subjects, I had already decided I wanted to go to university as I loved learning knowledge associated with different subjects, and excelled in Science. Ironically, one of the Secondary schools I visited is where I currently work. I have gone full circle from being a pupil in this deprived area to being a teacher in the same area, being able to give back to the community and understanding their backgrounds and challenges.

A key motive for me in becoming an educator and for carrying out this research is similar to Creegan (2008); my passion is to deliver equality and equity in promoting not just occupational aspirations, but the aspiration to better the lives of young people from disadvantaged areas. I hope for every young person to reach his or her potential. I acknowledge this may be an idealistic Utopian dream, but believe that a key responsibility I have is to provide the advice, guidance, opportunities and experiences so that young people may be helped on their way to realising their aspiration. I facilitate young people to answer two key questions: ‘how do I get there?’ and ‘how do I know what is out there?’

## Chapter Two

### Autonomy and the Knowledge Economy: A Liberal versus a Neoliberal Approach to Education

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This Chapter extends the initial discussion on Scottish Education policy from Chapter One and will critique a liberal and neoliberal approach to education. From the outset it is important to highlight that these complex terms invite an overlap of ideas from both camps, which is considered throughout this Chapter. It is important to note that Gale and Parker (2015a) stated that nations that are influenced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have their policies developed in such a way that they aim to improve attainment and increase the number of young people that progress to Higher Education, especially those from disadvantaged areas, and that this in turn increases the number of educated workers which leads to increased competition in the global knowledge economy. As will be seen later in this Chapter, this infers that OECD-influenced countries follow a neoliberal policy framework where accountability is ever-increasing in terms of the knowledge economy, examination results and performance of schools, which are run like businesses in a competitive globalised world. Sellar and Lingard (2013) highlighted the increasing globalisation of education and the impact of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in their book *'PISA, Power and Policy: The Emergence of Global Educational Governance'*. The notion of governance and PISA is considered in relation to neoliberalism in Section 2.2 later in this Chapter.

Paterson (2014) described Scotland's education system as one where the relationship between the individual and economic development is untenable. Moreover, Paterson (2014) stated that CfE is unrecognisable as having being developed from a particular philosophical approach, but that it does demonstrate some traits from both the liberal and neoliberal camps; where Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) seeks to prepare young people to be part of an economically successful country where human capital and life-long learning are important factors.

The design principles of CfE stipulate the curriculum should be built based on a values-based idea, to include the importance of morals and values; that is, CfE's four

capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Scottish Executive, 2004) may align more with what might be regarded as a liberal approach to education, where the aim is to produce well-rounded, reasonable individuals. However, as will be demonstrated in this Chapter and Chapter Six: Discussion, DYW clearly identifies the priorities as preparing young people for the world of work in terms of skills development (Scottish Government, 2014), which may link with the concept of the *knowledge economy* from a neoliberal philosophy as highlighted by key authors: Trowler (2003), Olssen *et al.* (2004) and Olssen and Peters (2005), who assert that knowledge is produced in individuals to further the needs of the state under capitalism.

## 2.1 The Journey from Classical Liberalism to Modern Liberalism

A liberal approach to education will be discussed using three important concepts of a liberal education: autonomy, non-instrumental purpose of education and breadth of learning, implied by Bridges (1992) and Enslin (1999). However, to begin, Sandel (2010) discussed Immanuel Kant's concept of freedom, that:

*'to act freely is to act autonomously, and to act autonomously is to act according to a law I give myself – not according to the dictates of nature or social convention'* (p. 109).

This is closely related to an individual's morals and values. Kant's theory promotes the aim of education as giving individuals freedom and autonomy and on developing moral, or well-rounded individuals. According to Munzel (2003) a liberal approach has its roots in Kant's early writings in the eighteenth century.

Baumann (2013) compared the 'old' classical (or traditional) model of liberal education with the 'new' model. The 'old' traditional model was philosophy based, allowing individuals the flexibility to think deeply about their responses to questions and see things as they are about human nature and the nature of being. Whereas the 'new' model is based on values and tolerance, where the opposite case can be listened to and understood. Gaus, Courtland and Schmitz (2015) stated that the old classical model allowed individuals to live their life as they see fit. Furthermore, Gaus, Courtland and Schmitz (2015) highlighted that the classical model aimed to better the fortunes and chances of the working classes: as Gaus, Courtland and Schmitz (2015) quoted from Bentham the aim *'was to make the poorer rich, not the rich poorer'* (no page number as on-line source).

Roth (2013) suggested the change from the traditional, or classical, form to the new form took place through the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. Roth (2013) stated that the argument for changing from traditional liberalism to a new liberalism during the 1800s and 1900s was due to a debate between the traditionalists who wanted to keep classical liberalism based on Greek and Latin foundations and deductive reasoning, and those modernists who wanted a liberalism that was based on modern-day contemporary issues. Gaus, Courtland and Schmitz (2015) commented that the change from traditional to a new liberalism also occurred for three reasons: first, that the sustainability of a free market was being questioned. Second, there was increasing support and belief that the government could improve economic life and third is that the right to own property created inequality with the working class.

Moreover, Roth (2013) stated that as education moved into the twentieth century, *'the professionalised research university dominated the evolution of higher education'* (p. 521), possibly due to the small increasing number of people who sought Higher Education degrees and wanted to further their education. This was a fact highlighted by Dewey (1910 and 1916, republished in 1997), a leading philosopher and educational theorist at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where according to Roth (2013), Dewey (1910 and 1916, republished in 1997), noticed all people would need employment and that education would help them prepare for this employment. However, Roth (2013) noted that Dewey was against education that aimed to streamline people into certain industries; for Dewey education should be a means of empowering an individual and developing human significance: whether the individual is a manager or a worker. Dewey is important because, according to Field (n.d.), he developed key ideas relating to the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, further discussed in Chapter Four, where he broke from traditional epistemologies of empiricism and rationalism. Field (n.d.) stated that Dewey saw the purpose of knowledge was to fulfil human purposes and functions. This links with Kolb *et al.*'s (1979) notion of experiential learning, which is a four-stage process of: concrete experiences, observations and reflections, formation of abstract concepts and generalisations, and testing concepts in new situations. Miettinen (2000) stated that for Dewey reflection was aimed to solve problems faced in life, and that concepts are created by human interaction with the environment and not solely in the head.

Gaus, Courtland and Schmitz (2015) stated that through the work of Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, in 1971, a social justice theory developed which aimed to level out wealth and income differences. It is important to point out that Bridges (1992) stated that

while there is general agreement on the principles on a (new) liberal approach to education, there are some authors, for example Bonnett (1978), who disagree slightly in the priorities due to the changing nature of education over the last 40 years, perhaps in relation to the increasing importance of skills development.

### **2.1.1 Autonomy**

Enslin (1999) in her discussion of educational change in post-apartheid South Africa stated that policy based on liberal education should have two aims. The first being that education should not discriminate against individuals in society, where all citizens are seen to be equal in relation to expression of opinion, race or religion, for example. Second, that education should encourage independent and critical thinking, and that these aims bring about autonomy. Smith (1997) stated that to understand autonomy, it is necessary to understand power relationships: who has this power and how is this power maintained and exercised? Chesters and Smith (2005) argued that in countries where there is a coordinated market economy, for example Germany, the pathways that young people take in progressing from school to their post-16 destination are not as complicated as other countries. In Germany this is in part due to the structure of the secondary school education system, where young people can choose to participate in work-related learning through apprenticeships in upper secondary school. Chesters and Smith (2005) also stated that through their social capital, education, expectations and family connections, parents can influence which type of school their child should attend depending on their aspirations: academic, vocational or low education track. Also in Germany there is not as much stigma attached to non-university routes to careers as there is in the UK.

Some traits of Chesters and Smith's (2015) work has been evident in the school where this research is taking place, where two large-scale mentoring programmes are taking place, one with young people who wish to progress to university (intergenerational mentoring) and one with young people who are at risk of disengaging (MCR mentoring). Here young people are matched to a mentor that works in the area the young person aspires to. Wierenga (2009) highlighted the positive contribution that mentors can bring to young people, in that mentors bring new language and meaning and can help young people translate and re-translate reality. Similarly, in looking at a study into the influence of significant individuals in encouraging young people to enter the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sector, Sjaastad (2012) stated that mentoring provides an added benefit in that it gives young people a deeper understanding of a specific subject area. The intergenerational mentoring project is showing signs of success in that

younger people from SIMD 1/2 areas of the school's catchment area are progressing to Higher Education. The MCR mentoring has also resulted in developing young people's resilience, which has resulted in those pupils engaging with school and their life in general.

Bridges (1997) stated that personal autonomy and liberal democracy go hand-in-hand, in the sense that individuals are able to make independent and informed choices and that autonomy, or practical competence, is needed to support individuals in achieving these choices. Bridges (1997) also stated that the practical competences an individual needs are dependent on the choices they make. Bridges (1997) highlighted that these practical competences, or vehicles for autonomy, could be core, generic or transferable skills. There may be a link here to neoliberalism through individuals' skills development, which will be discussed later. However, it is important to remember that not all skills development is associated with neoliberalism. Simons and Masschelein (2008) discussed the concept of learning from a liberal perspective as an active, social and constructive process and define autonomy as being able to meet one's needs in a changing world. Moreover, they commented that education should prepare individuals for the changing nature of our world; however, this sounds very neoliberal and ignores barriers individuals may face in their lives. This can be related to the discussion from Roth (2013) and Dewey above, in that the changing nature of our world could be interpreted as individuals developing their human significance. Furthermore, this could also be related to promoting a less rigid curriculum: one with more problem solving, creativity and divergent thinking, which Sir Ken Robinson (2010) advocated in a talk on ted.com on changing worlds with the challenges presented by culturally diverse countries and less stable and secure economics and, ultimately, labour markets. Indeed Sir Ken Robinson chaired a report (1999) for the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education that highlighted the need for more problem solving, creativity and divergent thinking within education curricula. However, it is important to acknowledge that we live in a world based on the economic success of the country we live, and indeed the world, as Robinson (2010) suggested in his talk, and that knowledge is needed for certain industries to be successful.

Furthermore, Simons and Masschelein (2008) suggested that some regard autonomy as *'being able to meet one's needs, and since these needs are changing constantly, lifelong learning is required'* (p. 398). They further commented that those who agree with the above quote suggest that life-long learning can be used as a vehicle to achieve the autonomy needed and that the central aim of the school is to train individuals how to learn. This concept of life-long learning links with the idea of breadth of learning

associated with a liberal approach to education. Enslin (1999) stated that equality and tolerance are essential for enjoying lifelong learning. Smith (1997) stated that a problem with autonomy is that individuals risk being seen as atomised individuals, separated from the world, as opposed to individuals who are part of society. In order to overcome this Smith (1997) suggested that an important aspect of autonomy must be citizenship and co-operation. Moreover, Bridges (1992) used Dearden's definition of autonomy in that it is a cognitive process, where one determines what one thinks and does through the thought processes in one's mind, and through the processes of: choosing, deciding, deliberating, reflecting, planning and judging. This definition can be incorporated into Simons and Masschelein's (2008) definition above by being able to meet one's needs. Bridges (1992) elaborated by suggesting a key component of autonomy is being able to recognise and separate the motivation for carrying out actions; that is, as Bridges describes, '*the voices which speak to us and urge this thought or that action*' (p. 156).

Mackenzie (2008) took the concept of autonomy one stage further and suggested that autonomy should be relational, that is the concept of *relational autonomy*. By this Mackenzie (2008) meant that the decisions one takes should be done in consideration of one's social conditions. According to Christman (2004), this means consideration of our motivation and our overall social character and relationships to other individuals and groups. This allows us to be self-governing, free individuals. It is important to acknowledge that this may not be possible for everyone due to the constraints and difficulties individuals may have in their lives due to their socio-economic circumstances and/or lived experiences; structural constraints may limit the ability for an individual to exercise individual agency or autonomy. However, Christman (2004) also suggested taking care with the concept of relational autonomy because issues arise from its implementation in a practical sense in that not everyone embraces the same model of social life. Wardrope (2015) extended the definition to suggest that it is important for one to consider their cultural, economic and political position in respect of relational autonomy, for example, the decisions one takes may be bound by cultural or economic restrictions.

Enslin (1999) discussed Parekh's notion that societies should be able to choose their own destinies and not be oppressed. In this case, citizens of a liberal democracy and a liberal approach to education are used as a reference point to the notion of choice. This is a choice that allows them to develop as people and which is not illusory and constrained as in neoliberal choice. Bridges (1992) agreed in the importance of individuals being able to make choices about their futures and extends this idea to cover two important

aspects of choice. However, it is important to consider choice being related to motivation: internal versus external motivation. One being that choice should be informed by ideas and beliefs, and second that choice should include alternatives that are achievable and/or realistic. In the sense of this dissertation this is taken to mean that young people are able to choose their own post-16 destination, but that young people should also consider alternative post-16 destinations, or even back-up choices should their original aspiration not come to fruition. However, it is important to contextualise this and realise that choices young people make are constrained by various factors such as socio-economic background, family experiences and background and culture, for example. These are the kind of constraints that are installed by the *habitus* as will be discussed later.

### **2.1.2 Breadth of Education**

Bridges (1992) discussed *enterprise education* as supporting and extending a liberal approach to education in three ways; first through the curriculum, where young people work with the teacher to develop a negotiated curriculum, in which young people's own aspirations play a key role. This is, however, difficult in practice due to the variety of possible post-16 destinations available and due to the requirements in a prescribed curriculum. Second, through pedagogy, where teachers are allowed to be creative, adaptive and flexible. There should also be more opportunities for collaborative work and learning from experiences in real-life situations. Third, through assessment, where young people are able to take part in self-assessment and are involved in the process of their own development. Here there are links with Robinson's (1999; 2010) notion of divergent thinking in creating a more creative, less rigid curriculum. It is important to acknowledge that while Bridges (1992) comments related to teacher training it is possible to see how this is transferable to secondary education. Bridges (1992) acknowledged that enterprise education is both easy and difficult to define, for example some do not specifically define the concept to allow freedom of interpretation. From the above discussion of Bridges' (1992) enterprise education and Robinson's (1999; 2010) notion of creative education it can be summarised that education can help individuals to develop their personal qualities and future paths in a world that can be competitive and hostile. The notion of competitiveness and individual responsibility is closely aligned with neoliberalism, and will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.2. In order to achieve the three conditions described above, Bridges (1992) suggested three ways of developing enterprise education. The first is promoting enterprising individuals, which will allow individuals to develop their personal qualities. This could be achieved using Robinson's (1999; 2010) idea of a creative curriculum or by involving business partners in school education through the

curriculum. Second is to promote enterprising organisations, which can create opportunities and respond to changes in demands. Third is developing a wider understanding of enterprise as an important aspect of education. This can be related to Chesters and Smith (2005) (liberal) market economy, where there is little linkage between education and the labour market, for example in Australia.

Bailey (1992) is, however, critical of Bridges' (1992) notion of enterprise allowing individuals to cope with competitiveness. However, it is important to recognise that individuals should not be responsible for social problems not of their making or within their control and that education should be a public good and a social good. Bailey (1992) described this as a flaw in Bridges' enterprise thesis, as competition between individuals, or organisations, and enterprise can be related to the instrumental purpose of education. Bailey (1992) stated that in the world there is a false impression that everyone can win in an enterprising society and that governments and politicians, for example, want to blame unemployment and poverty on individuals and societies that are not enterprising enough.

Rowe (2017) acknowledged the different levels of involvement individuals have in different types of democracies but commented that, in order to flourish in an egalitarian, self-governing democracy, individuals need an education (or a curriculum) that provides them with (socially constructed) skills over and above those skills that are needed to make a living: a curriculum based on a liberal education. It is important here that Rowe (2017) linked liberal education with democracy, and by this he meant individuals participating in decisions that will affect them in society, in addition to treating each other with fairness and justice. Rowe (2017) compared the link between education and democracy to the Confucian idea, where society is viewed as a learning community. However, in his discussion of Higher Education curricula, Arndt (2016) highlighted that authors charge liberal education with an incoherent curriculum because it is broken into different subject areas that lacks purpose and direction and, in the wider sense, that liberal education is economically not fit for purpose.

### **2.1.3 Non-instrumental Purpose of Education**

The idea of meritocracy, and its rise, satirically discussed by Michael Young in his 1958 book *The Rise of the Meritocracy* is also a key notion of liberal education: that if an individual works hard at school they will reap the benefits and rewards. However, as discussed throughout this dissertation, it is not always that simple, and that individuals, or young people, will come across barriers that may prevent them from working hard at

school, for example, socio-economic factors, family influences, and lack of support as will be discussed in Chapters Three and Six. Allen (2011) set out a critique of Young's 1958 work, arguing that since Young's work, the administrative and educational priorities have changed, however acknowledges, at least implicitly, the notion of increasing ambition and competition. Allen (2011) noted two points of Young's thesis, looking back from the year 2033 to the 1960s and 1970s, first Young predicted that less able young people would be encouraged to leave school while more able young pupils would be paid a maintenance allowance to encourage them to stay at school and have their outcomes improved. This is not the case and Scottish Government figures (2016c) show that staying on rates at schools are increasing for a variety of pupils from various backgrounds. Second, Young commented that Grammar schools would improve so as to replace private schools. Moreover, an individual's social position was based on the simple formula: ability+effort, which linked those who were intelligent to a higher social class than those who were not intelligent. The term intelligent was used here as the sum of ability+effort.

Young (2001) commented in an article in the *Guardian Newspaper* that he was disappointed in his 1958 work because it was set out to be a warning of what could happen in British education between 1958 and 2033, however, the concept of *meritocracy* has taken on popular meaning, especially in the United States and by the UK Prime Minister at the time, Tony Blair. Young (2001) gave a warning of a social revolution in his 1958 work that had taken place:

*'education has put its seal of approval on a minority and its seal of disapproval on the many who fail to shine'.*

(no page number as online source)

Here Young (2001) was indicating that young people are placed into bottom sets or streams from an early age. Importantly, the notion of the hidden curriculum must be taken into account here, as teachers may subconsciously use this in their classroom learning and teaching, which ultimately has a larger impact on a young person's holistic educational future. Young (2001) related this to the idea that disadvantaged young people who are set or streamed into lower sections would be more vulnerable and demoralised when it comes to their post-16 transition. Indeed, Bloodworth (2016) set out a political argument for meritocracy from the 1870s, when the first Education Act was published, that successive governments have advocated for increased social mobility. However, Bloodworth (2016) noted that the best jobs are still done by those young people who come from wealthy

backgrounds and that, for the reasons of barriers discussed earlier, it is challenging for intelligent young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to change their position in society.

Robeyns (2006) discussed the intrinsic importance of education in that it should consider individuals rights, capabilities<sup>2</sup>, morals and values, in other words it should have a non-instrumental purpose, where it does not take account of the economic aspect that education plays in terms of solely being there in order to find someone employment. This is related to the notion that education is a human right under the United Nations. Robeyns (2006) did point to an issue with a rights-based model of education, for example, that given the same access to education, some parents have economic, social and cultural capital to enhance their child's education, whereas some parents do not. This is considered more in Chapter Three in relation to Bourdieu's theory. Reay (2017) noted in a study carried out involving interviews with parents from a private school, that when parents and their children have a self-assured relationship to education, they would generally succeed in education. Reay (2017) related this to Bourdieu, who said that these young people do not need to engage in '*rational computation in order to reach their goals*' (p. 132), as they move through the system '*like fish in water*' (p. 132), in other words the economic, social and cultural capital the family has and the effort that their children will put in at school is enough to ensure their success. It is important to recognise that these young people may have many other advantages, such as attending a private school. This can be linked with the concept of meritocracy (for the wealthy) discussed above, where if you work hard, you will reap the benefits of success.

Reay (2017) expanded on the influence of parents in relation to countering the effects of inequality and stated that in the current social climate, parents are being encouraged to be home-educators more and more, helping their children with schoolwork and homework. It is important to remember that barriers to this exist, for example, Reay (2017) stated that in modern living and life parents simply do not have the time to do this after school or in the evening and that the increasing demand for paid tutors is a consequence of this. This, however, raises another issue for mainly working-class parents in that they may not have the financial resources to afford these tutors putting their children ever further behind their middle-class peers who can access paid tutors.

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<sup>2</sup> It needs to be acknowledged that Martha C. Nussbaum in her 'Capabilities Approach' presents an extension to the concept of a liberal approach to education. This is not a subject for this dissertation and the interested reader is directed to Nussbaum (2006; 2009) and Robeyns (2005).

Peters (2003) suggested that in the modern world the traditional idea of freedom associated with a liberal education is under threat from the influence and pressures from central government to bring about a thriving economy whilst at the same time reducing costs and changing how schools, or education, is governed and who is accountable. Indeed, at the time of writing this dissertation the Scottish Government had finished carrying out a review of governance of education, where it intends to take responsibility and, hence, accountability away from Central and Local Government and give more power to Head Teachers (Scottish Government, 2017c). Peters (2003) summarised other challenges facing education institutions: changes to the public sector, the changing nature of employment and the labour market, and the pressures from globalisation and international competitiveness. In this sense liberal education has had to develop to keep up with these changes. However, if liberal education relates to the development of autonomy, as discussed above, it should be able to manage the challenges Peters (2003) discussed.

At the beginning of this section it was noted that there are disagreements about the format of a liberal approach to education. Phillips and Siegel (2013) stated that this is most notable in the struggle between liberal education and vocational education, in considering what is most important: education for citizenship or education for personal development. Here liberal education is taken to mean education for personal development and vocational education is taken to mean education for citizenship. Phillips and Siegel (2013) argued that education for citizenship and education for personal development could be seen as a '*false dichotomy*' (no page number as online source), where both are not mutually exclusive. If there is any difference it is due to the different use of terms such as teaching, learning, training, indoctrination, education and enculturation. Moreover, Callan and White (2003) pointed to the philosophical debate over communitarianism and liberalism, where they suggest that communitarianism is changing liberalism in terms of providing education for the improvement of individuals and society. Sandel (2010) is critical of economic and political liberalism in favour of a communitarian approach for the common good. In relation to career goals, or aspirations, Hutton (2006) stated that in a liberal approach to education, career goals are less likely to be discussed and more likely to be discussed in a professional education, but which he indicated as a programme geared towards employment; a more neoliberal agenda. Moreover, Gale and Parker (2015a) and Sellar (2013) noted that other researchers have used the terms *neoliberal imaginary* and *social imaginary* for those who do not have self-capitalising behaviour, for example, some young people from disadvantaged areas. Self-capitalising behaviour can be defined by Sellar (2013) as being able to actively pursue aspirations based on a desire to do so. It is,

however, important to note that young people who do not display self-capitalising behaviour may do so through no fault of their own due to poverty, for example, and other barriers and constraints discussed throughout this dissertation. Neoliberal education policy can limit young people's aspirations, as they do not have access to resources such as work experience or family connections. In acknowledging that to some extent all education policy, in a general sense, is to prepare young people for the world of work, it may be the case the influence of competition through neoliberal policy has made the gap between the winners and losers starker. As such these young people who lose out may be limited by their self-identification and associated perception of their position within society and the perceptions associated with different aspirations, for example, Higher Education (HE) and the 'type' of young people that aspires to HE. It is this neoliberal approach that will now be critiqued. The concept of aspirations is considered more in Chapters Three and Four.

## **2.2 Neoliberal Approach to Education and Its Instrumental Purpose**

Ball (2013) stated that the two aims of a neoliberal approach to education are: firstly to develop a strong, but minimal state, with a developed national identity where there is social order and social authority. Second is to promote free-market economics. Moreover, Trowler (2003) pointed to the notion that, in a neoliberal framework, the interests of the market are of greater importance than the interests of the individual.

Robeyns (2006) defined the instrumental purpose of education; where the knowledge and skills an individual gains are solely to contribute towards economic productivity, either directly or indirectly. Ball (2013) further developed this idea by stating that the term *productivity* is used to link business to economics and drive forward the neoliberal agenda, where schools are encouraged to act like businesses more and more. Furthermore, Ball (2013) stated that education and education reform are dominated by the economic aims of a country; that is why short-term need dominates the economics of a country. Brown (1999) suggested that the formation of skills could be defined, in terms of social capacity, as development of innovation, learning and productivity. It could be argued that these definitions are the vehicles for skills development, which relate back to the liberal definition given by Bridges (1997). Within the neoliberal agenda, Ball (2013) stated four organisations that influence education development for political or economic reasons, either directly or indirectly, are: the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the European Union (EU). Olssen *et al.* (2004) described these organisations, or actors, as *supranational* organisations and related them to the process of *globalisation*, which seeks

to describe and promote the interconnectedness of different states around the world. The definition of globalisation as interconnectedness of different states (Olssen *et al.*, 2004) can be extended by Verger *et al.* (2012) and Dale (1999) when they described the political, economic and cultural arms of globalisation.

It is important to point out that Olssen *et al.* (2004) are very critical of neoliberalism, by reminding us that education is essential to a democratic society and points to the work of Dewey (1910 and 1916, republished in 1997), as discussed earlier, where education teaches individuals the processes to think better and where knowledge is developed through interactions and through reasoning and interpreting facts, which can be used to hold government and authority to account. This is further discussed by Muhr (2012) who stated that despite the influence globalisation has in developing neoliberal policies, the supranational organisations mentioned above still promote education as a human right and support transnational social justice. From the discussion earlier it can be seen there are links here with liberalism in developing the process of thinking through being taught how to 'learn to learn' and the Deweyan concept of liberal education. Furthermore, Giroux (2004), a critic of neoliberalism, noted that neoliberalism is eroding the social provisions of the welfare state, to promote market freedom and profit making as important aspects of democracy.

### **2.2.1 The Knowledge Economy and Human Capital**

According to Dale (2005) central to the aim of globalisation is the so-called *knowledge economy*, where individuals gain knowledge to contribute towards the state economy. Dale (2005) highlighted the link Susan Robertson demonstrated between the knowledge economy and the role of supranational organisations such as the World Bank and the OECD in terms of the agenda-setting documents that these organisations produce. Furthermore, Dale (2005) noted some of Robertson's concerns about the knowledge economy: in that it has great consequences for education systems and promotes material status amongst society. Moreover, Verger *et al.* (2012) stated that a negative outcome of globalisation is that it has increased inequality in and between countries through unequal distributions of power.

Peters (2003) commented that *learning* and *knowledge* are key to social organisation and production and that these concepts have changed overtime under the influence of the global knowledge economy in that the central aim of education institutions, such as schools, is to produce *human capital* that can be used in the

competitive world. This is linked with Bourdieu's concept of *capital* as will be discussed in Chapter Three, for example, where individuals who have access to cultural capital can better themselves by utilising this cultural (or human) capital; that is, taking advantage of family contacts and family human capital and those who have little or no human capital cannot be competitive and so resort to survival or coping strategies.

Robeyns (2006) highlighted an issue with human capital in that it is instrumental, fragmented and economistic; it lacks consideration for individuals' rights and capabilities and does not take account of the social, cultural and non-material aspects of life. Moreover, a human capital model suggests that individuals act for economic reasons only, as according to Little (2003), the aim of human capital theory is that individuals invest in education to better themselves. Little (2003) went on to critique human capital theory in that education can be seen as a screening, or selection tool, by employers and the like to pick the best people to perform the job. Here individuals are also mostly interested in the economic, or material, benefits education can bring, thus linking with the notion of *homo economicus*, in which, according to Read (2009), neoliberalism seeks to improve an individual's economic position. In this sense skills and productivity are linked to how much someone earns (Little, 2003). Therefore, someone using this theory would struggle to understand why someone would educate himself or herself if they do not receive financial gains through their salary or other material possession(s). This brings Little (2003) to have discussed the motivational aspects for learning, which is intrinsic motivation for the purposes of pleasure and interest versus the extrinsic motivation for learning that could be financial or positional gains. Little (2003) concluded that human capital theory takes the assumptions for motivation to learn for granted. These are not new ideas and were discussed by Schultz as far back as 1961: '*...the most distinctive feature of our economic system is the growth in human capital*' (p. 16).

Coffield (1999) commented that when education policy is aimed at up-skilling the workforce, the policy could be viewed as a simplified version of human capital theory. In addition Coffield (1999) highlighted some drawbacks of human capital theory: it negates other forms of capital (for example, social and cultural capital, defined by Bourdieu), it does not take account of injustices in society or sexual division in the labour market and it is divisive where more educated individuals may be favoured over less educated individuals and that continued up-skilling will devalue qualifications and credentials. An example of the last drawback is the over production of university graduates for the number of employment vacancies that are available. A further drawback outlined by Brown (1999)

is that there is no place for teamwork, interpersonal or creative skills within human capital theory. With all of these drawbacks Coffield (1999) questioned why human capital theory is so popular. The answer is simple, according to Coffield (1999): it gives politicians the power to increase how much is spent on education, and provides a rationale for implementation of neoliberal action and policy, hiding the need for economic and social reforms and gives the idea that to every complex problem there is a simple solution.

Moreover, Enslin and Hedge (2008) pointed to the World Bank's *Knowledge for Development* programme, which encourages the efficient use and transmission of knowledge. This indicates the World Bank's influence on globalisation and the use of knowledge as a product. Throughout Enslin and Hedge's (2008) article, it is clear that they are pointing to knowledge as what is learned from Higher Education. This can be translated in this context to what is learned at school. Another example of a supranational organisation's effects on education is the idea of the EU's KnELL project (Dale, 2005). This project puts an emphasis on learning, not education; competence not context; the importance of ICT, and has a work-related focus on (education) policy. Moreover, Rizvi and Lingard (2009) stated that in terms of global education policy, more resources are deployed to assist in data collection for comparative purposes, which links with the concept of performativity. Thompson (2009) noted that in UK Government policy, the importance of young people entering further education was to create an economy that is a high-school-knowledge based one.

### **2.2.2 The OECD and PISA as a Measurement of Human Capital**

An example of a performativity measure associated with globalisation is the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) that is produced by the OECD (OECD, 2016). PISA assessments look at assessing literacy, numeracy and science, amongst a predetermined selection of pupils of school leaving age and ranks countries in order of comparative performance. In addition, PISA also correlates the results with socio-economic backgrounds of the young people sitting the assessments (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009) and the '*flow of human capital from schooling systems*' (Lingard, 2017, p. 7). According to Lingard (2017) PISA was initiated in 1997 and assessments were first performed in 2000 and are then performed every three years by the OECD, which was established in 1961. Furthermore, Lingard (2017) stated the nature of assessment has increased since 2000 to assess human capital to a greater extent and highlighted the success of China's Shanghai performance in 2009, and other East Asian countries, as examples of where policy makers in the West should be looking. Moreover, Lingard

(2014) stated that an aim of PISA is to allow policy convergence between the countries that participate, where there is a general theme of you cannot improve what you cannot measure. The most recent PISA in 2015 found that Scotland's performance had declined in literacy and science and performed at the OECD average for numeracy. In addition, Scotland had fallen in the comparative rankings across other countries and within the UK. In the previous PISA 2012, Scotland performed above the OECD average in literacy and science and average in numeracy (Scottish Government, 2016).

Lingard (2017) suggested that national data and international data should be used together to give a comparative analysis. However, Wiseman and Walayo (2018) stated that critics of PISA accuse the OECD, and other supranational bodies, of attempting to dominate education policy. Lingard (2016) suggested that the results from PISA assessments are used as a way to justify policy reforms and demonstrated how this has been done in the USA, England and Australia; perhaps though their agenda-setting documents discussed previously. Moreover, Lingard (2016) stated that different countries use PISA results in different ways, with their own justification and rationale for their use. In the UK, and Scotland specifically, it is possible to see the influence that supranational organisations have on policy: it is only necessary to look at the reaction from the British media and statements from Government Ministers at the time results are published. Indeed Lingard (2016) commented on the importance of the media in portraying performance in PISA assessments. Sellar and Lingard (2013) highlighted that the increased use of PISA results has resulted in new methods of global governance being created and implemented. The concept of Governance is considered next in Section 2.2.3.

Moreover, the OECD, according to Lingard (2017), is specifically concerned with the development of skills via human capital theory and the OECD's *Skills Strategy*, which specifically relates skills, lifelong learning and knowledge-based economies to the development of a country's economy. In relation to learning through life Lingard (2017) highlighted authors such as Deleuze (1995) and Rose (1999) who comment that it is no longer appropriate to consider education as occurring within a specific site, such as a school, but to consider education as learning through life to improve an individual's human capital. This may be achieved through work experience, community learning, family learning, exposure to colleges, universities, apprenticeships and other training providers, for example.

The emphasis on development of skills by the OECD is evident through the expansion of PISA in three areas, according to Lingard (2017). First is the widened scope of the assessments to include more forms of human capital, for example financial literacy. Lingard (2017) also pointed out the ability for PISA to move on-line may also strengthen the possibilities for measuring more forms of human capital. Second is the increasing scale of assessments through increasing numbers of participating countries and schools, where even non-members of the OECD participate in PISA through the OECD's Enhanced Engagement Programme. Lingard (2017) commented that in 2015, 38 non-member states participated and 34 member states participated in PISA. Third is by the increasing explanatory power of the assessments by policy makers. Lingard (2017) described this as the OECD's vision to demonstrate a direct link between classroom teachers' pedagogy and PISA assessment scores, what he called the '*holy grail*' (p. 11) of educational research.

Furthermore, Lingard (2017) identified an issue, in that PISA does not take into account teaching methodologies that take place. To combat this, according to Lingard (2017), the OECD has introduced the *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) to assess learning environments and teaching conditions in school. Lingard (2017) stated that the OECD hopes to capitalise and link the vast data that comes from the PISA and TALIS programmes. TALIS has only been carried out twice, in 2008 and 2013, and the OECD aims to link the data from PISA and TALIS in 2018.

Earlier the work of Robinson (1999; 2010) was discussed in relation to building and developing a less rigid curriculum through a liberal education model and a curriculum that thrives on individuals being able to take part in more activities that promote problem solving, creativity and divergent thinking. It is not easy to see how PISA would fit into this less rigid curriculum, particularly since the PISA assessments are on-line and measure more concrete elements of human capital. Perhaps the OECD may need to develop ways to assess the skills of critical thinking or divergent thinking, or even develop assessment questions that take these skills into account. What is important is that young people should never be over assessed to satisfy a neoliberal agenda influenced by supranational organisations.

### **2.2.3 Governance**

Dale (2005) wrote about *governance* associated with a neoliberal framework. This means that responsibility and accountability in education associated with funding, ownership, provision and regulation is transferred from the state to other organisations,

such as national, subnational organisations, or even co-ordinated through markets or the community. An example of this was detailed earlier, in the discussion surrounding the Scottish Government's consultation to transfer powers from Local or Central Government to Head Teachers (Scottish Government, 2017c). As mentioned above Lingard (2017) suggested that PISA data should be used for comparative analyses, however, in addition to this Lingard (2014) argued that comparison has allowed governance and control to take hold within the PISA system in a form of top down accountability. Ball (2010) warned that processes like the above that transfer responsibility or devolve authority are processes of re-regulation, where the regulating body simply changes, and not de-regulation, where regulation is removed. An example, given by Rosenau (1992), would be supranational organisation, such as the OECD and the World Bank trying to influence policy through their agenda-setting documents and PISA assessments. Rosenau (1992) called this governance without government, as these organisations have no legal framework for countries to implement their policy suggestions.

A further example can be seen through the education policy of England, where the UK Government identified that the standard of education was decreasing compared to other countries (UK Government, 2015). To combat this the then Conservative education secretary, Michael Gove, consulted with stakeholders to set up 'free schools', which would be state-funded by the Government, non-profit, independent from Local Authorities and all pupil ability, with an aim to increase educational attainment in England. Andrew and Johnes (2017) carried out a detailed review of free schools for the Education Policy Institute and noted that since free schools were set up in 2011 their numbers have increased to 347 and are found in every region of England. They also noted that the geographical location of free schools has implications for public education in that it will affect school choice for anyone who lives in their catchment areas; some areas have many free schools and some areas have few free schools. Andrew and Johnes (2017) pointed to the '*regional bias*' (p. 8) in the location of free schools; early free schools are in high performing London compared to now, where they are more prevalent in areas of deprivation, but only take an average share of deprived young people. Moreover, Andrew and Johnes (2017) suggested that free schools are not yet popular with parents and have not yet become the first choice of state school for a young person. Even since free schools opened in 2011, Andrew and Johnes (2017) have suggested there is not enough data available to assess their effectiveness. Furthermore, since free schools have been operating they have been plagued by problems, as reported in the media, for example The Guardian

(2018). These problems include: financial irregularities, director's salaries compared to teacher's salaries and more use of unqualified teachers as oppose to qualified teachers.

Gillies (2011) argued that due to governance individuals need to be *agile* to secure employment and maintain a place within a dynamic market; that is an individual who is dynamic and proactive. However, Gillies (2011) is also critical of the notion of being *agile* as it can be seen to have a corporate influence, where an individual should be seen to be agile to meet the demands of the company or employer. Moynihan (2006) detailed the trade-off: '*flexibility and operational authority are increased in return for results-based accountability*' (p. 79). In other words, success is dependent on each worker's agility, and each worker is depended on the company for employment and their salary, therefore, the worker accepts the responsibility to be *agile*. If they do not, then insecurity of employment and the future relies paradoxically on change and the capacity for rapid change. While this neoliberal angle must be addressed, it should be acknowledged that aspects of flexibility have been of benefit to some workers too, as highlighted by Wheatley (2017), in a study involving mostly public sector workers and those with contracts, particularly in relation to flexible shift patterns, which have suited some with childcare responsibilities, for example, and in relation to working from home. Therefore agility may offer some rewards in terms of agency and autonomy for the worker but this too comes with considerable cost, as noted above and by Sennet (1998).

Sennet (1998) argued that in a modern world of fast capitalism, flexibility and lifelong learning are important for individuals to keep up. Bourdieu (1998) described this as '*flexplotation*', which means individuals being flexible under pressure from those above them for the benefit of others, for example, to those whom they are accountable. Reay (2017) discussed the destruction of worker's rights since the 1980s, which has led to poorer financial and legal positions for workers. Moreover, Reay (2017) demonstrated this with the increasing number of zero-hours contracts: approximately 0.4% of the UK population were on a zero-hours contract in 2004, compared to 2.3% of the UK population in 2014 and 6% in 2017, according to the Office of National Statistics (2018). This is attributed, according to Reay (2017), to the increasing exploitation of the workforce by powerful employers. Furthermore, Gillies (2011) noted that the use of *agile*, or more proactive and dynamic workers, in discourse has been more prominent since the economic crash in 2007/8. However, it is important to note that while the economic crash was caused by high-earning bank officials engaged in illegal practices, it is the workers who have to suffer the need to adapt.

Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2011), in a study carried out in a primary school, demonstrated that working class young people are being geared towards other aspirations, than their personal aspirations, through the reproduction of neoliberal middle class ideals. Perhaps this is a symptom of the reproduction of the dominant class culture, highlighted by Bourdieu (1977) and in Chapter Three. Reay (1998) disagreed with Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2011) because she suggested that in a capitalist economy responsibility falls on the individuals themselves; that is, responsibility for securing aspirations lies with the individual. Moreover, Reay (2017) noted that some young people's aspirations are in conflict with the local labour market and that this can present a problem for young people achieving their aspirations. It is important to remember, however, that some working class families may find it difficult to access help in relation to the different post-16 opportunities that exist. Indeed Reay (2017) noted some of the barriers that exist outside school, such as lack of parental support, poverty at home, poor housing and lack of life experiences. Indeed, this can be related to the lack of any idea of education as a public and social good.

### **2.3 Summary of Key Ideas and Chapter Conclusion**

From the discussions presented in this Chapter, the central ideas of liberal and neoliberal approaches are presented in Table 2.1 over page. Neoliberalism can be summarised by four key ideas (Olssen and Peters, 2005). First, individuals are considered as having rationally self-maximising economic interests. These individuals are best to judge their own needs and interests. Second, neoliberalism promotes competition in and between markets and free-market economics. Third, neoliberalism relates to *laissez-faire* in that the market is seen to be self-regulating, where it does not need state or government help.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, neoliberalism has a commitment to free trade, where there are no fees or tariffs for trade, for example, the EU free trade arrangements between countries who are members of the EU and European Economic Area.

Furthermore, Olssen *et al.* (2004) pointed to the notion that neoliberalism has run its course and failed, and that what is needed is a new discourse that is a non-bureaucratic welfare state under democratic control. This being said, however, neoliberalism is still with us, according to Olssen (2015), who demonstrated an example being the impact of increasing accountability in university research through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and the Research Excellence Framework (REF) to minimise creativity, where research is evaluated based on its end users: politics and industry, for example.

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<sup>3</sup> At present there is lack of market self-regulation and state bailouts for elites and bankers, where workers had to pay the price in terms of stagnant wages which have still not recovered.

**Table 2.1. – Comparison of Liberal and Neoliberal Ideas  
Based on Chapter Two Discussions**

<b>Key Idea</b>	<b>Liberal Approach</b>	<b>Neoliberal Approach</b>
Origin	Reaction to control/over indulgence in global markets.	Reaction to liberal education and insufficient economic drives in education.
The Individual	Individuals can critically think for themselves. Capable of rationality.	Capitalist, self-interested individuals with economic interest and entrepreneurial.
The State/ Politics	Democracy is essential where everyone has a say.	Performance oriented. De-regulated market with accountability and performativity.
Values	Freedom, autonomous choice, equality and democracy.	Globalisation, free market economics, competition individual economic gains.
Knowledge	Can use critical thinking to question and develop knowledge.	Knowledge economy, human capital theory, appropriate skills and knowledge related to economic gains.
Pedagogy/ Curriculum	Inclusive curriculum, breadth of learning. No economic or instrumental outcomes.	Skills for work and life-long learning. Outcome and performative based.
Aim of Education	Develop capacity in autonomous, well-rounded individuals.	Develop a skilled, competitive and contributory workforce.

To have an education system entirely based on a liberal approach to education where everyone is exposed to a breadth of learning, are autonomous individuals free to make choices, within constraints, whilst at the same time having a thriving economy may be difficult. This is because societies are mixed with individuals, organisations, industries, political parties and communities who have different goals, desires and values. Olssen (2004) stated that a key difference between liberalism and neoliberalism is related to the notion of *laissez-faire* and that liberalism focuses on the autonomous individual rather than the state; the individual is the one that has to be liberated from the power of the state.

Neoliberalism views the state as being the vehicle to provide the market conditions for individual competition and prosperity.

Bauman (2003) highlighted that education is increasingly being presented as a product rather than a process that should be on-going throughout an individual's life. Olssen and Peters (2005) exemplified the commodification of education and research in the Higher Education sector through the example of universities having to meet performativity criteria, for example REF and RAE as mentioned above. From the discussion above, the commodification of education can be interpreted as the increased tendency to view education as a product (through neoliberalism and the knowledge economy) as opposed to a life process that encourages an individual to reflect on their aspirations and values (through a liberal approach). Simons and Masschelein (2008) discussed the concept of life-long learning and stated that in order to address economic problems, these problems are turned into educational problems, and so to increase the knowledge base of the workforce will result in an individual renewing their human capital.

This can be interpreted as the development of an individual's employability using the cognitive process of learning they developed in school. The next Chapter will detail an in-depth discussion of Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction*, outlining key concepts and the design of this theory together with an explanation of the key concept of *habitus* and transformation of *habitus*. This will be related to literature on aspirations and linked to the *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* nature of aspirations.

## Chapter Three

### Bourdieu and Aspirations

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This Chapter is presented in four sections. The first section provides an overview of Bourdieu's *Theory of Reproduction* (1977), defining important terms and explaining key areas of this theory. Section two will critique applying Bourdieu's theory as a method of data analysis. Third, a critique of the current literature surrounding aspirations and young people's choices in relation to post-16 destinations is presented. Finally, the fourth section will link the previous sections together by bring together ideas from Bourdieu's theory and current literature on aspirations and *habitus* transformation. A running theme throughout this Chapter is the notion of *habitus* transformation or development.

#### **3.1 Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture**

This section focuses on Bourdieu's *Theory of Reproduction* and his book (with Jean-Claude Passeron) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, hereafter referenced as Bourdieu (1977). This book is a key reference as it allows important ideas to be framed and concepts to be defined. It should be acknowledged, however, that there are competing doctrines in which to study social activity. Bourdieu is not the only theorist to study social actions, beings or cultural perspectives of society. If a researcher wished to study social activity objectively from a structuralist perspective, then they might look at the work of Levi-Strauss or subjectively in a phenomenological perspective then they might look at the work of Mauss, Husserl or Merleau-Ponty (Bourdieu, 1977b; Grenfell and James, 1998; Nash, 1999). However, the importance of the work of Pierre Bourdieu's research into the relationship of how the dominant classes reproduce their ideas and concepts from generation to generation is more relevant to this dissertation. This is posited by Harker *et al.* (1990) when he highlighted that it is the dominant classes that have the power to control the economic, social and political resources that schools can acquire, and that it is this acquirement, or embodiment (as Harker *et al.*, 1990 described), that gives the dominant classes their strategy and capacity for reproduction.

The central idea of Bourdieu's theory (1977) is relating how the pedagogical practices in schools relate to the cultural practices of pupils and their families.

Furthermore, it is argued that the power the education system has imposes certain meanings and actions, of the dominant class, on all young people regardless of their background. This is allowed to happen because it is *legitimised* in how schools are structured and operate. These meanings and actions are described as symbolic in that they can appear subconscious, where young people may be exposed to them without their knowledge, through the education system and how the school operates.

### 3.1.1 Key Concepts in Bourdieu's Work

In the context of Bourdieu's theory, the education establishment is referred to as the *field* (Grenfell and James, 1998). In this *field* pupils hold different positions, which determine whether or not they will continue in the same path throughout school, or be given the possibility to change path. In the context of aspirations, this could mean young people 'coasting' along at school with no determination, or young people being given the knowledge, skills, experiences and opportunities to aim for their aspirations. Nash (2002) argued that the knowledge young people gain at school is the *arbitrary* knowledge of the dominant classes and that if one wishes to become 'educated' then young people need to buy-in to the way in which the school, and indeed, the education system operates. Not all young people may buy-in due to barriers and constraints outwith their control: both consciously and subconsciously. This will be highlighted through this dissertation.

Bourdieu highlighted two important concepts in relation to *field*: *habitus* and *doxa* (Grenfell and James, 1998). *Habitus* is described as a structuring structure, which organises people by their perceptions, thoughts and actions and takes account of their history, preferences and dispositions. In the context of this dissertation, it could be argued that the *habitus* of young people growing up in socially disadvantaged areas needs to be re-structured or transformed by involvement and exposure to different experiences or activities in order to broaden their aspirations, reduce barriers, and thus develop their *habitus*. That being said, it is not as easy as this and it is important to bear these barriers and constraints in mind. *Habitus* is defined as: the set of dispositions; that is, the way one thinks, acts and behaves in relation to experiences, attitudes, beliefs and social influences that affect an individual's choices and future opportunities. *Habitus* is the way one thinks and the way experiences are grasped (Grenfell and James, 1998). Nash (1999) extended this to suggest the *habitus* is embodied as an internalised structure and has a history. Furthermore, King (2000) highlighted that *habitus* produces social actions and practices that are deeply ingrained within individuals. Moreover, Stahl (2015a) noted that as *habitus* can be generated by the influence of the school, it could also affect young people's ways of

thinking and being. Stahl (2015a) further suggested that *habitus* allows researchers to move away from narrow concepts, such as aspiration, to consider them as the connection between the past and the present, as a fluid concept encapsulating agency taken together with individual and group effects. This links with the idea proposed by Gale and Parker (2015a) who suggested that aspirations can be thought to develop through individual's navigational capacity, taking account of the historicising and spatialising aspects of aspiration. This means developing aspirations to take account of 'map' and 'tour' knowledge, initially developed by de Certeau (1984), that individuals have developed within the education field. 'Tour' knowledge is that which is expressed through operations by being able to navigate around a physical or social space by taking direction and instructions from another. Using tour knowledge individuals know where they have been and where they are at that present moment in time, but may be unaware of where the tour will take them in the future. If individuals come across obstacles or difficulties, they may simply choose another route rather than try to overcome these difficulties. 'Map' knowledge is that which is known from above. Individuals with map knowledge are certain of where the end is from the beginning of their journey, they have been able to use their knowledge and resources to map out and navigate their aspirational route and can use their knowledge and resources to overcome obstacles and barriers. Appadurai (2004) reinforced the navigational capacity of aspirations to take account of the economic, social and cultural resources that are available to individuals to allow them to take steps towards their aspirational goal. This is developed by Gale and Parker (2015a, 2015b) and Bok (2010) when discussing the difference between desire and possibility of certain aspirations, where young people from areas of low socio-economics status are generally hopefully and optimistic about their futures, refuting the misconception and often deficit-based models, that suggest these young people do not have hopes and ambitions for the future. This dissertation will support the claim, like Bok (2010), that young people from areas of low socio-economic status are ambitious and forward thinking about their futures and aspirations.

Furthermore, Bourdieu's tools are chosen as the methodological approach to this dissertation because, according to various researchers, for example Costa and Murphy (2015) and Stahl (2015a), they offer the researcher an adaptable set of concepts which can expose and explain the processes of why things come about in the social world, for example the reproduction of inequality, while at the same time focusing on the agency associated with the individual. Moreover various researchers, Gale and Parker (2015a, 2015b), Zipin *et al.* (2015), Tarabini and Curran (2018) and Stahl (2018) have used

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as a methodological framework to explore aspirations. In addition, Thompson (2009) stated that post-16 aspirations are a key component of the dispositions embedded within the *habitus* and link this to class background, where those young people whose parents were from a labour contract employment background did not have as well developed dispositions compared to those from a higher class family background. The work of these researchers and others are considered in more detail in Chapter Four, where the methodological framework of this dissertation is presented.

*Doxa* is defined simply as 'the rules of the game', and indeed Bourdieu frequently wrote of social activity as a 'game'. The 'rules' organise people in the *field* and are not conscious in the minds of those playing the game. Those who challenge the rules of the game are those who may have the possibility of changing power relations in the *field* for the betterment of themselves. Again, putting this in the context of aspirations, this could mean that those from a lower socio-economic area who challenge the game and develop their dispositions, for example their values and actions, associated with *habitus* could progress to better/other aspirations. However, in order to challenge the game, it is necessary for young people to take risks, which may not always pay off. Stahl (2015b) suggested that some working class young people do not want to take risks, by challenging what they learn, for fear of failure and embarrassment. Indeed, Stahl (2015b) also suggested that the school could be thought of as a generative medium for the *habitus*, which affects ways of thinking, both directly and indirectly, consciously and subconsciously.

In an *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu (1977b) described *habitus* as being the result of practices and the mode of practices and as generative schemes that readjust to given conditions. *Habitus* is constructed from social and cultural messages. For this dissertation this means that a young person's *habitus* has a dialectical relationship with the education establishment in that it is mutual and reinforcing. Robbins (1998) linked Bourdieu's use of generative schemes and the notion of *habitus* as a structuring structure with neo-Kantian thinking. The link between *habitus* and education is prominent in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, where Bourdieu stated the *habitus* developed in the family is the underlying structure of experiences at school and that it can be changed by experiences at school. This is considered further in Chapter Four together with the concept of *institutional habitus* in relation to *habitus* transformation.

Reay (2010) utilised the concept of *habitus* in empirical research on Higher Education. Reay (2010) suggested that *habitus* has a long history, dating back to the times of Aristotle; however, Reay (2010) contended that the use of *habitus* in research is not always operationalised in the way Bourdieu intended. She asserted that some researchers apply the concept of *habitus* before data is collected, whereas Bourdieu asserts that the concept should be used to analyse the data. This dissertation has attempted to use the concept as Bourdieu intended. As will be demonstrated during data analysis, data was initially coded and themes identified without using the concept of *habitus*, and it is later in the data analysis, where literature is used to explain the data, that *habitus* and the Bourdieusian methodology comes into play.

One further important concept of Bourdieu's theory is that of *capital*. *Capital* is defined as the knowledge, experiences or connections that one has. There are different types of capital: *social*, *economic* and *cultural capital* (Grenfell and James, 1998).<sup>4</sup> *Cultural capital* is formed through education and includes language. It is connected to objects, places and individuals, for example how well someone speaks 'Bourgeois English' compared to Glaswegian and their interests in art and music. Bourdieu (1977) stated that language, its acquisition and use, is the product of social conditions and that there is a mismatch between 'domestic' language used at home and the language used in school. This notion of a cultural mismatch was extended by van de Werfhorst (2010), who is critical of Bourdieu's notion of a mismatch, by suggesting that aspirations and educational levels should take into account the multidimensional aspect of society as opposed to the unidimensional aspects. By multidimensional, van de Werfhorst (2010) meant that it is important to consider four resources together as a measure of outcomes and not focus on one resource. The four resources were: cultural, economic, communicative and technical. Bourdieu (1977) also discussed scholastic (or academic language) and stated that how well people learn was related to their understanding of this language and that this, in turn, is affected by sex and class. This was elaborated when Bourdieu suggested that attainment, or mastery of scholarly language, was related to the difference in the social position of the teacher compared to that of the young person. Where middle-class people who may be more likely to achieve scholastic language are likely to succeed.

van de Werfhorst (2010) described Bourdieu in the sense that young people from advantaged backgrounds will attain better in school because there is a similarity between

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<sup>4</sup> It should be acknowledged that there are further types of capital; symbolic and linguistic capital that encapsulate other types of capital.

the culture at home and the culture of the school, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds will not do as well because there is a gap between the culture at home and that of the school, which may result in these young people dropping out of school. In this study this could refer to a working class young person being educated using middle-class language. This links with the work on education inequality by Basil Bernstein (1971), in his classic combinations of volumes of *Class, Codes and Controls*, where he stated a fundamental connection between the ingrained structures of communication, the process of socialisation and one's class background in that language in the classroom can be used as a method of social control.

*Social capital* involves connections that a young person has and social relations, through their family for example, and how they may use these connections to better themselves. *Economic capital* is money or other financial assets. *Capital* is stored in one's *habitus* and if someone has *capital* that comes from their family, this makes them better players of 'the game'. King (2000) highlighted Bourdieu's analogy of 'the game' as in football or tennis: it is the understanding of one's relationships to others, taking into account acceptable practices. However, Fine and Lapavitsas (2004) raised caution over the notion of *capital*, as described above, when it is used to show any relationship between the capitalist economy and social capital relationships, in that it assumes a relationship between individuals and economic outcomes. Fine and Lapavitsas (2004) stated that *social capital* was the second most used concept after globalisation, in the social sciences and points to *social capital's* importance with the World Bank, where they highlighted a problem in that researchers used *social capital* in a way that can be applied to any methodology, method or theory. For this purposes of this dissertation it is important then to give a definition of social capital, as described at the start of this paragraph.

Lastly, bringing these concepts together, Bourdieu talked of *symbolic violence*, which is practiced unconsciously in education, and is the combination of the language educators use, the subjects taught, discipline and the examination system.<sup>5</sup> For example, Classics and Latin are subjects typically thought of in relation to private education of the upper classes. Moreover, Bourdieu (1977) highlighted that pupils who have better scholastic language and cultural capital are likely to invest in this capital and language by choosing difficult subjects with a higher cognitive challenge. It is important to note, however, that Devine (2004) highlighted that the benefits from social networks and

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<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu uses the term educators to mean teacher, lecturers, for example. In this dissertation an educator is taken to mean secondary school teachers.

contacts of middle-class families, who presumably speak this scholastic language, influence the decision and actions they themselves take as parents. Pupils who do not have the required capital to be successful at a difficult subject are likely to become disengaged, alienated, or eliminated from education. These young people may feel demotivated and become less aspirational than their middle-class peers who possess the required capitals reinforced by parental aspirations and resources. In addition, by the time some young people reach Secondary school it is difficult to change their motivation for education and it is a case of keeping them engaged and focused on the goal to reach their aspiration. This is acknowledged in a report by Haywood *et al.* (2009) for the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which stated that young people from disadvantaged areas, or lower socio-economic backgrounds, are less likely to maintain motivation for staying on at school beyond the compulsory leaving age. This report commented on other barriers such as religious background, sexuality and ethnic minorities, which are beyond the scope of this dissertation but must be acknowledged as contributing factors either operating individually or as multiple factors.

### **3.1.2 The Four Principal Propositions**

There are four principal propositions to Bourdieu's theory: pedagogic action (PA), pedagogic authority (PAu), pedagogic work (PW) and the notion that each educational institution contributes to social reproduction through its internal conditions; that is, the way it operates and functions (Bourdieu, 1977). PA is central to *symbolic violence*, defined above. This is the method and principles the school uses to teach, or educate. These methods belong to the dominant group in education, those who are educated, and are imposed on everyone who uses the education system. In this sense Bourdieu described PA as a *cultural arbitrary*. PAu is the power that educators have and how they use this. Bourdieu again described this as an arbitrary power that is used to apply *symbolic violence*: the unconscious power teachers have when they discipline, communicate and push young people towards examinations. Using PAu, teachers may be unaware that they are reproducing the culture of the dominant classes; this can be related to the hidden curriculum, discussed earlier. PW is the process of providing young people with ideas, and attitudes: the 'inculcation' process, where the teacher is the inculcator and the pupils the inculcated. PW must take place over a long period of time and is directly related to, and can affect, the *habitus* through unconscious actions and relationships. This then implies that this process of inculcation takes place through the *habitus* (Grenfell and James, 1998). PW starts in the family at a young age and is developed as a young person moves into school and further to Higher or Further Education. Above all PW can be measured by academic

achievement, which is related to the difference in *habitus* of the teacher (the school) and pupil. Bourdieu (1977) asserted that education is a process of inculcation between transmitters (teachers) and receivers (pupils). From the above discussion it could be implied that *habitus* is related to PA, PAu and PW, where it can both restrict and empower choices through the action of symbolic violence. Moreover, Reay (2004) described choice as being central to *habitus* and that choice may be limiting to an individual based on the resources available to them. This resonated with Bok (2010) who developed the ‘aspirational map’, where the resources and choices that young people make in relation to their aspirations are affected by the social, cultural and economics factors that influences an individual’s capacity to navigate this map. This links with the concepts of map and tour knowledge discussed earlier in this Chapter. Reay (2004) went on further to suggest that to Bourdieu, the dispositions available to an individual are made from the opportunities and constraints developed through earlier life experiences, where if a possibility arises that is unthinkable, it will be rejected by the *habitus*.

Bourdieu (1977) described those who are successful in education as ‘survivors’ who have been inculcated with the ‘message’ and those who do not succeed as being ‘eliminated’ from the educational system. Those who do not survive may be those who are working class and disadvantaged because they have not had the same access to *social* or *cultural capital* and the mastery of scholastic language that the middle classes have; the working class young person may not have had the opportunity to modify their *habitus*. Stahl (2015a, 2015b) described this modification as the *counter-habitus*, which can operate alongside a transformed habitus. Stahl (2015b) described the *counter-habitus* as an *egalitarian habitus* that can be used to combat the neoliberal effects of schooling. By this Stahl (2015b) meant, in his study of working class boys, that they use this *counter-habitus* to develop a sense of self-worth, value and loyalty to themselves in a school environment that promotes a “*learning=earning*” (p. 28) culture. However, as Brown *et al.* (2011) highlighted the notion of learning=earning is breaking down due to increased competitiveness between good, ‘middle class jobs’ brought about by the increasing number of graduates.

Stahl (2015b) went on to discuss the possibility for *habitus* transformation and noted that if the *habitus* becomes destabilised a *habitus clivé* is formed, resulting in messages about upward mobility education to be transmitted. Moreover, Stahl (2015a) stated that this modified *habitus* could be changed by an individual’s agency when they come into play with an unfamiliar *field*. This could mean, for example, that by exposing

young people to different ideas about aspirations, they can modify their *habitus* and gain social and cultural capital making their aspiration possibilities wider and more realistic. Those who drop out of education early, self-eliminate and increase the mortality rate of education. Stahl (2015a) stated that the school is central to *habitus* development in that it provides a place for the *habitus* to develop and transform, both directly and indirectly by allowing messages about upward mobility to be passed to young people, which can change the way individuals think and act; that is their dispositions, and to challenge misconceptions that are discussed through out this dissertation and in Chapter Six: Discussion. Above all, one aim of Bourdieu was to develop a theory of social praxis that went beyond the traditional paradigmatic lines of objective/subjective or theory-practice (Grenfell and James, 1998).

### 3.2 Bourdieu: Theory as Method

Grenfell and James (1998) stated that Bourdieu's theory is one *of practice and for practice*: that theory and practice are complementary and occur at the same time during the research process. This is an example of the dialectic of theory and *praxis* highlighted by Papa *et al.* (2006) who stated that in social change there are four dialectics that need to be considered in research. First is that of *control* and *emancipation*, which states that disempowered people immerse themselves in systems of control to allow themselves the possibility to be emancipated. This could be an example of young people from working class backgrounds that commit to bettering their education at secondary school and have the capability to progress to university. The second dialectic is that of *oppression* and *empowerment*, which highlights that when an entity acts as an agent that empowers, it may also act as an agent of oppression; not necessarily at the same time, but maybe some time in the future, or that the entity could be superficially empowering whilst oppressing at a deeper level. The third dialectic of social change that needs to be considered is that of *dissemination* and *dialogue*. Put simply this is the way information is received by an individual from another of greater power: the receiving individual accepts control. It is possible that this power dynamic evolves through the action of the Four Principal Propositions discussed above: pedagogic work, pedagogic action, pedagogic authority and the operation of the education establishment. Lastly, the fourth dialectic is between *fragmentation* and *unity*, where individuals of the same order find security in each other, for example, the working classes in a community, and diversity, or differences, leads to fragmentation and isolation.

It is important to recognise that while these dialectics are described in four categories above, they do influence and impact each other. In terms of this dissertation, investigating the experiences, choices and decisions that affect young people's post-16 destinations, it is possible that all four dialectics for social change may come into play. For example the dialectic of control and emancipation could be related to Bourdieu's (1977) idea of the education system reproducing the dominant discourse: that of the middle classes. Working class young people could use this middle class discourse to raise their educational achievement and attainment. The second dialectic of oppression and empowerment could come into play, where if working class young people do take on board the dominant discourse, this could act also as a vehicle of oppression. This is related to the third dialectic of dissemination and dialogue where the education establishment and the teachers transmit their pedagogic authority and action through learning and teaching and daily interactions between young people and teachers. Lastly, in the fourth dialectic of fragmentation and unity, where working class young people may group together to help each other succeed, or are isolated by the discourse of the middle class. It is important that a deficit-model of the working class is not portrayed, in that it is important to recognise that working class young people do achieve and succeed as highlighted by the Scottish Government's statistics (2017f; 2017g).

There are critics to using Bourdieu's conceptual tools, for example, Jaegar (2011) who suggested that the concepts developed by Bourdieu were too vague to be applied, in the sense that Bourdieu himself had not adequately defined them. Moreover, Grenfell and James (1998) indicated that Bourdieu's research is not methodologically prescriptive and is, therefore, open-ended. Importantly, as this research is focusing on Bourdieu's *habitus*, Grenfell and James (1998) warned researchers using this concept not to fall into the trap of mistaking *habitus* for a mechanical element to the way the *field* is played by individuals. In this way Grenfell and James (1998) and Costa and Murphy (2015) bring out the *relational* element of Bourdieu's concepts and described research that utilised Bourdieu as thinking in a certain way with these concepts, or tools, to understand and explain inequalities. Grenfell and James (1998) go further to suggest that if one uses *habitus* as a research tool, then it can never be investigated using solely empirical work.

However, the benefits and methodological ways of using Bourdieu's theory have been argued by many researchers and are discussed below before being used to develop a methodological lens with which to investigate data in Chapter Four. Mills (2008) highlighted the potential of teachers using Bourdieu's concepts to transform the cultural

capital of those from disadvantaged areas, rather than reproduce the capital. This transformative view of Bourdieu's concepts was echoed by Costa and Murphy (2015), however to be transformative, researchers (and teachers) must fully understand the concepts used and understand the difference between the *field* that an agent is acting in and the *habitus* they have disposed in them. Moreover, Fitzpatrick and May (2016) demonstrated that theory and method, using Bourdieu's concepts, works together to provide a rich, critical study.

The importance of being aware of different definitions of concepts was highlighted by Chesters and Smith (2015) when they discussed the different definitions of *social capital* offered by Bourdieu (1977) and James Coleman (1988), where the latter viewed *social capital* as interchangeable with working together towards common, community goals, as Tzanakis (2013) described as a bonding mechanism, whereas Bourdieu saw social capital as an individual entity. Moreover, Tzanakis (2013) highlighted that the definition of *social capital* changes depending on which theory is used, that of: Coleman (1988), Bourdieu (1977; 1984) or Putnam (1993), and that in reality *social capital* is often a mixture of these definition taking account functionalist, realist, or critical theories. Tzanakis (2013) demonstrated that Coleman's definition was subject to extensive critique for three reasons. Firstly, Coleman's definition does not differentiate between individuals and their ability to acquire resources; furthermore, Coleman did not describe how social capital could transform from an individual level to a common, community level. Second, Coleman suggested that *social capital* is only apparent at community level indicators. Third, Coleman insisted that there must be closure on *social capital's* functionality. Similarly, those critics of Coleman, for example Portes (1998; 2000) and Sobel (2002), are also critics of Putnam, stating that Putman's definition falls short because he does not take into account other factors that could affect economic wealth and social capital. Furthermore, in Putnam's definition causality is one directional in that society produces or helps the economic state of a country, but economics does not produce or affect society. This demonstrates the caution raised earlier by Fine and Lapavitsas (2004) when they cautioned over any link between the economy and social capital relationships. Nonetheless, Tzanakis (2013) carried out an empirical study that highlighted the individualist account of *social capital*, that is the account Bourdieu gives, is the best for social science research.

Nash (1999) examined a claim from the Office of Standards in Education in New Zealand that Bourdieu's *habitus* did not have much to offer educational research and points

to other researchers, for example Tooley and Darby (1998), who have reached similar conclusions. Nash (1999) was also critical of Diane Reay's use of habitus as method. Here Reay (1995) argued that by studying *habitus* it was possible to look from past histories to the present day to see how *habitus* has changed through experiences that one has; and it allows us, as sociologists of education, to study individuals. Furthermore, Reay (1995) argued that by studying *habitus* it was possible to trace reasons for choosing particular experiences; studying *habitus* allows researchers to examine young people's practices through looking at their dispositions and social context. These dispositions are created from young people's earlier experiences. At the same time Reay (1995) acknowledged the problem of using *habitus* due to various definitions that exist, but nevertheless argues for the use of the concept as a method. Reay (1995) found that social and cultural exclusion existed in classrooms, where '*the habitus of the home meets the habitus of the school*' (p. 368); where young people's predispositions from home have more power than the school's structure and rules. It is easy to see how this is the case by comparing the amount of time young people spend at home with the influence of their family and societal influences compared to the amount of time spent at school and the influence of educators using middle-class rules.

Bourdieu (1977) distinguished between the *primary habitus* and the *secondary habitus*. The former is formed through the family and forms the basis for reception of the pedagogic work, described earlier in this Chapter, and the latter is developed at school. Costa and Murphy (2015) stated that Bourdieu's use of *habitus* is a means of getting away from the dichotomy between (objective) structure and (subjective) agency. Furthermore, Costa and Murphy (2015) suggested that research using the concept of *habitus* allows for the researcher to investigate stratification in society. The concepts of *primary habitus* and *secondary habitus* are considered in more detail in Chapter Four.

Nash (1999) stated that Bourdieu's *habitus* could be used in research in two ways: as a *specific habitus* or a *general habitus*. The former would be used to study reproduction based on class practices that are occurring and can be observed and discussed. The latter attempts to quantify *habitus* using statistical means, which can be applied to all people in a certain class. It is important here then to acknowledge generalisations in social science research; where generalisation can be made and which groups in society they can be applied too. The concept of generalisation is discussed further in Chapter Five. This dissertation will utilise the *specific habitus*. Mu (2016) used Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus* in a study examining the *habitus* of '*Chineseness*' (p. 19) using quantitative and

qualitative methods. Here Mu (2016) used Bourdieu's concepts to describe and explain his findings, such that social and cultural activities, like investigating 'Chineseness' (p. 19), has its roots in practices and dispositions of people's historic actions based on the level of capital they had. This in turn affected the way of speaking, standing, walking and feeling and thinking. Papaploydorou (2016) reminded researchers to consider the context within which research is being carried out. This is an important implication for the research being carried out, where it is not a 'one size fits all' approach and maybe difficult to transfer to different contexts.

Moreover, Murphy and Costa (2016) stated that in the world of sociology of education Bourdieu's work has enhanced our understanding of the ways in which reproduction of inequality has been evident through the curriculum and assumed cultural capitals. Furthermore, Murphy and Costa (2016) proposed using theory along with method to bridge the gap and provide an enhanced critical examination of the entity under investigation and indicated that Bourdieu himself attempted to overcome the theory-method dichotomy through his use of different concepts such as *capital*, *habitus* and *field*.<sup>6</sup> Jones (2011) suggested Bourdieu's work could be used to combine the personal and collective elements at play in social, cultural and political spheres of influence, where the personal and collective elements are constantly negotiating with each other, which may result in certain actions or choices being taken. Moreover, Murphy and Costa (2016) described Bourdieu's concepts as the object of research and the means of research and go on to suggest that this encourages the researcher to look deeper, beyond the causes of practices to understand what can be done to encourage change. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that the use of the concepts could also restrict change from taking place (Costa and Murphy, 2015). Nowicka (2015) stated that Bourdieu's concepts are social and metaphorical, which leads Murphy and Costa (2016) to describe Bourdieu's concepts as malleable as Bourdieu himself continually refined the definition of his concepts.

### 3.3 Aspirations, Choices and Experiences: 'How do I Get There?'

The excellent work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) must be acknowledged in relation to inspiring social change to promote the attainment and aspirations of young people from disadvantaged areas. There are, however, competing views in relation to aspirations. For example, the work of Beck (1992), where aspirations

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<sup>6</sup> A reminder to the reader that the use of Bourdieu's '*habitus*' as a research tool is defined as: the set of dispositions, that is, the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and social influences that affect an individual's choices and future.

were defined to tie in with the needs of the state and the economy and are competitive. Burke (2015) suggested that a knowledge economy perspective was set up because of the evolution and formation of post-industrialisation, a change in the labour market from production to services, and that this in turn, required a more educated workforce. This is a workforce, or individuals, that are measured on the knowledge or skills they have.<sup>7</sup> However, some research based in Europe, for example Goulden (2010) and McKnight *et al.* (2016), suggested that gaining employment does not necessarily eliminate poverty due to a number of reasons, for example the employment may be low-paid and/or part-time employment or lack progression and therefore not provide a route out of poverty. Poverty is a major factor that constrains choice and opportunity, particularly in Scotland (and indeed Glasgow). This was demonstrated by ‘*The Glasgow Indicators Project*’, which showed that in-work poverty in Scotland has been increasing since 2013-14 and at 2015-16 was at 70% for children and 64% for adults (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, n.d.). The Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) define in-work poverty as individuals who are living in a household where at least one member is employed, either part-time or full-time, but where the household income is below the poverty threshold for the UK. The GCPH further states that since 2000 children affected by in-work poverty has increased from 42% to 70%.

Young people aged 13 to 16 years were chosen in a study by Furlong and Biggart (1999) because they asserted that older children have more realistic aspirations. Indeed, Furlong and Biggart (1999) suggested that as young people get older they are more confident in their awareness of their academic performance and the qualifications they are likely to achieve. For this reason this research interviewed young people aged 16 and 17 years old. Moreover, Ball *et al.* (1999) stated that by the time young people are in Year 11 (S4 equivalent in Scotland) they have already assigned themselves to one of the major post-16 destinations, be that college, university or an apprenticeship for example. Furlong and Biggart (1999) outlined a developmental approach to aspirations, where young people aim for aspirations that link with their view of themselves, for example, in relation to their gender, social class and/or potential academic attainment and that this has the potential to exclude certain aspirations and that their suitability for certain occupations develops at an early age.

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to note here the link with Human Capital Theory from the previous Chapter.

### 3.3.1 Aspirations and Attainment

Kintrea *et al.* (2015) defined aspirations as the hopes and ambitions that young people have. Earlier work by Kintrea *et al.* (2011) differentiated aspiration in three ways; ideal, realistic and educational. Ideal aspirations are those that an individual would like to do if there were no constraints. Realistic aspirations are those that an individual is likely to do, given the present circumstances and constraints under which they live. Educational aspirations are those that an individual would expect with regard to their education or attainment. Morgan (2007) also defined two important concepts: educational aspirations and occupational aspirations. Educational aspirations are defined similarly to Kintrea *et al.* (2011) above and occupational aspirations are defined as the occupation, or job, that young people would like to have in the future, for example by the time they are 30 years old.

Furthermore, Kintrea *et al.* (2011, 2015) acknowledged that aspirations are defined by a range of factors including: family, peer pressure, what one thinks about one's self, society, the media and where one lives. Moreover, Kintrea *et al.* (2015) critiqued the assumption made in UK policy that young people from disadvantaged areas have lower aspirations, which lead to lower educational attainment and achievement. Gale and Parker (2015a) supported Kintrea *et al.* (2015) who found that expected aspirations were high, however there was a lack of resources with which to support young people to achieve their high aspirations. Aspiration is a very personal entity and differs for each young person, which links with Kintrea *et al.* (2015) when they discussed the realism of aspiration as being linked at an individual level to young people's educational attainment and achievement. For example, a young person who aspires to work in the construction industry is just as valid as one who aspires to university. For the purposes of this dissertation definitions will follow those of Forsyth and Furlong (2003) where Higher Education is considered as degree level and Higher National Diplomas and Further Education is defined as Higher National Certificates, National Certificates and National Progression Awards. It also needs to be acknowledged, from a study by Gutman and Akerman (2008), that aspirations of individuals, particularly working class young people, are constrained by a number of factors: religion, race, socio-economic background, previous experience, opportunities and the environment young people are brought up in. Some of these will be discussed below.

Furlong *et al.* (1998) carried out a study that compared the Finish and Scottish education systems and found that gender and previous academic attainment were significant factors that influenced aspirations. Furlong (2005) stated that the decisions

young people make at age 16 are considerably influenced by past experiences, both positive and negative. Moreover, Furlong and Biggart (1999) found that males tended to associate themselves with aspirations strongly linked to traditionally masculine areas, for example, the armed forces, the police and skilled trades, joiners and mechanics, whereas females tended to aspire to teaching, hairdressing, nursing and other high status aspirations, for example, lawyer and doctor. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to specifically consider gender stereotyping, it is important that gender stereotyping is acknowledged. Moreover, Reay (2002) highlighted the struggles and difficulties that young males have in growing up in areas of deprivation, when they want to learn to better themselves in the future, but have to balance this with the tough man stereotype to be accepted by their male peer group. According to Reay (2002), Bourdieu identified this type of double-sided struggle as the ‘*duality of the self*’ (p. 222).

### 3.3.2 Career Education and Advice

Furlong and Biggart (1999) examined the aspirations and expectations of young people aged 13 to 16 years old and found that young people need to begin to discover the different aspirational and occupational prospects and possibilities available to them before they begin their secondary education. This was a view supported by Menzies (2013) who suggested that career education and opportunities for work-related learning need to be provided from an early age. This is a key aim of the Scottish Government’s *Developing the Young Workforce* (DYW) agenda (Scottish Government, 2104) and the development of the *Career Education Standard* for all young people aged 3 to 18 years old (Education Scotland, 2015). These standards set out the entitlements and expectations of teachers, parents, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and employers in relation to providing careers information and guidance.<sup>8</sup> Furlong (2005) highlighted the importance of the family in providing advice, where working class parents may not be aware of different, and new, opportunities that exist. This appears to confirm earlier work by Biggart and Furlong (1996) who suggested that the opportunities that exist in the broader context of the labour market do affect what young people choose to do upon leaving school. The point here is that career education and work-related learning must be given from an early age and that parents should be encouraged to give their advice, but within the context of the opportunities that exist for their child(ren); parents should up-skill themselves on new opportunities that exist. An example of this in Scotland is the introduction of Foundation

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<sup>8</sup> Skills Development Scotland is the national body responsible for providing careers information and advice to everyone in Scotland. They are not restricted to dealing with young people, but serve the entire population in a ‘from cradle to grave’ service (<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk>).

Apprenticeships. It is important to acknowledge that not all parents may be able to up-skill themselves due to their own experiences and backgrounds and that perhaps the school should take the lead in offering advice and involving parents in their child's post-school decisions. In the school this research is carried out in, this is done in a number of ways and areas of good practice are identified in Chapter Six: Discussion. As a further idea it would be interesting to explore the impact and success of 'community information events' where colleges, employers, universities and SDS hold events in local community centres to raise awareness of what they offer to young people. Rowan-Kenyon *et al.* (2011) suggested, in a study involving college students, that due to unequal access to careers advice, some students are placed at a disadvantage when considering their future options. This can be related to careers advice being able to provide young people, and their families, with the map knowledge they need to navigate their aspirations from an early age (Bok, 2010; Gale and Parker 2015a) and demonstrates a link with the cultural and historic aspects of aspirations from Bourdieu (1990), as discussed earlier in this Chapter. This is especially true for young people from low socio-economic areas who wish to progress to Higher Education (HE) but have had limited access to gaining experiences of HE, possible due to few family members progressing to HE.

Moreover, Rowan-Kenyon *et al.* (2011) discussed a conceptual model of occupational aspirations comprising of different layers, based on work by Lent *et al.* (1994, 2000). Layer 1 takes account of the student and family context, involves learning experiences and expected outcomes, self-efficacy and interests developed from childhood and through adolescence, all of which result in the formation of occupational aspirations. This feeds into Layer 2, which takes into account access to, and the quality of, career education and the curriculum. Layer 3 involves partnerships, perhaps with other schools, colleges and universities. Layer 4 takes into account federal and state policies, or in the case of Scotland this would be Local Authority and Government policy. The study carried out by Rowan-Kenyon *et al.* (2011) found that those students who were at higher-resourced schools were more confident in talking about and planning their aspirations with their parents being seen as more supportive. Also, the families of these students were able to provide them with information in relation to possible careers, which may not be the case with all families who live in areas of low socio-economic status, as these parents may not have the necessary capital to give career advice.

Forsyth and Furlong (2003) found that young people whose parents had no occupation tended not to progress to Higher Education. More specifically, Reay (1998)

suggested that the mother has a great influence on shaping young people's identity. Bourdieu (1990) called this the *family habitus*, where careers are already realised through subconscious procedures, where young people's aspirations are the social reproduction of parents' expectations. Therefore, it is extremely important that the school facilitates dissemination of information in relation to different post-16 destinations. Furlong (2005) also warned schools of being complacent in terms of careers guidance for the middle-low attainment groups. Ball *et al.* (1999) found that careers advice was not rated highly with young people when compared with the experience and advice of friends and family members. Moreover, Sjaastad (2012) completed a study that highlighted 22% of young people were inspired by their parents, compared to 9% inspired by teachers. Menzies (2013) stated that careers advice needs to be high quality and that work-based learning and work experience are essential in developing and confirming aspirations. Kintrea *et al.* (2013) added that young people should be informed about the pathways available to them, helping them to answer the question 'how do I get there?'. Both these ideas from Menzies (2013) and Kintrea *et al.* (2013) link with DYW in that a key policy feature is extensive career education from early years onwards (Scottish Government, 2014). Furthermore, the DYW agenda specifically considers the importance of work-based learning, leading the developments of Foundation Apprenticeships.

### **3.3.3 The Education Institution, Class Differences and Aspirations**

Nash (2002) identified that progression in secondary school is associated with the non-cognitive dispositions inherent in young people, or that young people who are successful in secondary school are more in tune with these dispositions. These non-cognitive dispositions are defined as how young people think, behave, act and conform or otherwise to the dominant discourse, which links with the definition by Costa *et al.* (2018) discussed earlier. Those successful individuals are so because of their ambitions, self-confidence and a positive attitude to the process of education. These dispositions are related to their *habitus* and the institutional *habitus*, through young people's beliefs about the purpose of education. This is considered more in Section 3.4 and Chapter Four. Kintrea *et al.* (2015) described young people's views of themselves in relation to gender, social class, for example, as their own cognition and extended this to suggest that, in addition to the factors outlined by Furlong and Biggart (1999), ethnicity and institutional factors in local areas impact on how aspirations are formed, in addition to the influence of the media; that is, the school is important in shaping aspirations.

Furlong and Biggart (1999) arrived at the conclusion that underperforming (young people) boys will limit their ambitions; and, that if young people wish to take advantage of academic attainment they may need to consider travelling for work or looking for employment outwith the local labour market. Moreover, Stahl (2015b) found that the *habitus* working class boys have means that they ‘*exclude themselves from what they are excluded from*’ (p. 27). This is not true of all young people and different programmes, for example school-college programmes, need to be in place to cater for the aspirations of all young people. The Local Authority that this dissertation research is based in employs a range of opportunities to keep young people in education as long as needed by participating in school-college programmes, where young people spend a proportion of the week at school and the rest at college. This can range from spending one to three days at college. Specifically, the school that this dissertation research is taking place in has set up bespoke partnerships with a local college. This has resulted in two programmes being developed: a transitions course for those with additional support needs and a National Progression Award in Construction. This is being extended with the development of a National Progression Award and Foundation Apprenticeship in Early Learning and Childcare. Early Education and Childcare is currently a growth area identified by the Scottish Government, who have carried out a consultation into the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare provision in line with their strategy to double the number of places of free entitlement to childcare (Scottish Government, 2017d).

Furlong (2005) described schools where some young people are put in a position in which they struggle to participate in school and develop survival strategies throughout their education. These are young people who may not attend regularly, or those who do attend and may just turn up at school to survive each day and leave. Ball *et al.* (1999) described these young people as having a learner identity that is shaped by self-exclusion from education, where education, as one interviewee from the study said, is ‘*not for people like him*’ (p. 214), and relates this to Bourdieu’s relationship between young people’s individual agency and inculcated dispositions. These may be the young people who are more likely to disengage and leave school as soon as they can. Gale and Parker (2015a) also noted that the position an individual places themselves in and their perception of their position in society has an impact on their aspirations, and suggested that some young people may self-exclude because they view themselves as not to be good enough in some way. This can be related to the quote from Ball *et al.* (1999) above, where young people from low socio-economic areas decide early in life to rule out certain aspirations as being too difficult or risky to pursue. Gale and Parker (2015a) referred to this as the habituated

nature of aspirations that takes into account an individual's history and biographical journey through life that differentiates between desire and possibility of what one could or should expect. The notion of habituated aspirations is considered more in Section 3.4.2. Furlong (2005) suggested these young people are from the lower working classes or minority groups with below average attainment, where disengagement stems from poor performance in assessments. Reay (2002) and Kintrea *et al.* (2015) described this as the negative consequences of schooling that young working class people may experience.

Nash (2002) suggested that some working class young people do not view education positively because it does not meet their needs in terms of their immediate future, that is, that their education is not tailored to their aspirations and they question the worth of certain subjects in relation to the knowledge they will gain. This is a question asked all too often when pupils choose their subjects for the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).<sup>9</sup> This demonstrates a Bowles *et al.* (1975) situation through their correspondence theory, where in a Marxist capitalist society, the school is seen an agent of reproduction of social relations. Bowles and Gintis (1988) are critical of the function of the school, from the hierarchy of authority to the repetitive tasks given to working class young people and suggested that the school encourages and prepares young people to participate in the economic system; and does this through the process of school, which is learning, to the outcome, which is employment.

Moreover, Bowles and Gintis (1988) commented that the education system encourages young people to be subordinate and have respect for and obedience to authority. All young people are categorised into different levels based on how well they pass through from process to outcome and also on their '*behavioural regulation*' (p. 3.); that is, how well they conform to the social structure of the school. This ultimately affects what young people do when they leave school. To this end, Bowles *et al.* (1975) critically cite Lester Frank Ward from 1872: '*every child born into the world should be looked upon by society as so much raw material to be manufactured*' (p. 3). Here it is possible to see traits of neoliberal ideology as long ago as 1872. It is important to acknowledge that the process of education is complex for working class young people who are bound by school discipline, the constraints of time and authority and given routine tasks to complete.

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<sup>9</sup> The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence is where pupils choose their subjects that they wish to progress with and aim to achieve National Qualifications in.

To combat this, Furlong (2005) suggested allowing working class young people to progress at their own pace while reducing the quantity of assessments. In Scottish Education this has been an aim of CfE, where young people are allowed to progress at an individual pace. In an earlier study by Furlong and Cartmel (1997) they noted that within those of working class background, participation of young people in education that are high attainers has increased; however, there is still an issue of participation amongst low attainers, who may be those young people to do not attend or are disengaged from education. Although this data is now 20 years old, those of working class background and low attainers still do not participate in education and risk disengagement. A study by Reid and McCallum (2014) found that young people from disadvantaged areas who see schooling as a crucial medium in pursuing their aspirations can achieve the required academic success needed for realising their aspirations. However, a study by the Sutton Trust, reported in the BBC (2016), found a major gap in access to Higher Education from young people from socially disadvantaged areas, where more people from poorer backgrounds were progressing to college as opposed to university. This study also found that poorer young Scottish people are four times less likely to go to university compared to their wealthier counterparts. A similar trend was found in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Moreover, research commissioned by the JRF (Menzies, 2013) stated that the assumption that disadvantaged pupils have low aspirations is false and that the challenge lies with promoting and providing opportunities for these young people to reach their aspirations, which is referred to as the *aspiration gap* by Carter-Wall and Whitfield (2012). This reinforces earlier work by Kintrea *et al.* (2011) who studied young people in three disadvantaged areas and found their aspirations to be high. Young people should, according to the JRF, be asking themselves the question: how do I get there?, rather than: where am I going?. Again, this links with the notion of developing young people's map knowledge. It is important to recognise the barriers and constraints, as discussed in this Chapter and throughout this dissertation, in educating young people to be map knowledgeable about where 'there' actually is. However, young people need to know where 'there' is and have knowledge of the labour market and employment beyond the simple generalisations they are aware of. This has potential to impact on the careers advice and guidance given in secondary school, as discussed earlier, where young people's aspirations should not be changed, but rather embraced, or even challenged, taking account of realistic expectations and labour market information. Realistic expectations are mentioned because educators and professionals do not want to set young people up to fail.

Ball *et al.* (1999) described young people as having different learning identities, aspirations, motivation and educational inheritances, all of which influence young people and the extent to which they participate in their negotiation of different post-16 destinations. Furthermore, Ball *et al.* (1999) suggested that young people's choices are constrained by their educational futures as much as they are constructed by their educational pasts, this can be related to what Furlong (2005), Reay (2002) and Kintrea *et al.* (2011) allude to in relation to negative experiences of schooling in constraining young people's choices. Interestingly, Thomson (2002) referred to the schooling game, where the school unintentionally positions young people differently using the hidden curriculum where school staff sometimes subconsciously differentiate their treatment of young people, which results in unintentional outcomes. Cornbleth (1984) stated that young people's values, beliefs, ways of behaving (their dispositions), and the information that is available to them are inextricably linked to the hidden curriculum within a school. In the context of a working class young person, this means that if the young person progresses through school as a high attainer and has a supportive family with moderately well educated parents they are more likely to succeed than a low attainer with parents and a family who are not aware of what it takes to be successful. In other words, the high attaining young person already has the dispositions of what it takes to be successful over the low attaining young person.

### **3.3.4 To Stay in or Leave Education: Engaged or Disengaged in Education**

Biggart and Furlong (1996) suggested that young people who stay on at school, past compulsory leaving age, do so because a lack of opportunities exists. However, recent Scottish Government policies aim to keep young people in education or training for as long as possible (Scottish Government, 2012a, 2012b for example). These policies were outlined in Chapter One. However, this could be seen as 'parking' and delays classification as a negative outcome. Later, Furlong (2005) suggested that young people from the lower working classes are at a higher risk of leaving school at the minimum age and are more likely to follow a vocational route as opposed to an academic route. This was demonstrated in a study carried out by Forsyth and Furlong (2003) who examined the class background of pupils attending school and found that a school only needs a small proportion of middle-class background in S1 to get a middle-class majority in S6, as working class pupils would tend to leave at school leaving age. Moreover, Furlong (2005) highlighted that those with low academic achievements are encouraged to leave school early and pursue a work-based route, whereas more academically able young people are encouraged to stay on at school. Forsyth and Furlong (2003) pointed to the Educational

Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in supporting young people from less affluent areas to remain in school. At present in Scotland the EMA is a weekly payment of £30 given to all young people aged 16 years old and over whose family earn less than a threshold salary, currently approximately £24,000, and meet other stringent conditions such as continued good attendance and progress at school (Scottish Government, n.d.).

According to Furlong (2005) young people from disadvantaged areas become disengaged with school at a young age, and in some cases this is promoted through the culture of the school in that it would be expected that young people from certain families or backgrounds would fail. To combat this, Furlong (2005) suggested that young people needed to have positive experiences of education from an early age and particularly at the beginning of secondary school education and during the important primary-secondary transition period. Reid and McCallum (2014) supported this and found that positive school experiences and trust relationships with teachers are essential to maximise young people's aspirations. Furthermore, Gale *et al.* (2011) found that the attainment gap between those from advantaged backgrounds and those from disadvantaged backgrounds increases as young people move through primary school into secondary school. Despite this study being carried out in Australia, the same attainment gap issue is found in Scotland (Sosu and Ellis, 2014), which the Scottish Government has attempted to address through the Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding, where the latter is issued based on the percentage of young people in a school who qualify for free school meals and the proportion of young people who live in the poorest SIMD areas.

### **3.3.5 Family Influences**

From the discussion above it can be seen that young people's aspirations are clearly dependent on their experiences of education, class background and the influence of their family and the school on providing experiences and information in relation to post-16 destinations. Beck (1992) referred to this as the *individualisation* of young people meaning that young people can develop and change from the traditional assumptions held by their families and class identity. Beck (1992) went on to suggest that the labour market has to change to accommodate increasing individualisation. It is important to take care with Beck's point as this could be seen to link with the individualisation used by neoliberalism discussed previously. Ball (1996) and Reay and Ball (1997) suggested that working class parents are constantly comparing their children to other children, particularly middle class children, in what Bourdieu described as the influence of dominant discourse. However, Cater-Wall and Whitfield (2012) suggested that most parents do

demonstrate an interest in their child's education, and that where there appears to be little parental interest, this might be explained by the problem that parents are unable to provide effective support, because they have been unsuccessful in education and do not possess the knowledge to support their child, or by poor relationships between the school and parents. Reay and Ball (1997) stated that decision-making by working class parents, and indeed young people, is surrounded by fear and reluctance to engage.

However, as Ball *et al.* (1996) pointed out, this is not true of all working class parents, where some do participate in education at the same level as middle class people. Reay and Ball (1997) suggested that, in terms of choices that are made at school, the situation has arisen where middle class parents make informed, thought out choices and working class parents made ill-informed, poorly thought out choices, '*leaving it up to the child*' (p. 90). In a study researching choice in education Ball *et al.* (1996) found that social segregation is likely to increase as a result of the choice process maintaining distinction between social class and associated differences in education. The JRF highlighted the importance of parental engagement in relation to young people's aspirations where involving parents in this process, perhaps through engaging at key times, such as subject option choices, is a key way of doing this. Moreover, Kintrea *et al.* (2015) described *neighbourhood effects*, defined as the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of individuals that are altered by their neighbours' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. This closely resembles the definition of Bourdieu's *habitus* given earlier and the effect of others' dispositions on an individual's dispositions.

### **3.3.6 Imagined Futures with Flyers, Plodders and Drifters**

Ball *et al.* (1999) described different groups of young people in relation to their 'imagined futures'. The first group are those who see themselves completing examinations and progressing to university and then a career. For these young people their plans for the future are stable, clear and possible. This is becoming less so with more young people uncertain about their aspirations and their future. It is important to take the context of young people into account so as not to make generalisations. This first group are confident young people who can speak about themselves reflexively and plan taking account of issues that may arise. Their families are supportive and facilitative. A second group has plans for the future that are vague, unstable and uncertain, which may reflect their experience of life as chaotic. These young people may tend towards a vocational route, for example. The families of these young people may not have experience to use to facilitate their young person's progression, but can be nonetheless supportive.

However, a third group has no plans for the future and aim at getting by or coping, much like those young people who develop survival strategies outlined above by Furlong (2005), who wish to leave school at the earliest possible opportunity. These young people are not well supported by their family, have limited choices due to economic circumstances and may not be in this position by choice. There may be events that occur in their lives that are beyond their control, for example, illness, pregnancy and a breakdown in the family unit or other personal circumstances. For these young people Bourdieu (1990) suggested that their *cultural capital* is stretched and their *habitus* is both inventing but constraining. The idea of imagined futures was supported by Appadurai (2004) who stated that in order to understand young people's aspirations, it is important to consider the influence of socio-economic backgrounds and experiences. It is essential for all young people, particularly those from the second and third group above, that they are supported as much as possible in order to make their post-16 transition as smooth and positive an experience as possible.

Benton (2014) suggested that one way to encourage and motivate young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is to introduce lower entry-level qualifications for Higher and Further Education. However, Lyon and Murray (1993) noted the problem of the overproduction of graduates and the lack of employment opportunities for this group. Lyon and Murray (1993) stated there is a correlation between Higher Education and the economy, which influences government policy development, and that to align graduates more with economic needs there should be a focus on vocationalism of Higher Education, where transferable skills are taught to students. Perhaps this has started in Scotland through the Foundation Apprenticeship scheme. This being said, Reay (1998) stated that class definitions are changing, and that the assumption that capitalism dictates the responsibility of working class young people's education lies with the individual alone is a distortion, as working class education is still overshadowed by that of the middle classes. Moreover, Reay and Ball (1997) commented that this neoliberal economy is actually widening the gap between working and middle classes, creating increased educational segregation (Reay, 1996), where some working class families feel part of a stigmatised group who have limited options.

In a similar style, Biggart and Furlong (1996) categorised young people into three categories: the *high flyers*, the *plodders*, and the *drifters*. The *high flyers* are similar to Ball *et al.*'s (1999) first group who are certain about their future and follow the traditional path of entering academia and are typically middle class whose parents attended university.

Biggart and Furlong (1996) identified that some of these young people follow this route because it is what is expected of them. The second group, the *plodders*, have to work at academic success because it does not come naturally: they need to work hard to achieve good grades in examinations and, sometimes, struggle with their work and lack confidence. Furthermore, the *plodders* traditionally followed vocational routes, however, some see the value of education as a means to bettering themselves. If a working class young person from this group tried to better themselves, academically, they run the risk of being labelled a swot. The last group, the *drifters*, lack any motivation and have poor, if any, parental advice. They are similar to Ball *et al.*'s (1999) last group and are from working class backgrounds. These young people value their status amongst their peers over education and may have siblings or parents who are unemployed. Thus, this results in poor examination results at the end of post-compulsory education.

### 3.4 Bourdieu's Theory of Reproduction in Relation to Aspirations

According to McClelland (1999), Bourdieu thought of aspirations as the internalisation of different objective possibilities for success and that they are derived from past experiences and processes of socialisation, including *cultural capital*. Moreover, Yang (2013) identified three key aspects that determine aspiration from a Bourdieusian perspective. First is the young person's position in the *field*, that is how much *capital* they have. Second, is their perception of the *field* (school, for example), this is their *habitus* and third, is the state of instruments of reproduction, this is the *field*. An equation that represents the relationships between these variables, according to Bourdieu (1984), is:  $[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$ .

It needs to be acknowledged that Bourdieu's ideas and concepts are not the only ones available with which to critique aspirations, according to Sjaastad (2012); Cooley and Mead's idea of *symbolic interactionism* can be used to compare how one fits into social relationships. The central idea here is the concept of the *self* and it has been developed by Higgins (1987) where he identifies three *selves*. First is the *actual self*, which consists of the attributes you believe you have. Followed by the *ideal self*, the attributes you would like to have, and lastly *the ought self*, the attributes you should have. While space constrains giving details it is suffice to say that this idea has its roots in psychology, whereas the roots of Bourdieu's concepts and ideas lie in sociology.

Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) stated that the use of Bourdieu's *habitus* allows the subjective nature of aspirations in relation to the objective nature of social connections to

be studied, and that career decisions are made within parameters that are set by one's social class, gender, ethnicity and family capital. Bodovski (2015) implied that young people from middle class backgrounds have a more developed *habitus* than those from working class backgrounds because they are exposed from a young age to their parents' communication with people in authority and because these young people are more likely to be involved in decisions that affect them through engaging with critical thinking.

### 3.4.1 Aspirations, Habitus and Transformation

In addition to the factors that can affect aspiration identified in Section 3.3, there are other Bourdieusian-related notions and concepts of aspiration. These will now be discussed and this section will provide links between *habitus*, aspirations and *habitus* transformation. Gale and Parker (2015b) highlighted that, like Appadurai (2004), Bourdieu saw aspiration as a cultural entity, or capacity. However, Appadurai (2004) discussed this in relation to aspirations as a navigational capacity, where it is important to take into account the cultural capacity developed from past experiences that can be used to navigate future experiences. Gale and Parker (2015b) note, however, that with these navigational capacities, it is important to consider an individual's position within their *field*, as described above. This could mean that some working class young people are able to use this navigational capacity to develop their dispositions, thoughts and actions to modify or transform their *habitus*. It is important to highlight that not all young people may be able to do this because of barriers, constraints, truncated opportunities and unequal access to resources.

Moreover, Appadurai (2004) noted that the ability to use this navigational capacity to look to the future is dependent on the economic, cultural and social resources that an individual has access to; and, that individuals have unequal access to these resources depending on their socioeconomic status. Appadurai (2004) commented that this is a particular issue for the working classes. Indeed, Zipin *et al.* (2015) commented that with the increasing marketization of public services in a neoliberal world, resources are being redistributing upwards creating a more powerful dominant class, resulting in those who are left behind being seen as deficit and having poverty of aspiration. This is where the role of key adults and partners who work with young people are important, for example, teachers and careers service workers who can facilitate young people gaining access and availability to resources, and provide opportunities, that could help them develop their dispositions (their thoughts, actions, values, preconceived ideas, for example). Such opportunities could include work experience, visits to colleges or universities and

mentoring, in addition to well-formed vocational programmes to help young people develop their navigational capacity and to ultimately realise their aspirations. Gale and Parker (2015b) stated that aspirational differences between socioeconomic groups are related to the cultural resources that can be accessed and utilised by a particular group. As will be seen in the discussion, the participants in this study do not have poverty of aspiration. Moreover, Zipin *et al.* (2015) stated that with increasing neoliberal influence on policy, raising aspirations could be seen as a way to increase productivity and competitiveness, in terms of navigation of aspirations through providing young people with suitable map and tour knowledge, as discussed earlier.

Holland, Reynolds and Weller (2007) suggested that young people use the resources that are available to them, through social networks for example, to form their aspirations and aid in their transition between school and their post-16 destination. However, this may not always be the case, as those young people from Ball *et al.*'s (1999) group two or three will not have access to these networks of support. The JRF commissioned a study looking at the impact and importance of mentoring, where Cummings *et al.* (2012) suggested that inspirational mentors who come from organisations or are social entrepreneurs give disadvantaged young people the opportunity to transform their lives and nurture their aspirations: this is similar to the MCR mentoring mentioned earlier. Furthermore Creegan (2008) reiterated a concern first highlighted by Joseph Rowntree last century; that philanthropic efforts are all very well, however they do not get to the cause of truncated opportunities. Philanthropic efforts alleviate the symptoms of poverty, disadvantage and lost opportunities but neglect to get to the cause of the issues.

Stahl (2015b) promoted an *egalitarian counter-habitus* amongst working class individuals (boys) that allows them to fit in to their field. Stahl (2015b) described an internal process that occurs within individuals to allow them to modify their dispositions so that they see value in a neoliberal world; that is they will modify the way they think, act and behave. This *egalitarian counter-habitus*, according to Stahl (2015b) is related to the '*sameness and ordinariness*' (p. 28) that everyone is viewed as having, a kind of '*working-class morality of honour*' (p. 28), and loyalty to one's self. Therefore, the *egalitarian counter-habitus* is then viewed as the coming together of the neoliberal and dominant view of education and working-class values. With reference to working class young people, Stahl (2015b) stated that their *habitus* needs to be transformed to bind or align with middle class contexts and that this could also contribute towards the upward social mobility of working class young people. The difficulty for working class young people is perhaps

reflected in the stalling or decline in upward mobility as suggested by some research. Stahl (2015b) highlighted that in order for working class young people to transform their *habitus* they need to be willing to accept new messages (about aspirations). These new messages could be information, experiences and opportunities in relation to different post-16 destinations and are considered in Chapter Six: Discussion. This transformed *habitus* is, according to Stahl (2015b) a combination of the original *habitus* developed through the family and the community and a new *habitus* composed of these new messages. It is, however, important to acknowledge the challenges, obstacles and barriers some young people may face, as highlighted through this dissertation, and that this *habitus* transformation is easier for some young people are more difficult for others.

### 3.4.2 Doxic, Habituated and Emergent Aspirations

In relation to Bourdieu's concepts of *doxa* and *habitus* defined earlier in this Chapter, Zipin *et al.* (2015) defined two types of aspiration in terms of subjective and intersubjective processes: *doxic* and *habituated* aspirations. *Doxic* aspirations are those that are formed from taken for granted assumptions; they are the common-sense aspirations that young people follow. *Doxic* aspirations are formed from the dominant way of doing things and are natural to an individual or group of people; for example, obtaining a university degree may be the preferable route for many middle and upper class young people. In a study by Gale and Parker (2015b) examples of *doxic* aspirations were: pilot and forensic scientist, where these aspirations are associated with having value in society and maybe seen as prestigious aspirations that individuals should want, or be expected, to aspire to by others in their social class. According to Zipin *et al.* (2015) *doxic* aspirations have a degree of symbolic violence, defined earlier, associated with them because "*they codify the norms, and so select for the success, of those in relatively powerful positions*" (p. 231). Here working class young people and their families succumb to the meritocratic dream through this symbolic violence and blame themselves if they do not succeed; their aspirations may be fuelled by populist dreams, for example, from the media and television.

Zipin *et al.* (2015) suggested *habituated* aspirations are arrived at by means of young people's dispositions; that is their actions, thoughts and behaviours, their lived practices that are the result of their biological and historical circumstances from their family, sociocultural and socioeconomic group; that is they are embodied in their *habitus*. According to Gale and Parker (2015b) it is these *habituated* aspirations that account for the structural positioning of individuals in society and it is these aspirations that are reproduced without question: "*the logic is: what has been will be*" (p. 85). These are the

aspirational possibilities that young people consider given the limits of their social-structural position.

Zipin *et al.* (2015) further discussed the notion of *emergent* aspirations. These are aspirations that are changed or modified in relation to new practices, knowledge, meaning and value where school and education play a key role, in addition to the family and community, to provide new and different experiences and opportunities. Moreover, Zipin *et al.* (2015) suggested that *emergent* aspirations show a developing ‘Funds of Aspiration’, which are future looking and utilise ‘Funds of Knowledge’ from previous experience and opportunities, including those provided from the family or school. It is possible that these *emergent* aspirations are as a response to a modified or transformed *habitus*, where according to Gale and Parker (2015b) this is a way to tackle disadvantage and lack of resources, to modify aspirations and *habitus* and to tackle the structural issues of society. This is easier said than done due to the complex nature of society, meaning that some (or most) young people will follow aspirations that are a mixture of *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations. Zipin *et al.* (2015) stated that to theorise the *emergent* aspirations it may be necessary to use concepts beyond that of Bourdieu; nonetheless *emergent* aspirations will be considered in the methodology and data analysis.

Scandone (2018) highlighted the shared histories that are passed on inter-generationally through everyday discourses that are responsible for forming aspirations of what is possible for young people of low socioeconomic status. Examples of *habituated* aspirations from Gale and Parker’s (2015b) study examining the difference between aspirational desires and possibilities in young people included unskilled and manual labour and thoughts that university “*was not for the likes of us*” (p. 88), which links with the quote from Ball *et al.* (1999) earlier in this Chapter and demonstrates similar types of dispositions embodied in these young people. It was interesting to note that Gale and Parker’s (2015b) study found that boys are more likely to follow vocational routes and that the difference between what boys saw as a desired aspiration compared to a possible aspiration was greater compared to girls, although not specifically mentioned this could possibly be due to the differences in map and tour knowledge acquired between boys and girls. Zipin *et al.* (2015) suggested that, at the level of the *habitus*, *doxic* aspirations fill the gap in imaginable aspirations that working class young people have, compared to the more practical aspirations related to their *habitus*. It is clear to see that this can be both empowering and constricting in the battle to transform the *habitus* of working class young people, where increasing young people’s agency may be beneficial to aid empowerment.

Dumais (2002) stated that in overcoming obstacles, in relation to barriers associated with their position in society, young people could develop cultural capital through opportunities and experience both in school and outwith school, for example through family visits to museum, concerts, reading and so on. This cultural capital could feed into the *habitus* and help transform the *habitus* into a new set of dispositions that young people could use to better themselves.

Archer and Yamashita (2003) developed Beck's (1992) notion of structural limitations on individuals' aspirations in that these limitations relate to their social, cultural and economic position. This is particularly relevant to this study as Archer and Yamashita (2003) stated that at ages 15-16 years old, young people are going through the process of considering when to leave school and what to do with their futures. Moreover, Archer and Yamashita (2003) found that working class young people often perceived themselves in a negative way with a sense of knowing their limits or evaluating themselves as 'not good enough' for certain post-16 education routes. These young people may associate these routes with a lack of knowledge, uncertainty, fear and risk. Reay (2001) attributed this risk to the inherent notion that, for the working classes, education has routinely resulted in failure for working class young people, possibly due to a lack of positive educational experience as has been witnessed through the researcher's own practice. Ball *et al.* (2000) suggested that working class young people will blame themselves for any failure instead of structural inequalities and lack of access to resources; and, may opt-out as a mechanism to avoid failure. It is important to acknowledge that this is not true of all working class young people, as discussed previously.

Archer and Yamashita (2003) go further to suggest that working class young people often do not have smooth transitions from school to post-school, and that this also leads to uncertainty and high dropout rates. This concern is acknowledged in the school this dissertation research is carried out in and discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. In addition it is further suggested by Archer and Yamashita (2003) that non-participation in education post-school is seen as a deficit model of the working classes and, that to avoid this, other opportunities post-school must be considered; that is, the more natural choice perhaps associated with their *habituated* or *doxic* aspirations. In a study looking at young women, Scandone (2018) referred to the known routes that (young) people take in relation to understanding their aspirations, expectations and pathways and conceptualised aspirations as a form of *habitus*. However, she cautions that young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds are typically viewed, by policy, in a deficit model where

aspirations are too low or unrealistic, which is not always the case as will be shown by the interviewees in this dissertation and by work by Kintrea *et al.* (2015) and Gale and Parker (2015a and 2015b).

Moreover, Scandone (2018) discussed the notion of change in an individual's practice, through their modified *habitus* which comes about from exposing an individual to new or different resources and providing them with the opportunity to change their dispositions; that is how they think, act and behave. For example, if a working class young person wishes to progress to university, and they are first in their family to wish to go to university, then exposing the young person to university through widening access programmes and visits to universities could result in them changing their thought processes and decisions thus resulting in a transformed *habitus* with altered dispositions. A similar argument could be made with other post-school routes in terms of actualising aspirations, for example, by including more work experience and extra-curricular activities to expose young people to different environments and *fields* that could result in a transformed *habitus* and dispositions (Scandone, 2018). This would also enable young people to take advantage of some of the forms of capital discussed earlier, by developing their own social and cultural capital. Scandone (2018) described this in terms of allowing young people to experiment with different career routes. In summary, Scandone (2018) described the *habitus* aspect of aspirations as:

*“the links between individual and collective experiences, the interconnection of past, present and future in discourses and practices, and the ways in which the latter are affected by different endowments of economic, social and cultural capital.”* (p. 536)

Connolly *et al.* (2016) described these capitals, social and economic for example, as lucrative in that they are only accessible to those who have a *habitus* that conforms to the dominant discourse of legitimizing production and reproduction in inequalities. Moreover Connolly *et al.* (2016) suggested that in schools where there is high attainment and achievement, young people are able to transfer this capital into careers plans and strategies for their future. Moreover, Connolly *et al.* (2016) stated that these capitals could influence how, in the social world, individuals view, interpret and behave. In support, Connolly *et al.* (2016) cited research by Jarvie and Maguire (1994) and Wacquant (2008) that related this influence of capitals to Bourdieu's notion of *practice*, where *practice* is the effect of *habitus* resulting in the display of behaviours and dispositions an individual

exhibits. This could mean that an individual's *habitus* affects how they behave, how they think and act, and in turn affect their dispositions and how they display behaviours and thoughts. Hence, the notion of how *practice*, *habitus* and dispositions affect one another could be seen as a dialectical relationship.

Furthermore, Connolly *et al.* (2016) noted an adverse factor in relation to raising aspirations amongst those wishing to pursue Higher Education; where the school pushed for young people to aim higher and more academically, when choosing Further Education may have been a more suitable route, as a stepping stone to Higher Education. This highlights that when institutions have a culture, practices, or activities that encourage students to have high aspirations, that the students are carefully selected, in line with their aspirations, and not set up to fail. This was also highlighted by Rawlinson (2017) in an examination of working class students *primary habitus* in relation to the *habitus* of the university and found that when these are aligned students transition to Higher Education is improved in terms of students being more motivated in relation to their future career choice. Furthermore, since aspiration is a very contextual and individually dependent concept, as Connelly *et al.* (2016) pointed out, it can be seen that if students are pushed to far they may drop out of education or training all together. However, Connolly *et al.* (2016) noted that if students are not given the opportunity to participate in these practices, or activities, the institution risks promoting the symbolic violence that could lead to the reproduction of inequality by promoting the dominant class with working class young people dropping out.

### **3.5 Chapter Conclusion**

In conclusion this Chapter has presented various factors, from the family to careers advice, to the educational institution itself that can affect young people's aspirations. To this end, the following *a priori* themes were identified that will be used in the data analysis of interview transcripts: influential people, education and associated experiences (including the role of education in constraining and developing aspirations and *habitus*), economic and social factors and career education in relation to developing knowledge of various post-16 destinations. It can be said that there is a definite link between aspirations and the reproduction of inequality (Kintrea *et al.*, 2015). Kintrea *et al.* (2015) raised an important point in questioning whether the aspirations from young people from disadvantaged areas are generally low, or whether their aspirations are being downgraded because of the circumstances they find themselves in. Interestingly, Reay (1998) stated that those who belong to the working class do not always get the opportunity to choose

where they position themselves because the working classes are produced by societies more powerful. As Bourdieu noted, the working classes are produced and kept in place by the discourse of the legitimised classes, the upper and middle classes.

This Chapter has also discussed the possibilities that enable or constrain *habitus* transformation, for example those outlined by Gale and Parker (2015b). A link has been established between aspirations, *habitus* and *habitus* transformation that allows the research questions to be considered. Moreover, the idea of different types of aspirations has been considered: *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations in that these do not necessarily work independently but that aspirations are a result of a mix of different processes operating at once within the dispositions of an individual; that is, that aspirations are affected by dispositions in terms of how an individual thinks, acts and behaves (Zipin *et al.*, 2015), in addition to their values and acceptance or challenge of taken-for-granted assumptions and misconceptions. Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction* of inequality has also been critiqued as a 'theory as method' in qualitative data analysis, including key concepts associated with this theory such as *habitus*, *doxa* and *field*. Chapter Four will examine the notion of paradigms in research and justify an interpretivist paradigm together with developing a Bourdieusian framework for analysis based around the key concept of *habitus* discussed in this Chapter, using the themes identified above and looking at how other researchers have operationalised *habitus* as a methodological lens with which to analyse data.

## Chapter Four

### Interpretivism and Constructivist Structuralism: Developing A Bourdieusian Methodological Framework

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This Chapter will initially examine interpretivism as the paradigmatic approach; that is, the school of knowledge that the research in this dissertation is associated with and based on. This will be done through an analysis and critique of interpretivism to include a discussion of the philosophical elements of epistemology, ontology, axiology and ideology, which Lincoln and Guba (2005) stated compose a paradigm. Schiller (2016) stated that when deciding which philosophical stance, or paradigm, to base research on, it is important to specifically consider epistemology and ontology as these elements will have methodological implications for the research that is being carried out through the methodology. Darlaston-Jones (2007) defined epistemology as the construction of knowledge, and closely relates epistemology to ontology, which is the construction of reality. These concepts are defined in greater depth in Section 4.2. While Wainwright (1997) stated that the epistemology, ontology and methodology together make up the philosophical aspects of a paradigm. Methodology is defined, according to Roberts (2014), as the logic and rationale, that is, the foundation of using a particular method, which will be outlined below.

Also, this Chapter will explore current literature in relation to methodological approaches that utilise aspirations and *habitus* in order to develop a Bourdieusian methodology. This will provide reference and links to Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus*, expanding on key ideas from Chapter Three in Section 4.3, from which a theoretical, methodological lens will be drawn in which to analyse the data collected during the research process. Finally, the importance of agency and structure will be considered in relation to the role of the individual and the educational institution and again related to aspirations and *habitus*.

#### **4.1 The Paradigm Continuum, Qualitative and Quantitative Methodology**

It should be acknowledged that there are diverse schools of thought in relation to basing research on a theoretical paradigm. Before interpretivism is discussed, it is

important to contextualise an interpretivist paradigm with other paradigms for undertaking social science and natural science research, including positivism and constructivism. The latter is linked to interpretivism ontologically as highlighted by Lincoln and Guba (2005). Wainwright (1997) stated that in general, traditional constructivist approaches are associated with qualitative methods and the social sciences, whereas traditional positive approaches are associated with quantitative methods and the natural sciences. Moreover, Wainwright (1997) maintained that these dichotomous distinctions of qualitative versus quantitative, or constructivist versus positivist are increasingly fallacious. Oakley (1999) discussed the qualitative/quantitative debate in relation to the 'paradigm wars': a debate spanning over 40 years. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) supported Oakley (1999) when they asserted that in research it should be the paradigm and research question(s) which dictate whether qualitative or quantitative methods are chosen, or even a mixture of both. Cupchik (2001) further suggested that qualitative and quantitative approaches could be used to complement each other in that this provides a deeper study. Darlaston-Jones (2007) described the importance of a researcher's conviction and commitment to subscribing to a particular research paradigm.

Wainwright (1997) stated that positivism is premised on the view of reality that we experience what exists, and that knowledge is founded from deductive experimentation; that is, through the scientific method, or hypothesis verification. According to Krauss (2005), in positivism science is the methodology that is used to get to the truth. Wainwright (1997) stated that one fundamental drawback of positivism is that it fails to acknowledge causal effects and explanations for what is observed.

At the opposite end of the continuum is constructivism, which takes account of an individual's actions and meanings, based on a view of what an individual believes exists. A constructivist epistemology is based on individual's subjective knowledge, with an investigative methodology focusing on individuals' experiences (Wainwright, 1997; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). According to Krauss (2005) the view of realism in the constructivist paradigm is that there is no objective single reality. Darlaston-Jones (2007) stated that constructivism takes account of the cultural, political, historical and social aspects of the particular context under study. Drawbacks of constructivist approaches are that, while they aim to understand individuals' experiences, it has been suggested that they do not go far enough to examine the processes and mechanisms at play in shaping an individual's path and fails to take account of ways in which individuals can change or alter the paths they take. Furthermore, Wainwright (1997) reminded researchers to be cautious

in adopting these broad terms for paradigms as previous researchers have used them differently and that it is important to consider the context of the research being carried out.

Danermark *et al.* (2002) commented that in positivism the objects of study in natural sciences are naturally produced and socially defined, whereas in social science objects of study are socially produced and socially defined. Wainwright (1997) stated that in the sciences, which are more prone to utilising quantitative methods, the relationship between the researcher and the researched is *subject-object*, whereas in the social sciences the relationship is *subject-subject*. This implicitly implies the human nature and the relationship between the researcher and the researched in social scientific research that utilises qualitative methods. Patomäki and Wight (2000) suggested that the world, and indeed society, is made up not only of events, experiences and discourses but that the world is also formulated from underlying structures and powers that may have a direct or indirect influence over society. The use of an interpretivist approach resonates with this research in that it aims to explore how young people's *habitus* and dispositions are influenced by factors such as social class, family and the school, and looking to investigate to what extent can the school transform young people's *habitus* by providing opportunities and experiences in relation to different post-16 destinations.

The debate over whether researchers use a qualitative methodology or a quantitative methodology has long been discussed and critiqued in research literature, as has relating a particular methodology with certain paradigms (Creswell, 1995). Howe (1988) suggested that the practical issues surrounding carrying out research and collecting data should be considered above the epistemological, conceptual and theoretical basis of a research study. Taking this into account, for this dissertation a methodology was used that utilised qualitative methods to allow the research questions to be investigated. The exact Bourdieusian methodology used in this dissertation is discussed in more detail later in this Chapter.

#### **4.2 Epistemology, Ontology, Axiology and Ideology of the Interpretivist Paradigm**

Darlaston-Jones (2007) suggested that knowledge is constructed through social and cultural interactions by and between individuals. More specifically, Wainwright (1997) defined epistemology as the process of how we come to know about knowledge that is out there for us to know. This links with Weaver and Olson (2006), who stated that in the interpretive paradigm knowledge is developed from individuals to develop understanding and meanings of their actions and the reactions of others, where

intersubjectivity, that is mutual recognition and a shared awareness and understanding between the researcher and the participants, is key and embraced.

Mack (2010) also stated that in the interpretivist paradigm knowledge is produced through personal experiences and particular situations; that is, knowledge is socially constructed and interpreted. In the interpretive paradigm the object of interest is studied through the eyes of participants and researcher in their daily-lived situations, in this way the participants are co-producers of data together with the object of investigation. Furthermore, Bunniss and Kelly (2010) highlighted two important aspects of interpretivism. First the subjective nature of knowledge acquisition; that is, the epistemology which allows direct interpretation of a situation without the need for an overarching truth or theory. Second was the ability to get in-depth, detailed interpretations of the object under investigation, which will allow the researcher to fully understand the object within its specific context.

According to Darlaston-Jones (2007) the ontological position, that is the construction of reality, meanings and beliefs, is constructed based on social, political and cultural influences and the action and interactions of social beings. Weaver and Olson (2006) stated that the interpretivist paradigm is ontologically different to other paradigms because the truth, or reality, is based on a combination of local and specific realities that are subjectively viewed; interpretivist ontology is based on relativism. Moreover, Bunniss and Kelly (201) described interpretivist ontology as changing, where there is no one truth.

In this research contradictory processes exist, and are taken into consideration in the discussion, because each young person will have a different experience of the social, political, cultural influences of the environments they interact with including misinformation, misunderstandings and misconceptions and preconceptions as highlighted by Krauss (2005).<sup>10</sup> That is to say, reality will be based on the degree of interaction a young person has with different environments, for example colleges, universities, work experience opportunities, together with their biographical history. This could suggest that the more interaction a young person has with an environment, for example further education, the more developed their reality and knowledge are.

Axiology and ideology are concepts that are closely related to each other.

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<sup>10</sup> Environments could be defined as anywhere young people may get new or different experiences, this could be: the school, the workplace, colleges and/or universities.

Axiology is the consideration of ethics, reflexivity and values (Lincoln and Guba, 2005; Sikes, 2006). Tomar (2014) reminded us that when discussing axiology it is important to take into account the philosophical position of axiology to include moral values and our character development. She stated that values should be based on what is good, true and right to do. It is important that participants' views are valued, as they are the source of information required for the research project and that the researcher considers their own values and how this could affect the research. It is true to say that without the cooperation of individuals and their giving up their own valuable time, research in the social sciences would not be as vast as it is today. Bunniss and Kelly (2010) stated that using interpretivism means that research is never bias free, where it is important for the researcher to consider their own feelings, thoughts, opinions and experiences on the research topic. To take this into account in this dissertation, the personal and professional thoughts and implications of the research on the researcher were considered in Chapter One and a researcher's journal will be used as an aspect of methodology. This is an important aspect of reflexivity, which is extremely important in considering data analysis and interpretations and will be discussed more in Chapter Five.

According to Lincoln and Guba (2005) ideology is the position of the researcher in relation to the research and the effect of power on the research and participants. The methodological implications of axiology and ideology together with an in-depth discussion of ethical considerations is given in the discussion on methodology in Chapter Five, accompanied with a discussion of Bourdieu in relation to reflexivity in sociology. Weaver and Olson (2006) highlighted that the interpretivist paradigm is more associated with qualitative methods, which provide deep descriptions, understandings and explanations of the topic under investigation. Bunniss and Kelly (2010) stated that interpretivist methodology is based on inductive reasoning, where the research is generative as different interpretations are allowed.

Moreover, Weaver and Olson (2006) suggested that through their research in the nursing sector, an interpretivist paradigm coupled with qualitative methodology and methods provided them with ways in which strategies for patients and nursing practice can be improved. Using this approach allowed Weaver and Olson (2006) to gain insights that would not necessarily have been brought to light before. It is hoped that this approach can be transferred to this research, where practices for allowing young people to investigate and sample possible career aspirations can be improved so that young people from socially disadvantaged areas can maximise their aspirations. That is they can use experiences and

opportunities they are given to make better informed choices in relation to their future in ways that may transform their *habitus* and associated dispositions. It is suggested that this may aid them in the battle between their working class *habitus* and the school's middle class *habitus*.

In summary, Weaver and Olson (2006) summarise the positive aspects and the limitations of using an interpretivist approach in research by other researchers. The positive aspects include that interpretivism allows the voices and concerns of participants to be heard; the nature of a subjective process and the notion of intersubjectivity between the researcher and the participants leads to fruitful and deep discussions on the topic under investigation. Moreover, interpretivism allows researchers to investigate a local and specific topic that needs addressing and allows meaning to be associated with understanding the topic of interest. Limitations of the interpretivist approach include that it may not take into account historical factors in relation to the research topic and that a less objective approach may mean some important patterns are missed. Furthermore, the nature of interpretivist research means that different researchers may interpret the findings differently. Mack (2010) further highlighted drawbacks of using an interpretivist paradigm in that the findings are not generalizable to the whole population, only to the local situation and context under investigation. To combat these limitations in this dissertation, historical and biographical factors in relation to the participants will be taken into account and brought to light in the discussion of research findings. Also as a method of triangulation, the researcher will employ the use of the supervisor in relation to interpreting the research findings.

Moreover, Smith (1992) stated that when researchers arrive at interpretations of data and findings, their interpretations are best reached by making careful judgements and reasoning. Thanh and Thanh (2015) stated that it is important to provide the context in which research in the interpretivist paradigm is carried out as this could impact on the quality of the interpreted data collected. Taking this into account, Chapter Five will provide the context and background of the participants in addition to providing the school and policy context in Chapter One. The next section will outline different ways in which researchers have used *habitus* and aspirations as methodological tools. From this discussion, a theoretical lens will be developed that will be used as method of data analysis in this dissertation.

### 4.3 **Habitus and Aspirations: Developing a Methodological Theoretical Lens**

The concepts of *habitus* and aspirations have been used in various ways by researchers, depending on the aims and objectives of their research. Writing in a special issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Education* Trevor Gale and Bob Lingard (2015) discussed the merits of using Bourdieu's conceptual tools, bringing them to life through research. They advocate using these conceptual tools in a context that has increasing social and economic inequalities; and, where globalisation plays an important role to help understand, through reworking and rethinking, key areas for research in sociology of education. From the discussion below, it will be clear that *habitus* has been used more often in qualitative studies, although some quantitative studies are considered to give a fuller picture of previous research. This section links with Section 3.2 where a critique in using theory as a method of data analysis was given. The utilisation of *habitus* as a method of data analysis was highlighted by Rawlinson (2017) in her doctoral study examining the subconscious dispositions of students studying at a Higher Education institute in Scotland in relation to how they 'play the game', as defined earlier in this dissertation. This study will seek to utilise *habitus* in a similar way to understand how these subconscious dispositions influence young people's aspirations and considering the actual and intended aspirations of the participants.

First, it is important to conceptualise *habitus*, as Costa *et al.* (2018) described: a process that grows and changes and impacts on dispositions of individuals; that is, a process that affects how individuals think, act, perceive and view the world around them. It is possible that as the *habitus* is changed it may influence an individual's dispositions, changing how an individual thinks, acts and behaves. Costa and Murphy (2016) defined these dispositions as being produced and reproduced within the social, economic and cultural structures within which agents identify themselves. The importance of agency and structure is considered in Section 4.4. As a reminder, in the case of this dissertation, that is the battle between individual *habitus* and that of the institution; in other words the battle between individual histories, based on societal and family histories, journeys and influences and the middle-class dominant discourse of education.

Institutional *habitus* is defined, according to Tarabini and Curran (2018) who take on Reay, David and Ball's (2001) definition as: "*the set of predispositions, taken-for-granted expectations and schemes of perception*" (p. 61) on which schools function and are organised. This then allows the researcher to study how certain actions and perceptions that young people have can be seen in the educational field. Tarabini and Curran (2018)

noted that by studying institutional *habitus* it allows researchers to examine decisions and opportunities taken by young people in relation to their dispositions and identities, which is central to this dissertation. Tarabini and Curran (2018) noted two types of institutional *habitus*: inclusive and exclusive. An inclusive institutional *habitus* is indicative of a commitment to the success for all young people and takes account of structuring factors, such as gender and class. Here social inequality is recognised and the institution will do its best to alleviate the effects of social inequality on young people. An exclusive institutional *habitus* is focused on knowledge transmission and meritocracy, where young people's individual failure is the fault of others and not the educational institution. Here the effects of social inequality are reproduced, as described by Bourdieu's Theory (1977) and in Chapter Three. Tarabini and Curran (2018) pointed out that some institutions demonstrate a mixture of both institutional *habiti* (used as plural of *habitus*) depending on their political, social and cooperate functioning and that there is 'middle-ground' between these two extremes. Moreover, Burke *et al.* (2013) stated that the institutional *habitus* is valuable because it demonstrates that schools can influence the *habitus*, and hence dispositions, of individuals through their practices. Tarabini and Curran (2018) stated that examining the institutional *habitus* allows the values and expectations of the institution to be brought to light.

Dumais (2002) used *habitus* as a way to examine young people's beliefs about the future when asked to choose what their expected occupation was by the time they are 30 years old from: professional, managerial, business, business owner, science or engineering. She carried out a quantitative study where responses to questionnaires were assigned a value depending on the response and statistical analyses were carried out. Some of the variables that were considered were: sex, social economic status, grade-point average, occupational expectations and a range of extra-curricular activities such as going to concerts or taking art or music lessons as ways to developing cultural capital and *habitus*. Dumais (2002) specifically found that the relationship between the data changed when socio-economic status was taking into account, where young people of low socio-economic status were more likely to participate in extra-curricular activities on a one-off basis as opposed to the frequency and regularity of higher socio-economic status individuals.

Thomson (2009) also carried out a statistical analysis focusing on data obtained from the Youth Cohort Study (YCS) in England and Wales. The YCS was a longitudinal study focusing on the decisions made by young people aged 16 or 17 years old as they

progress from compulsory education to further or higher education or into the labour market. This involved looking at educational attainment, training opportunities and experiences as school. This involved using results from surveys and assigning variables to the data based on different forms of post-16 education and training, from part-time to full-time, employed with or without training and government supported and non-government supported training. The study also took account of the type of secondary school young people were moving from, for example, state, independent or sixth-form college. It is important to point out that in assigning data to categories, Thomson (2009) used a classification system to improve the reliability and validity of the data. The results of the data analysis were then related to Bourdieu's concept and theory, particularly *habitus*, to explain family and societal effects on patterns that emerged and Thomson (*Ibid.*) agreed with Reay (2004) that choice is key to the *habitus* but also that choice can limit the *habitus*. Thomson (2009) distinguished two types of *habitus*: the primary *habitus* and the secondary *habitus*, where the primary *habitus* is formed from the dispositions that are developed from the family and society and the secondary *habitus* is formed from the dispositions that are developed through school. It is important to bear in mind that these *habitus* might not necessarily be in harmony with each other and this is where the battle of the *habitus* takes place. This supports and relates to the discussion on primary and secondary *habitus* from Chapter Three.

Gale and Parker (2015a) examined disadvantaged students' aspirations for higher education through a statistical analysis of students' aspirations for the future using Zipin *et al.*'s (2015) concepts of *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations discussed in Chapter Three. These concepts will be used to develop the Bourdieusian methodology for this dissertation. Furthermore Gale and Parker (2015b) related students' expected future occupations to their parents' current occupation and found that students tend to expect to have an occupation that is similar or higher in prestige compared to their parents' occupation, for those from high socioeconomic areas, and to similar occupations for those from low socioeconomic areas, for example, continuing to work in a rural setting as their parents had done. This highlighted the influence of individual and family *habitus* in terms of promoting *doxic* or *habituated* aspirations in young people in terms of aspiring to what they know, or think, is best for them. Gale and Parker (2015a; 2015b), as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, used the term '*map*' knowledge to describe a young person's view of their future; this is knowledge from above where young people can see the 'bigger picture' in relation to their future. These young people know what they need to achieve their aspirations and have alternative routes to their aspiration if obstacles get in the way.

Costa *et al.* (2018) highlighted two case studies where *habitus* was used as a methodological tool. In their first case study looking at graduate employment Costa *et al.* (2018) studied the effectiveness of using *habitus* and found that while the concept was effective and durable they noted that changes to an individual's *habitus* can be brought about if there are changes to the individual's environment. This research focused on working class young people who attended university and found that changes to their environment made them more aware of the rules of the games and how to play the game. This resulted in them becoming more confident and increasing their expectations which altered their dispositions and transformed their *habitus*. According to Costa *et al.* (2018) these changes in environment, and hence changes to their *habitus*, were brought about by changes in respondents attitude and practice brought about by networking with individuals and interacting with other environments after graduation. In the case of this dissertation this could mean exposing young people to new and different notions of careers, work experience, vocational, HE or FE programmes, could raise their aspirations and make them more aware of the opportunities and possibilities available to them.

Costa *et al.* (2018) used *habitus* as a concept that is durable and also changeable at the same time in a study looking at biographical research in relation to understanding the graduate labour market. *Habitus* was used here to demonstrate alternative pathways that an individual can develop through individual agency and changes in circumstances and/or environment. In this study *habitus* was examined through the repetition of individuals' practices and attitudes to experiences using the ethnographic Biographical Narrative Interview Method (BNIM) in a longitudinal study. Costa *et al.* (2018) argued that this method could be used as theory as method, despite the notion that BNIM is usually associated with inductive-driven data collection methods, as it allows the researcher to look at an individual's history and identify patterns, behaviours or norms; that is, dispositions. Utilising BNIM means interviews are carried out over two sessions and three sub-sessions. The first sub-session comprises of open questions or statements where respondents are given as much time as they need to talk about the issue. During this time the interviewer is not allowed to interrupt the respondent. The second sub-session is usually carried out subsequent to the first, however, this time the interviewer is allowed to ask questions for clarification on what has been discussed in the first sub-session. Lastly, the third sub-session occurs some time after the first two sub-sessions have been transcribed and analysed and where the interviewer is given free reign to carry out the interview in any format suitable.

Costa *et al.* (2018) noted that some limitations of using this type of ethnographic study are associated with the quantitative notions of validity and reliability of the data collected. To take this into account it is important to acknowledge that BNIM and its associated theory-driven notion of data analysis should be associated with qualitative methods and have a strong aspect of reflexivity built into the methods. The notion of reflexivity is considered more in Chapter Five. Connolly *et al.* (2016) carried out an ethnographic study involving semi-structured interviews. Once the interviews were transcribed salient categories were used to categorise the data. The categorised data were then given descriptive coding tags. Any similarities were identified and grouped into overarching categories. These categories were then examined further and themes were generated. These themes were then compared with key concepts from Bourdieu's theoretical framework identified from a literature review: building cultural capital, cultural capital convertibility, doxic constraints, relationality and intersubjectivity. Connolly *et al.* (2016) found that the concept of *habitus* was brought out as highly relevant to understanding career aspirations of the groups being studied and identified two types of *habitus* in the cohorts interviewed: their educational *habitus* and their 'life' *habitus*, where students who were interviewed saw both their educational *habitus* and their life *habitus* as separate. This resulted in difficulties when they try to acquire cultural capital, that could be transformed into other forms of capital (economic, for example) later, and develop their doxic values to either accept or decline the values of education promoted through symbolic violence and social reproduction. Perhaps it is a bringing together of these two forms of *habitus* that can promote *habitus* transformation. Furthermore, Connelly *et al.* (2016) demonstrated that students' doxa had an ideological power, which resulted in their actions not being shaped by their *habitus* on its own, but also by the perceptions, that is dispositions, of what could be realistically achievable.

Scandone (2018) studied education and employment aspirations and pathways using a Bourdieusian lens, which allowed for the interaction between structure and agency to be examined. This allowed Scandone (2018) to look at the intersecting roles of social identity, for example, class, race, ethnicity, gender, while keeping account of the structural inequalities that exist. Scandone (2018) examined *habitus* in practice, which, as highlighted in Chapter Three discussions, is a combination of individual's dispositions together with the social, cultural and economic resources they have, taking into account the context of the field. Here *habitus* was used to explain how class, race, ethnicity and gender positions shape attitudes, experiences and practice. Moreover, Tarabini and Curran (2018) noted that (educational) choices that young people make are often as a result of past

experiences, feeling and subjective perceptions of the future and that these choices are limited by their social, cultural and economic position in society. Tarabini and Curran (2018) went further and suggested that operationalising *habitus* is essential for examining working-class young people's views of the future, and that utilising *habitus* allows young people's experiences in their school and their decision making processes to be examined through their dispositions, as will be carried out in this dissertation. Tarabini and Curran (2018) found that young people who have a *habitus* that is not aligned to the institutional *habitus* have a feeling of futility and incapacity; “a lack of control over the rules of the game” (p. 55) which impacts negatively on their experiences in school, through the ‘hidden curriculum’ and the dominant operational aspects of the school, and as a result may lower their hopes for the future or allow these young people to conform to their habituated aspirations where they expect that certain pathways are ‘not for the likes of me’. It is important to highlight the similarity between these statements and the thoughts of Bourdieu (1977), Ball *et al.* (1999) and other researchers used in this dissertation, that demonstrate working class young peoples though processes of eliminating from certain aspirations or careers as they are not suitable in for working class individuals in some way. This can be related to the literature review and Gale and Parker (2015) where individuals capacity is important in relation to their aspirations; young people need to develop the capacity to steer their course in the educational system to have a successful future.

In their second case study, Costa *et al.* (2018) looked at dispositions associated with digital scholarship. Here the concept of *habitus* was deployed to take into account categories of thinking, value systems and strategies that can be applied to digital scholarship. In this study narrative enquiry was used as the method for collecting data. This method allows the researcher to make-meaning of the social world around them and allows participants to develop and examine their personal experiences in relation to the topic under investigation. Narrative enquiry was used as a way of getting access to participants understanding of practices of digital scholarship; and, examining the values and principles individuals had about digital scholarship and exploring the strategies that individuals used to put their perceptions of scholarship into practice. This methodology can be related to this research where the interview questions are designed to get access to and assess young people's views and understanding of aspirations and post-16 destinations, and how *habitus* is influenced by the family, position in society and the school. Again, in this second case study the importance of reflexivity was highlighted which allows individuals, and the researcher, to examine their own practice. Costa *et al.* (2018) pointed out that subjectivity and (critical) reflexivity are important ideas in utilising

Bourdieuian concepts to understand the object under investigation. The notion of subjectivity and reflexivity are considered in more detail in Chapter Five. Moreover, Costa *et al.* (2018) remind us that when we talk about *habitus* it is important to take into account the context in which we discuss *habitus* and that the dispositions are considered in relation to a particular field, for example, in this study the school.

The theoretical lens that has been developed to explore the data and operationalise *habitus* and aspirations in this dissertation is as follows. Utilising the above discussion and that of Chapter Three the following high-level themes can be identified. First are dispositions: how young people think, act and behave; this will include looking for patterns of repetition of practices and attitudes, as highlighted by Costa *et al.* (2018). Second the influence of the school in terms of looking for effects of the institutional *habitus* in relation to mapping aspirations and expectations to the choices individuals make or the opportunities that are offered by the school. This second concept links with the first, dispositions, in that Stahl (2018b) commented that dispositions, and *habitus*, might be shaped by new and different experiences resulting in a *habitus clivé* or *secondary habitus*. This *habitus clivé* is in tension with the primary *habitus* as a result of the give-and-take of the internalisation of new experiences in a new field, which are competing with the dispositions of the individual's *primary habitus*. In order to ease this tension, individuals develop a *counter-habitus*, as discussed in Chapter Three. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) stated that the school, or education more generally, could be used to transform or reinforce an individual's *habitus*. Thomson (2008) noted that the word Bourdieu used for the *field* was *le Champ*, which translates as 'battlefield': this is the interpretation and understanding of where the 'battle of the *habitus*' takes place and where the notion of *habitus* transformation initially grows from, by individuals taking part in what Burke (2016) described as out-of-environment experiences; that is, experiences and choices that are taken up that would not normally have been due to dispositional constraints in working class young people's *habitus*.

Third, the aspirational goals of individuals will be examined in relation to intended aspirations and actual aspirations. This will consider individuals' aspirations in relation to Zipin *et al.*'s (2015) notions of *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations. Stahl (2018b) stated that using *habitus* in this way will allow the taken-for-granted *doxic* views of aspirations to be challenged and may result in a change in an individual's *habitus*. This methodology will allow the basic components: family, school and socioeconomic status, that influence *habitus* to be examined. These are summarised in Table 4.1 over page.

These high-level themes will be linked with those *a priori* themes identified from the literature review, Chapter Three, and from the coded interview data itself in Chapter Five.

**Table 4.1 – Summary of Bourdieusian Theoretical Lens for Data Analysis**

<b>High Level Themes</b>	<b>Theoretical Interpretive Themes</b>
1: Dispositions	These will consider how young people think, act and behave and will include looking for examples and patterns of repetition of practices and attitudes; that is, their <i>habitus</i> as an individual and as part of a (community) society in relation to socio-economic status.
2: Educational Field	The influence of the school will be considered to take account of the institutional <i>habitus</i> in relation to experiences and choices offered by the school and how these can influence a young person's dispositions and <i>habitus</i> .
3: Intended and Actual Aspirations	Intended aspirations of individuals taking part in the study will be considered in relation to Zipin <i>et al.</i> (2015) notions of <i>doxic habituated</i> and <i>emergent</i> aspirations. This will consider traditional, expected, ideal and actual aspirations.

#### **4.4 Agency and Structure: The Role of Education and The Individual as Part of Society**

As mentioned above in a Bourdieusian methodology, agency and structure are two concepts that are clearly linked. Stahl (2018b) commented that using *habitus* as a methodological tool allows individuals' agency, as an active ingredient, in the process of *habitus* formation or transformation to be taken into account rather than *habitus* being developed passively by interactions with social structures. From the literature review important influences on social structure can be identified: influences of peers, family, teachers and others, influences of the school in terms of opportunities given and taken by individuals including the provision of career education, to develop dispositions in relation to how young people think and act and how these dispositions change in relation to interaction with family, teachers and the school. These influences will be discussed in more detail in relation to how they are used in the data analysis process in Chapter Five, highlighting an important part in the data analysis process in moving from description to analysis. Patomäki and Wight (2000) suggested that agency and structure could not be separated ontologically, because they are intertwined, but can only be separated for

analytical purposes. They give three reasons for this. First individuals are linked to the social situations they find themselves in everyday life: individuals are woven with the social fabric. Patomäki and Wight (2000) were quick to highlight that, even though individuals are linked to the social world they find themselves in, individuals do not lose their sense of identity or personality, for the social world develops their sense of identity and personality.

Second is the recognition that the social world is dynamic and forever changing in that social activity is situated activity; that is, activity in which the outcome is depended on the communication, interaction and behaviour of the group as a whole, as opposed to individuals (Patomäki and Wight, 2000). However, in stating this Patomäki and Wight (2000) say that it should not be inferred that an individual's sense of identity, personality and perception of the social world should be rejected, as these are influenced by social interaction. Third is to take account of the context of social activity. This is to say, according to Patomäki and Wight (2000), that individuals and situated activity take place in a wider and deeper relational context, and that deeper context could be, for example, class relations or power relations.

Patomäki and Wight (2000) go further and suggested that this leads to the social reproduction or transformation based on relations from the past. This links with Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction*, in that the *habitus* and dispositions an individual possesses have been developed, partially, from the interactions with their family environment and society. Patomäki and Wight (2000) stated that the structural contexts of social activity take account of the authority, power and influence of social activity. In order for agency and structure to remain in Bourdieu's methodological tools, he described his method as *constructivist structuralism*, according to Stahl *et al.* (2018), where constructivist refers to the reproduction of human activity and structuralist to the relations of those involved, as highlighted at the beginning of this section. Archer (1996) proposed a three-dimensional model, which comprises social interaction: the *cultural* system, the *structural* system and *individuals* themselves. However, it is important to note that Archer's model has a crucial link to this dissertation through Bourdieu's *Theory of Reproduction*, in particular his concept of *habitus*, when Archer employs the term culture to mean the values, beliefs, ideas and norms of society; the dispositions associated with certain class strata of society. This can be linked back to the discussion of *habitus* and its associated dispositions of the way people think, act and behave detailed in this Chapter and in Chapter Three.

However, in reifying the role of education and the possibilities that education can bring, it is important to acknowledge there are some critiques and drawbacks associated with the role of education. One such example is the role of education in capitalist society which, according to Thomson (2008), drawing on the work of Louis Althusser, a prominent Marxist, is to produce, or reproduce, a dominant and obedient workforce. This can be related to Bowles and Gintis's (1988) correspondence theory, where school prepares young people to be obedient of authority and to participate in the economic system; in other words education has an instrumental purpose. At present the influence of Scotland's *Developing the Young Workforce* strategy is extremely skills based in that it is oriented towards providing young people with the necessary transferable skills needed for future employment (Scottish Government, 2014). This strategy links with the role of education in a capitalist way of thinking and with the larger neoliberal agenda, as highlighted by Hill (2006) and detailed in Chapters One and Two. Thomson (2008) further stated that schools, or educational establishments in general, promote a myth where everyone has an equal chance to succeed and rejects the idea of a meritocracy, again as detailed in Chapter Two. Moreover, Thomson (2008) suggested a direct relationship between a young person's social background and how well they attain at school: a young person from a more affluent family will attain better qualifications at school. This again provides links with Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction*, where the education establishment seeks to reproduce and legitimise the dominant class culture.

It is important to acknowledge limitations of encouraging as many people as possible to progress to Higher Education, as reported in the Guardian newspaper (Elliot, 2016), that an overproduction of university graduates is bad for the economy as graduate jobs are not available. Elliot (2016) reported that graduates are taking jobs in the police and banking, for example, which would normally have been where school leavers aimed to get employment. This could push those school leavers into less well paid short-term employment, for example in the *gig economy*, doing small jobs for companies such *Uber* and *Deliveroo*. Elliot (2016) further reported on comments by Peter Cheese (Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) that successive UK Governments (and indeed Scottish Governments) have pursued an agenda of encouraging ever increasing numbers of young people into Higher Education and that with the recent Brexit vote, governments need to take stock of Higher Education and skills to plan for the future of the country outside of the European Union. It is also important to bear in mind the discussion surrounding the growing number of people in the *gig economy*, the working poor who are in in-work poverty and the increase in automation in many sectors

that are limiting employment opportunities and limiting progression. This can be related to what Standing (2016), writing in the World Economic Forum, described as a new class system, where the precariat are becoming more prevalent in society; those people who have to accept unsecure or unstable employment, such as those in the *gig economy*. Standing (2016) stated that the precariat are those on zero-hours contracts, in voluntary part-time employment and short term contract, for example, and results in people employed in these areas having no occupational identity, where the number of hours people need to work is not reflected in their salary or recognised.

Moreover, Standing (2016) points out that as salaries have not risen with the increasing costs of living, this means that in countries such as the UK, USA, Germany and other OECD countries, opportunities for upward mobility have been falling while downward mobility has been increasing. The idea of social mobility was discussed by Goldthorpe (2016) who demonstrated that current trends indicated downward mobility is increasing. Furthermore, a Research Report (Nunn *et al.* 2007) commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions quoted research by Blanden *et al.* (2007) that demonstrated that social mobility in the UK has stalled or even declined recently. This could have potential implications for young people in that they may not be able to progress to a more advanced position than their parents. One key aspect of school and educators is to help young people as much as possible buck this trend and achieve their potential.

Furthermore, Sayer (1997) suggested that critiquing social phenomena is inherently difficult because of subjectivity; the debate over what embodies a problem, solution or explanation, for example. Moreover, Sayer (1997) pointed to the need to have alternatives and to take into account the cultural and political implications of providing individuals with the ability to better themselves. This has moral and ethical implications of its own in deciding who has the right to determine who is given the chance to be bettered, who is not and the rationale behind this thinking. Furthermore, with societies becoming more multicultural, diverse and interdependent, it is more important than ever that cultural aspects are taken into account.

#### **4.5 Chapter Conclusion**

In conclusion this Chapter began by highlighting different philosophical positions from positivism at one end of the continuum to constructivism at the opposite end of the continuum. Furthermore, strengths and weaknesses of these different approaches were discussed and an argument for basing this dissertation research on interpretivism was put

forward. Moreover, an extended discussion took place, based on some readings from the literature review and other literature, which considered how *habitus* and aspirations have been used methodologically by other researchers. This resulted in the following methodological approach being taken.

Three high-level themes will be considered. First are dispositions: how young people think, act and behave; this will include looking for patterns of repetition of practices and attitudes. Second the influence of the school in terms of looking for effects of the institutional *habitus* in relation to mapping aspirations and expectations to the choices and experiences individuals make or take that are offered by the school and the potential for these choices and experiences to bring about *habitus* transformation or change. Third the aspirational goals of individuals will be examined in relation to expected aspirations and intended aspirations this will consider individual's aspirations in relation to Zipin *et al.*'s (2015) notions of *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations. These high-level themes, presented in Table 4.1 above will be linked to themes identified from the literature review, Chapter Three and also themes identified from the data itself to provide a thematic approach to data analysis in Chapter Five. Furthermore, a discussion around agency and structure took place, which demonstrated the inter-relatedness of these concepts in consideration to social inequality and class inequality being a structuring-structure that can define young people's future aspirations resulting in them taking a doxic view of the future. The importance of developing agency will be highlighted in Chapter Six through the discussion of participants' responses and related to literature.

## Chapter Five

### Method of Data Collection and Analysis

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This Chapter outlines the methods used in this dissertation and provide context and background of the school and the research participants. Method is defined as the techniques that are applied to collect data on the object under investigation (King 1994; Roberts, 2014). Barriball and While (1994) reminded the researcher that every step of the research process can affect the results obtained and that it is important to reduce error as much as possible. The methods used in this dissertation are outlined together with a detailed discussion of how the research tools were developed and the method of data analysis is given. First, however, a discussion of ethics is presented in relation to reflexivity in social science, as the concept of reflexivity is important in Bourdieu's research methods as highlighted in Chapter Three and Four.

#### **5.1 Ethical Considerations and the Importance of Reflexivity**

Sikes (2006) stated that research is not a neutral or innocent practice and that researchers need to consider their motives and implications for carrying out research. It is not just implications for the participants that need to be considered but also the implications for the researcher and to anyone else who may read the research, for example, the participants themselves, other staff members, members of the participants' families and members of the public. As such the findings were written in a way that would not cause upset or tension to readers. As Agee (2009) noted, ethical considerations are important at every stage in the research process: from developing research questions, consideration of methodology and method, through to collection and analysing data to conclusions and writing up.

##### **5.1.1 Insider Research**

Since this research is being carried out in the researcher's institution, they were a teacher-researcher and an insider-researcher (Floyd and Linet, 2010). Several authors, for example Mercer (2007) and Floyd and Lint (2010), have commented that the emergence and expansions of the Doctorate in Education has seen a rise in the number of research projects carried out in the researcher's own institution. Lincoln and Guba (1995) and

Geertz (1993) referred to this type of research as *emic* research, which allows the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge of the object under study. However, Mercer (2007) and Greene (2014) suggested that the insider-outside continuum is false and that the position of the researcher changes depending on the stage of the research project. Moreover, Humphrey (2007) likened the insider-researcher to walking on a tightrope with the distinct roles of *researcher* and *insider* on either side with a double consciousness. There are advantages to insider-research, as Humphrey (2012) suggested, through enjoying a good rapport with participants, and Pendlebury and Enslin (2001) suggested through developing trustworthiness with their participants. Pendlebury and Enslin (2001) noted that care is needed when conducting insider-research as it is, as all research is, open to abuse. They further highlighted the difference between research *on* subjects and research *with* subjects, where the latter has some reciprocity attached to it. This research identified with research *with* subjects because would be using the outcomes of this research to provide suggestions to improve outcomes of young people from socially disadvantaged areas.

Humphrey (2012) described insider research as sensitive research because it could lead to disclosure of information about colleagues or the work place, or indeed about the participants themselves as Sikes (2006) noted. It was therefore important to be aware of personal, political and professional conflicts that can occur. Kleinsasser (2000) described this as the multiple lenses, roles and identities an insider researcher can take. This was also advantageous as, according to Kleinsasser (2000), it provided a deeper understanding of what participants say. To overcome issues surrounding sensitivity in this dissertation, a projective technique was used (Jahoda *et al.* 1951) which, defined by Catterall and Ibbotson (2000), are techniques that allow the respondents to discuss a situation presented to them, for example in a vignette, without the need for direct questioning. Using projective techniques also allowed a discussion to take place without the need to ask personal or intrusive questions. This also addressed the issue surrounding using suitable methods to carry out research, as Sikes (2006) suggested, instruments that are used to collect data must consider the participants' emotions and feelings too.

Mercier (2007) suggested, however, that familiarity to the research participants can lead to things being taken for granted and the obvious is not stated. To combat this during interviews the participants were asked probing questions to encourage them to explain what they say, this provided deeper answers and thicker data. Furthermore, Chevez (2008) suggested that at the start of the interview a disclaimer is given that even though the

participant and researcher may share an understanding of what is being discussed, it would be ideal if the participant could talk about issues as if it were for the first time. Floyd and Linet (2010) suggested that a drawback of insider-research is that because the participants know the researcher, they feel a duty to give the 'correct' answers to questions. Greene (2014), writing from a positivist approach, described the methodological implications of conducting insider-research and warned that care must be taken for researchers not to force their own views onto the participants. Such implications include a threat to objectivity through subjective involvement. In a constructivist-oriented paradigm subjectivity is seen as an advantage over objectivity, where as in positivist approaches the opposite is favoured.

### **5.1.2 Reflexivity, Rigour and Integrity in Social Science Research**

Greene (2014) stated that Bourdieu's work on reflexivity is highly regarded in insider-researcher fields, where Bourdieu advocated questioning oneself on perceptions one may have (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Furthermore, Mauthner and Doucet (2003) suggested that the researcher should keep their distance socially and emotionally to aid the reflexive process, but add that finding the correct distance is difficult and different for each project in terms of researcher-participant relationships. Greene (2014) added to this by stating that it is not only the participants that the researcher should remain appropriately distanced from, but also the subject matter of the research too. Manicas (2009) highlighted the practical aspect of reflexivity where the researcher should continually ask themselves probing questions with regard to assessing whether the interpretation that is being made makes sense and is addressing the research issue under investigation. Moreover, Bourdieu (1984) highlighted that the way we speak and act can affect the research process in professional disciplines because social structures are embedded into our conscious acts, and as such, professional reflexivity should be centred on the causal level as oppose to the empirical level. King (1994) extended this by stating that it is important for the researcher to consider their own biases and subjective interpretation of the object under study. Many authors, for example Morrow (2005), Drake (2010) and Humphrey (2012) have suggested that keeping a record of one's thoughts and feelings through a journal or diary is good method to promote reflexivity, which Drake (2010) described as self-triangulation. Morrow (2005) went on to suggest that it is important for researchers to consider their emotional attachment to the study. This was important for this dissertation, as some of the young people who are taking part in the study are growing up in similar backgrounds to the researcher. It was for this reason that Chapter One of this dissertation was incorporated so that a contextualisation could be made, and consideration of the researchers' historical,

social, emotional and cultural factors in relation to this study. This is the important aspect of *positionality* (Alcoff, 1991-92), where a researcher considers their position to the research and the participants.

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) further highlighted that researchers need to consider their reflexivity at all stages of the research process, particularly when interpreting and analysing data. Kleinsasser (2000) stated that reflexivity allows the researcher to consider ethics before, during and after the research and identifies four key points where ethics and reflexivity stand out: gaining access to participants, maintaining access, drafting the results of the study and bringing the study to an end. Moreover, Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) stated that data analysis is governed by the ontological, epistemological and theoretical beliefs of the researcher. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) agreed with Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) but also suggested that there are other influences in the data analysis process: personal, emotional, interpersonal and institutional factors including personal assumptions, as mentioned above. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) suggested that it is better to think of reflexivity in terms of varying degrees of reflexivity, where reflexivity is sometimes easier to identify than at other times and that time, distance and detachment from the researcher process is sometimes required.

Noble and Smith (2015) eluded to the idea that research conducted under the umbrella of qualitative research often lacks rigour because the reasons for using particular methods are not explicitly given and that analysis of data is biased towards the subjectivity of the researcher. For the purpose of clarity, it should be noted that since this dissertation relied on data collected and analysed from interviews it was considered qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Noble and Smith (2005) further suggested that concepts used in assessing the rigour and integrity of quantitative research, such as *validity* and *reliability* cannot be used in a qualitative study. It was suggested by Noble and Smith (2005), based on concepts from Lincoln and Guba (1985), that these quantitative terms should be replaced in qualitative research by *truth value*, *consistency*, *neutrality (confirmability)* and *applicability*. Moreover, these concepts are closely related to what Greene (2014) described as techniques and tools to overcome the obstacles and barriers of conducting insider-research discussed above. Each of these terms will now be considered in relation to this dissertation.

*Truth value* is the appreciation and recognition that multiple realities exist: those of the researcher and those of the participants (Noble and Smith, 2005). Here it was

important that personal experiences are taken into account, as in Chapter One, and in analysing, interpreting and reporting data and findings that an accurate account of the participants' views were given. *Consistency* means that the decisions arrived at are clear and transparent (Noble and Smith, 2005). In this research this involved utilising a critical lens rigorously during data collection and analysis, and recording and reporting accurately the reasons for decision making throughout the research process. *Applicability* is giving consideration to the how transferable the results of the research are to other groups or contexts. *Neutrality*, or *confirmability*, takes account of *truth value*, *consistency* and *applicability* through the constant interaction with research participants and recognising the intrinsic link between philosophical position and the research methodology and methods (Noble and Smith, 2005). It should be noted that this is at odds with the thinking of other researchers, for example Morrow (2005), who stated that quantitative research arrives at different knowledge claims from qualitative research and that qualitative research is idiographic and *emic*, which focuses on making meaning from individuals or a small group. Noble and Smith (2005) suggested the following activities promote *neutrality* in research: it is considered good practice to keep a reflective journal or research's journal to record decisions and thoughts. They also suggested that the process of reflexivity described above contributes towards the *neutrality* of research. Furthermore, using semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to check his/her understanding of what participants have said and using quotes from interviews in the data analysis promote *neutrality*. Both of which were used in this dissertation.

Morse *et al.* (2002) stated that de-briefing and keeping an audit trail during the research process is important to promote *trustworthiness* in research, where trustworthiness incorporates the concepts from Lincoln and Guba (1982), described above: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. In this research an audit trail of thoughts and decisions were kept, and regular de-briefing sessions with the dissertation supervisor were conducted. Moreover, Morse *et al.* (2002) suggested that *trustworthiness* is a concept that a researcher should take into account from the beginning to the end of the research process, that is, *trustworthiness* should not be used merely as an evaluative tool, it should be part of the iterative process of qualitative research where there is constant movement backward and forward between research design and research implementation.

Greene (2014) extended this idea to suggest that researchers also need to take account of their reflectivity and positionality, in addition to reflexivity in relation to behaving in a moral and professional manner. It was also possible that this research may

be viewed from the lens of a middle or senior leader, a person with a position of responsibility in the school, and according to Floyd and Linet (2010) the participants may have seen the researcher as being in a position of power and their responses could have been distorted in light of this. To overcome this, Floyd and Linet (2010) suggested having a great sense of trust and responsibility towards the participants, and Mercier (2007) stated that being seen as credible and having a good rapport with the participants can overcome this, as does reinforcing confidentiality and anonymity.

### **5.1.3 Practical Ethical Implications and Considerations**

Procedures for applying for Ethical Approval from the College of Social Sciences at the University were followed and subsequently ethical approval was given for the study. An application was also submitted to Glasgow City Council's Education Services Research Group (ESRG), where approval was given. The ESRG has requested a copy of the dissertation upon completion. Details of the ethical application and approval letter are given in Appendix One. Sikes (2006) stated that anonymity and confidentiality are difficult to promise because something maybe said in an interview that cannot possible be kept confidential, for example, a child protection issue. At the start of the interviews, it was explained to participants that if something was said that could have consequences for wellbeing or safety then this would need to be passed on. Furthermore, it was made clear to all participants that they can withdraw their participation at any time. Safety of young people was paramount to this research. The interviews were carried out in a room with a window overlooking other classrooms and there was a window on the door looking into a main corridor. Furthermore, if young people become upset during the interview, it would have been terminated immediately. Thankfully this did not occur. There was access to a range of counselling services that young people can access, if needed. During the data collection and analysis process care was taken to ensure that the participants where not distressed and upset by the experience.

Parr (2015) emphasised the issue surrounding power and the nature of the relationship between the researcher and participant, in that issues associated with power can be reduced by establishing a relationship with the participant based on empathy and mutual respect. As participants in this study were known to the researcher, there was already established a mutually respectful relationship with them. During the interviews, and indeed through out the research project, a non-hierarchical position was adopted (Parr, 2015). Before the interviews were carried out, participants were spoken to, to put them at ease and answer any questions they may have. The discussions that took place were not

necessarily related to the research project and were an opportunity to allow the participants to speak freely about topics they wanted to discuss; participants were given a voice to speak with. Indeed Pendlebury and Enslin (2001) and Parr (2015) highlighted the important reciprocity aspect of research. This further contributed to developing a good rapport with the participants in this study and gave them an opportunity to see the researcher in a different light as oppose to a member of the school leadership team.

Furthermore, having a background as Principal Teacher of Pastoral Care, there was great experience in identifying and dealing with distress. While in a dependent relationship with potential participants it was made clear that non-participation or withdrawal during the course of the study would have no bearing on their schooling or relationship with the researcher. All paper documentation and electronic audio-files were kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home address. During the transcription of interviews participants were de-identified to Respondent 1, 2 and so on. All audio-files downloaded on the researcher's laptop and subsequent transcription and analysis were password protected with the password being known only to the researcher himself. Once transcription had taken place, participants were offered a paper copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. This was done away from others to maintain confidentiality. Furthermore, participants were offered a copy of the data analysis/findings upon completion of the project. Data was retained in case of the need for resubmission of the dissertation. Once it was known that the dissertation had been passed successfully, all personal data, both paper and electronic, would be destroyed. Paper data will be shredded and electronic data will be permanently deleted from the laptop using removal software.

## **5.2 Methods of Data Collection**

### **5.2.1 Qualitative Data: Interviews**

Gill *et al.* (2008) stated that the two most common methods used to collect data in qualitative research are interviews and focus groups. Roberts (2014) stated that using interviews, where questions are asked in a discussion format, allow respondents to talk at ease about potentially sensitive topics. Gill *et al.* (2008) commented that using focus groups to explore potentially sensitive topics is not suitable as the participants may be uncomfortable discussing issues in front of each other. This ruled out using focus groups for this research. The idea of using interviews to explore understanding and experiences, in relation to social and education settings, was further highlighted as an appropriate method by Witz *et al.* (2001). Coleman *et al.* (1999) and Witz *et al.* (2001) also suggested that vignettes are suitable to explore human understanding, and that this method of

interviewing allows the researcher to understand the individual or scenario portrayed in the vignettes. Witz *et al.* (2001) specifically suggested the use of vignettes for exploring individuals' experiences and motivations in social and educational settings. This use of vignettes is a projective technique which allows the respondents to discuss a situation presented to them, for example in a vignette, without the need for direct personal questioning (Catterall and Ibbotson, 2000). Vignettes were used by several researchers carrying out research surrounding potentially sensitive topics, where the use of vignettes was appropriate to avoid asking intrusive and/or personal questions, for example: Neale, 1999, cited in Barter and Renold, 1999; Taylor, 2006; Stokes and Schmidt, 2012.

Maxwell (2012) suggested that the research questions should focus on the issue to be investigated, whereas the interview questions are a means of allowing the researcher to explore in greater depth the processes at work. This approach was adopted when designing the vignettes for use in the interviews. In designing vignettes, Taylor (2006) discussed the number of variables that should be present and suggests any number from five to over twenty. Each vignette was confined to a maximum of five factors: details of attainment, socio-economic background, family circumstances, the area lived in and the impact of friends and family on young people. Stokes and Schmidt (2012) suggested that the factors used to create the vignettes should be independent to the factor under study. In the case of this research, this was true in the sense that these factors can influence young people's aspirations individually.

Furthermore, Hughes and Huby (2004) emphasised that in designing vignettes one has to make sure they are realistic, relevant and of interest to the participants. This was supported by Stokes and Schmidt (2012) who stated that vignettes need to be believable. Gill *et al.* (2008) stated that when designing questions to accompany the vignettes it is important to make them as open-ended as possible to avoid the participant giving 'yes'/'no' answers with the order of questions going from the general to the specific. This advice was taken into account and the vignettes used in the study are detailed in Appendix Two. As the vignettes were realistic representations of possible situations this also further increased the trustworthiness according to Stokes and Schmidt (2012). By using closed questions Langley (2004) stated that participants responses can be restricted and that they are not able to express their opinion as fully as they would like. The interviewees were recorded to allow the need to go back and check what was said and to give an accurate representation of what was said for the data analysis stage. Witz *et al.* (2001) further

suggested that recording the interviews allows other researchers to examine the data (subject to ethical approval) to improve contributions to knowledge.

Gill *et al.* (2008) stated there are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, which differ in the way questions are asked and constructed. Structured interviews have no deviation from the set of pre-determined questions developed by the researcher and are not as useful for generating any depth to answers. Unstructured interviews may start with an opening question, which allows further discussion or elaboration. Gill *et al.* (2008) pointed to disadvantages to unstructured interviews are that they are time consuming and often difficult to administer. Semi-structured interviews comprise of a series of key questions, which allows flexibility to probe deeper into individuals' responses. During the semi-structured interview process, Barriball and While (1994) stated that it is important to be flexible to probe answers from respondents as this allows for clarification of anything that is not understood or anything that requires deeper interpretation or is of interest. More importantly, probing allows the researcher and participant to develop a sense of rapport and reduces the need for the participants to give the 'correct' answer in that their answers are more personal, thus increasing the trustworthiness of the research. This was a view echoed by Gill *et al.* (2008) who further suggested that by starting with questions that the participants can answer easily will put them at ease and ease them into the interview process.

Tyson (1991) also advocated for using semi-structured interviews in terms of starting with a set of initial questions and following up participants' responses with prompts and stated that face-to-face interviews give more detail than written responses. Whiting (2008) suggested that interviews can be carried out face-to-face or over the telephone. According to Barriball and While (1994), the advantages of using personal, one-to-one interviews are higher response rates, compared to on-line or paper questionnaires and those involved get an opportunity to state their values, beliefs and views. Furthermore, Barriball and While (1994) suggested the use of semi-structured interviews in explorations of people's perceptions and opinions. This was ideal for this research as it seeks to understand people's opinions of the object under investigation.

Parr (2015) suggested that having semi-structured interviews allows the participant to have some power in the data collection process, that is by allowing them to speak freely about issues relating to the topic that concern them. Humphrey (2012) commented that it is important to explain why the research is being carried out and the details of the research

project to participants before data is collected or else one could collect data that is of limited importance to the research project. This was reiterated by Whiting (2008) who provided a checklist of points to be explained to the participants before an interview takes place: purpose, approximate timing, format of questions, purpose of recorder, reminder that participants can seek clarification or not answer a particular question and to provide an opportunity for the participant to ask any other questions. In order to adhere to this, an interview preamble was given, read at the start of every interview and a concluding statement that was read at the end. This included a thank you to the participant for taking part.

Upon ethical approval from the College of Social Sciences Ethic Committee at the University, participants were recruited for the study; where eleven volunteers from S4 to S6 took part, aged between sixteen and eighteen years old. Furlong and Biggart (1999) suggested that recruiting older children is more acceptable as their aspirations are more realistic. Kintrea *et al.* (2015) reinforced this idea since young people will be at the stage in their education where they are choosing subjects relevant to their aspiration. Moreover, Witz *et al.* (2001) discussed successful research that has been carried out using interviews with older children and youths in a school setting, which was directly transferable to this research. Anyone interested in taking part in the study was given a Plain Language Statement and asked to come back if they were still interested in taking part. This was achieved with relative ease as a trial, or pilot, study had been carried out in the Open Studies Two (OS2) module of the Ed.D. course. This trial study allowed interview technique to be practised and refined. Furthermore, carrying out a trial study also allowed rigour and elements of quality control to be built into the research design and execution process by acting as a form of triangulation. Parental consent was required from all participants aged less than 16 years of age. Barriball and While (1994) implied that difficulty in recruitment may mean that the researcher ends up with a highly selective sample of individuals, which does not give a true representation of views that would be expressed. This was not an issue in this research, as it was not aiming to assert generalisations to the entire population, but rather to investigate a localised issue from the viewpoint of individuals involved. Moreover, Barriball and While (1994) stated that personal face-to-face contact is advantageous in helping to recruit participants in that it demonstrates interest and confidence in the project, it overcomes any hesitation and that questions can be answered immediately.

Interviews were a maximum duration of one hour and carried out at a time that causes least disruption to pupils' work, for example, during Core periods, free periods or after school at a time chosen by the pupil. Core periods are defined as Physical Education, Personal and Social Education or Religious Education: periods that every pupil in S4-6 has that do not contribute towards National Qualifications. This duration of interview was chosen from reading literature, in particular Wilson *et al.* (2002) who used interviews from 20-60 minute duration and Whiting (2008) who suggested a minimum of 30 minutes to several hours. Furthermore, as this research involved young people, it was important that they did not get bored or demotivated during the interview as this could have led to less full answers or them pulling out part-way through the interview, which would have had devastating consequences for the research project.

Participants were given time to give their answers to questions and were not interrupted during their delivery of answers. Moreover, Barriball and While (1994) stated this is good practice in developing competence and understanding of the interview process and in developing interview technique. This also allowed the researcher to make changes, adjustments and refinements as the interview process progressed. This led to the interviews becoming more natural and less rehearsed sounding, which is advantageous to the success of the interview according to Gill *et al.* (2008).

### **5.2.2 Qualitative Data: Researcher's Journal**

A researcher's journal was used to record notes during the interview. This allowed a note to be made of a particularly interesting statement and to record notes on information that may be useful to return to later in the interview, in order to probe deeper into participants' responses. Barriball and While (1994) suggested this improves the validity and reliability of the research, or in the context of this research, the trustworthiness. Furthermore, Gill *et al.* (2008) stated that recording notes during the interview processes on thoughts, observations and ideas could help in the data analysis stage. To this end, when conducting interviews for this study a period of time was given to debrief and write notes on any thoughts and ideas, for example. This was also carried out after every three interviews to reflect on the way the interviews were being carried out and if any improvements were necessary.

### **5.3 Context and Background of Participants and School**

Almost all, 10 out of 11, participants who took part in the research were from SIMD 1/2 areas within the catchment area of the school. These areas are the lowest socio-

economic areas in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2017a). The other participant was from an SIMD 6 area, a more affluent area. This particular participant did not live in the catchment area of the school and travelled across the city to attend the school. She previously lived within the catchment area and moved due to family circumstances but wished to remain at the school for reasons of continuity in her studies. All participants lived with at least one parent, their mother or their father. The latest school census highlighted that over 90% of the school's pupils lived in SIMD 1/2 areas and that over 50% of pupils were entitled to free school meals. Both figures highlight the level of need and support for young people in this SIMD area. Permission was sought from Education Scotland to use school-level data on different post-16 destinations; however, the researcher received no reply from two requests.

Table 5.4, below, outlines the school year, gender and intended aspirations of participants. It can be seen that these young people had a range of aspirations from the construction industry to college and university. From Table 5.4 it can be seen that 9 male and 2 female participants took part in the research, with pupils from stages S4, 5 or 6. This may mean there was a gender imbalance in responses towards more male-oriented attitudes and beliefs, which is taken into account in the discussion that follows.

**Table 5.4 – School Year and Gender of Participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Intended Aspiration</b>
1	S4	M	Engineering/Computer Games Design
2	S4	M	Apprenticeship in Mechanical Engineering
3	S4	M	University to study PE
4	S5	M	University to study Psychology
5	S4	M	Construction Industry
6	S4	M	Computer Games Designer
7	S6	M	University to study Pharmacy
8	S6	M	College to study Film
9	S6	F	University to study Engineering
10	S5	M	University to study Medicine or Science
11	S6	F	University to study Medicine

## 5.4 Data Analysis

### 5.4.1 Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

Wilson *et al.* (2002) carried out thematic analysis of interview data from transcripts. This is relevant to this research as Wilson *et al.* (2002) was investigating people experiences of post-discharge from hospital, which is a potentially sensitive topic, as this could have been. During the analysis process Witz *et al.* (2001) reminded the researcher that it is important to immerse oneself in the data and to constantly revisit transcriptions and the original recordings to check understanding.

The method formed that of a narrative-type inquiry with theoretical analysis, which according to Burke (2018) provides thick, rich data. The interviews were carried out in two parts. First, participants answered questions based on six pre-prepared vignettes that were developed outlining a fictional biographical account of a young person based on the literature and the researcher's experiences of working with young people at key points in their school careers: preparing for subject choices that will take young people to their National Qualification examinations and at the time they transition out of school to their chosen post-16 destination. This followed from a similar method used by Tarabini and Curran (2018) who used a qualitative methodology based on in-depth case studies. Second, participants were asked to give their own personal views of different post-16 destinations, for example, apprenticeship, college, university and going straight into employment from school. This second part comprised of a set of summary questions that participants were asked, where they were encouraged to give and justify their own views on different post-16 destinations and aspirations. This allowed the researcher to examine their *habitus* and associated dispositions of how people think, act and behave, including bringing to light some misconceptions and misunderstandings that the participants had in relation to different aspirations and aspirational routes. Caetano (2015) noted, however, that an individual's discourse and what they say is affected by their memory, experience, social circumstances and emotional state at a particular moment in their life.

Data was analysed in three stages using the following methodology proposed by Burke (2018). This three-stage process allowed data analysis to move from descriptive to analytical and introduced a robust element into the data analysis process. Stage One involved coding the data, once transcribed, using codes identified from the literature review and interview data. The specificities of the coding process are considered later in Section 5.4.2. The following codes were identified from the literature review (*a priori* codes) and interview transcripts, these are summarised in Table 5.6, page 102): influential

people (adults, siblings etc.), education (the opportunities provided that constrain and develop aspirations), economic and social factors (family background, area lived in), importance of young people following their own interests, experiences gained through education, post-16 destinations and other factors such as travel and health that can affect an individual's aspirations.

The codes were then linked together to develop sub-themes in relation to the high-level themes from the methodological lens developed in Chapter Four, see Table 5.5 as a reminder. First dispositions will consider how young people think, act and behave and will include looking for patterns of repetition of practices and attitudes, as highlighted by Costa *et al.* (2018) above. Then the influence of the school will be considered to take account of the institutional *habitus* in relation to experiences and choices offered by the school and, lastly, intended and actual aspirations of individuals taking part in the study will be considered in relation to Zipin *et al.* (2015) notions of *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations. During this process there was linkage between the key methodological ideas above and the themes identified from the literature review and data.

**Table 5.5 – Summary of Bourdieusian Theoretical Lens for Data Analysis**

<b>High Level Themes</b>	<b>Theoretical Interpretive Themes</b>
1: Dispositions	These will consider how young people think, act and behave and will include looking for examples and patterns of repetition of practices and attitudes; that is, their <i>habitus</i> as an individual and as part of a community (society) in relation to socio-economic status.
2: Educational Field	The influence of the school will be considered to take account of the institutional <i>habitus</i> in relation to experiences and choices offered by the school and how these can influence a young person's dispositions and <i>habitus</i> .
3: Intended and Actual Aspirations	Intended aspirations of individuals taking part in the study will be considered in relation to Zipin <i>et al.</i> (2015) notions of <i>doxic</i> , <i>habituated</i> and <i>emergent</i> aspirations. This will consider traditional, expected, idea and actual aspirations.

Throughout this process the researcher moved backwards and forward between the literature and interview data to identify sub-themes in a Bourdieusian manner in what

Mahar *et al.* (1990) described as moving between theory, empirical work and back to theory again; that is, the Bourdieusian notion of reflexivity discussed earlier. The third, and final, stage of data analysis involved using theoretical analysis in the discussion and understanding of the data. This is using Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction* and other sociological research discussed in this dissertation to understand and qualify what participants said during the interviews.

#### 5.4.2 Data Coding and Identifying Themes

ExpressScribe® computer programme software was used to transcribe the interview data from audio format into Microsoft Word® document and a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software package, *NVivo* Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QSR International Pty Ltd., version 10, 2014) was used to help to classify and categorise codes and themes from the transcripts. Reference was made back and forth between the audio recording of the interview and the transcription to check for accuracy and participants were given a copy of their transcription to check for accuracy. No participants said they did not want any part of the interview not to be used or that corrections had to be made. This demonstrated an accurate and robust transcription process. Hilal and Alibri (2013) advocated for using QDA packages as they enhance the quality of the research carried out to a large extent. Furthermore, Hilal and Alibri (2013) proposed that *NVivo* is a suitable package because of the powerful and wide range of functions it has and because it can manipulate a great deal of the manual operations of data analysis that a researcher would need to undertake thus saving time and allowing the researcher more time to focus on the analysis and interpretation. The details of how *NVivo* was used and the data that was input are given below.

First the interviews were coded using the *a priori* codes from the literature review and new codes that emerged from the data. This allowed the data 'to speak to me' without constraining the data. From this, the codes were categorised into sub-themes (Welsh, 2002). Welsh (2002) pointed out that *NVivo* can be advantageous to the data analysis process because it improves the rigour of the data analysis process, however, cautioned that it can be used so powerfully that the connection between themes becomes less reliable. It was therefore important to retain the value of using a QDA software package whilst at the same time keeping a manual touch on the data. To this end, the interviews were coded sentence by sentence. Where possible, there was no 'double-coding', which is assigning the same sentence to two different codes. To do this there was constant questioning about what the sentence meant and where it fitted with the sub-themes. New codes that emerged

were added to the *a priori* codes, after interview three, no more new codes were identified. This led to 21 codes being identified with varying occurrences from 145 references to two references. This shows a refined process of data analysis was carried out. These codes and the number of occurrences are summarised in Table 5.6, below. Table 5.6 is ranked in order of codes from most to least frequent. The number of sources is also given, which indicates how many out of the 11 interviews that were carried out each code appeared.

**Table 5.6 – Initial Codes Identified from NVivo Analysis of Interview Data**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Number of Sources</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences</b>
Influence of family	11	145
Economic and social background	11	108
Influence of school	11	72
Work experience	11	69
Early life influences	11	50
Own interests	11	49
Other	10	45
Influence of friends	11	37
Additional programmes	11	36
Assumptions about careers	11	35
Leaving school early	9	30
Different post-school destinations	8	26
Influence of others	9	26
Self-belief	9	22
Pressured or forced	8	21
Travel	11	19
Apprenticeships	10	18
Influence of siblings	8	16
Hard work	5	10
Health	6	9
Easy option or route	2	2

As certain codes had fewer occurrences than others they were not discarded and these 21 codes were further categorised into the sub-themes. One code identified was that of ‘other’. This code included ideas about respondents’ own ambitions and aspirations and

their thoughts on the importance of different post-school destinations. This was used for the third high-level theme in Table 5.5 above.

**Table 5.7 – Sub-Themes Identified from Codes**

<b>Sub-Themes Identified</b>	<b>Codes from Interview Data</b>
Positive and Negative Effects of Influential People	Influences of family and siblings Influences of friends Influences of others
The Field of Education and Institutional Habitus	Influence of school and teachers The notion of hard work paying off Leaving school early
Economic and Social Factors	Economic and social background Ability to access resources
The Benefits of Following Own Interests (Following Individual/Internal Habitus)	Following own interests The effect of being pressured or forced Self-belief
The Influence and Importance of Experiences gained through Education	Early influences of education Participating in additional programmes, The impact of work experience
Post-16 Destinations	Apprenticeships Assumptions about careers and different post-school destinations
Other factors	The Influence of Travel and Health on Aspirations

In the data analysis process each of the sub-themes identified in Table 5.7 above were considered in relation to the methodological lens developed in Chapter Four (summarised in Table 5.5). Table 5.8, over page, shows how the themes above link with the methodological ideas. It is important to remember that there will be overlap between and within themes and this will be brought out in the discussion that follows in Chapter Six, which will be supplemented by the theory and findings from the literature discussed earlier in this dissertation. Moreover, the discussion will identify possible strategies that could help young people transform their *habitus*. This will be done by linking the discussion to the key policies of *Developing the Young Workforce* that were discussed in

Chapter One: *Career Education Standard, Work Experience Standard, and School-Employer Partnerships* and outlining areas of good practice identified from the school this research was carried out in.

**Table 5.8 – Linking Methodological/Theoretical Interpretive References to Thematic Analysis**

<b>High Level Themes</b>	<b>Theoretical Interpretive Themes</b>	<b>Links to Thematic Analysis (Themes from Table 5.6)</b>
1: Dispositions	These will consider how young people think, act and behave and will include looking for examples and patterns of repetition of practices and attitudes; that is, their <i>habitus</i> as an individual and as part of a community (society) in relation to socio-economic status.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive and negative effects of influential people. Positive and negative influences of: family and siblings, friends and others.</li> <li>2. Economic and social factors and ability of access to resources, for example, work experience and career education.</li> </ol>
2: Educational Field	The influence of school will be considered to take account of the institutional <i>habitus</i> in relation to experiences and choices offered by the school and how these can influence a young person's dispositions and <i>habitus</i> .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive and negative influences of school and teachers and the notion that hard work pays off.</li> <li>2. The effect of leaving school at the end of compulsory education.</li> <li>3. Early and late experiences gained through education.</li> <li>4. Participating in additional programmes and the impact of work experience.</li> </ol>
3: Intended and Actual Aspirations	Intended aspirations of individuals taking part in the study will be considered in relation to Zipin <i>et al.</i> (2015) notions of <i>doxic</i> , <i>habituated</i> and <i>emergent</i> aspirations. This will consider traditional, expected, ideal and actual aspirations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Different post-school destinations and assumptions about careers.</li> <li>2. Following own interests. The effect of being pressured or forced and self-belief.</li> </ol>

## 5.5 Chapter Conclusion

First, ethical considerations for carrying out the dissertation research were robustly considered and interventions were identified and ready to put into place, if needed. Key terms and their impact on the research process were considered: *truth value*, *consistency*, *neutrality (confirmability)* and how these impact and apply to this dissertation. Following this, a method influenced by an interpretivist paradigm was developed using interviews based on pre-prepared vignettes. Furthermore, the use of interviews and the design of the associated vignettes have been discussed in addition to the practical aspects and issues surrounding carrying out the interviews, taking account of the potentially sensitive nature of this project. Throughout the whole research process the importance of ethics and trustworthiness has been considered and outlined. Latterly, the method of thematic data analysis using the Bourdieusian theoretical lens developed in Chapter Four and *a priori* codes and sub-themes from the literature review has laid the foundations for the following chapter which features a discussion of the interview data in relation to previous literature on *habitus* and its transformation. This demonstrated a robust data analysis process combining thematic data analysis with the Bourdieusian methodological lens developed for this dissertation. As a reminder the high-level themes from the Bourdieusian theoretical lens were: dispositions, the effect of the institutional *habitus* and intended and actual aspirations of the participants in relation to *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations. The *a priori* codes and sub-themes were: influential people (adults, siblings etc.), education (the opportunities that constrain and develop aspirations), economic and social factors (family background, area lived in), importance of young people following their own interest, experiences gained through education, post-16 destinations and other factors such as travel and health that can affect individual's aspirations.

## Chapter Six

### Discussion and Links to the DYW Policy

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#### 6.1 Introduction to Discussion

This Chapter details the discussion from the data analysis process and provides links to the DYW policy in Scotland. Namely these documents were: the *Career Education Standard* (CES), the *Work Placement Standard* (WPS) and the *School-Employer Partnership* (SEP) documents. The discussion includes highlighting how the DYW policy could help shape young people's aspirations and provide opportunities for their *habitus* to be shaped and counter the institutional *habitus* of the dominant class. Each of the themes in Table 5.8 above were analysed in relation to Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction*, in particular the concept of *habitus*, and the literature and theory outlined in Chapters Two to Four. The presentation of each of the themes will be followed by a discussion to directly link with literature and theory. In addition the discussion will bring out the researcher's own experiences and practices, and the opportunities the school this research is taking place in provides to ensure the best outcomes of young people regardless of their background or unequal access to resource. It is important to acknowledge there will be overlap within and between the high-level themes and sub-themes in Sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4. This overlap will be highlighted and cross-referenced where relevant.

#### 6.2 Dispositions

This first section of discussion will focus on young people's dispositions; that is, their values, how they think, act and behave and how these dispositions, and hence *habitus*, are influenced by immediate family members (parents and siblings) and friends. Furthermore, the influence of the economic and social area that a young person lives in will also be related to the dispositions, misconceptions, misunderstandings and *habitus* they display

##### 6.2.1 Positive and Negative effects of Influential People (Family and Friends)

This section will consider the positive and negative effects of influential people, focussing on family and siblings, on *habitus* and dispositions. Respondent 10, an S5 male, talked of the expectations placed on young people by their parents who have older siblings

who have chosen a particular post-16 route. Respondent 10 explained this by suggesting that it was commonplace for siblings to be compared by parents and teachers, perhaps through the influence of the hidden curriculum discussed earlier. The influence of siblings on a young person's aspiration was mentioned in almost three quarters of interviews, showing it has a prominent place in young people's thoughts as a factor that could affect their dispositions towards aspirations.

Respondent 1, *S4 male*, suggested that because an individual's parents may be unemployed, this could transfer to their children because they may see potential benefits of not working, for example receiving financial support from the government, and this could alter their dispositions into thinking they could live like that too. Here some of the myths about receiving government benefits started to intrude through responses. It is important that the way young people think about this is ratified early in life to eliminate misconceptions and misunderstandings. From the researcher's experience most young people are keen to progress from school onto something positive. The researcher has only encountered a small number of individuals who did not wish to progress onto something positive, and for most of these young people attendance and engagement at school had been an issue. This is where the *More Choices More Chances* teams support these young people, as discussed in Chapter One through the *Opportunities for All* agenda.

Respondent 11, *S6 female*, flipped the situation of parents' unemployment on its head and said that this situation could actually encourage young people to develop an attitude to work harder, achieve and aspire to good employment because they have witnessed their parents in this position. This experience of unemployment could be used as a catalyst to change young people's dispositions, for example their thoughts and actions, and ultimately, their *habitus* to follow a more positive route. Respondent 2, *S4 male*, commented on the opposite, that an individual seeing their parents employed would encourage them to progress onto something positive and result in improving the enthusiasm and dispositions of the young person as they have been exposed to the positive dispositions of their parents from a young age. Respondent 4, *S5 male*, said this '*would send a good message*'. Whilst not directly mentioning dispositions, it is clear that this is what Respondent 4 meant. Moreover, Respondent 11, *S5 female*, commented that parents do not necessarily need to talk to their children about their career, that young people pick things up subconsciously by seeing how their parents act, and that this can '*definitely influence how you act in the future*'. This links with the historical aspect of *habituated* aspirations where dispositions and *habitus* are formulated in biographic and historical

embodiments as discussed by Zipin *et al.* (2015). From this discussion it can be seen that employment of parents could be factor, either positively or negatively, in influencing some young people's actions, choices and thoughts; their dispositions. Ball *et al.* (1999) highlighted this and noted that parental unemployment may affect a young person's education negatively. It is important to inject reality in young people's perceptions, as circumstances may not be quite as simple as young people perceive them to be. It is also important to acknowledge that people are unemployed for a variety of reasons, for example: health, caring commitments, raising a family, redundancy and so on, and that unemployment may not necessarily come about through choice.

Respondent 1, *S4 male*, also said that some young people might choose to follow in the footsteps of their parents to do a similar, or the same type of job, because they see their parents enjoying it and earning good money. Again, if young people are brought up with these thoughts from an early age, this influences their *habitus* and thus their dispositions to align with that, the thoughts and actions, of their parents and again provide further links to *habituated* aspirations discussed in Chapters Three and Four. However, Respondent 4, *S5 male*, commented that parents may try to encourage their children to do a similar career to them because they '*see it as a tradition*', which could be related to professional parents or skilled crafts as noted below. Again here parents' *habitus* appears to have direct influence over the young person's *habitus* through the development of dispositions and attitudes towards certain aspirations. This is considered more in the discussion on allowing young people to follow their own career plans, see Section 6.4. Moreover, Respondent 2, *S4 male*, commented that boys and young men look up to their fathers and try to see them as role models, which results in these young men perhaps doing something similar to their father. This was mentioned in the context of young men taking up a similar trade to their father. It was interesting that the notion of following in your father's footsteps was more prominent through the interviews in relation to males being influence by their fathers than females being influence by their mothers. This demonstrated the almost stereotypical views young people may have on gender roles. However, Respondent 2, male, also said that they believe young women look up to their mothers and try to model themselves on their mother. This could be a link between a gendered approach to *habitus*: a male *habitus* compared to a female *habitus*.

Respondent 5 was an excellent example of the influence of family on children's aspirations. He had grown up with family members who work in a similar area that he wanted to work in, that being a car mechanic, and these family members had been

successful in opening up their own businesses. There is evidence here of the influence of the family members' dispositions having a direct impact on his aspirations. This was because Respondent 5 was able to see first hand what working as a car mechanic meant by experiencing the career first hand. The experiences that Respondent 5 had directly influenced his dispositions, his thoughts and beliefs, towards this area while keeping his *habitus* aligned with his family *habitus*. This Respondent clearly had a *habituated* aspiration, defined by Zipin *et al.* (2015), as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, Thompson (2009) described these effects as a *family habitus* that takes account of material, social and employment relationships in a family. Bowers-Brown (2018) in a study also found that young people may choose a similar aspiration to their parents because of the effect familiarity has on their decision making process and that this process can reproduce social positions in relation to aspirations. Bourdieu (1990) compared this to probable futures, or aspirations, that are rooted in presumptions of the present. Interestingly Respondent 5 referred to a car mechanic as a working class job; on probing why he considered this to be the case, despite most people assuming that having their own business is not working class, his response was that being a car mechanic is poorly paid. This highlights the question, to what was he comparing being a car mechanic against, and is there perhaps confusion in the respondent's thinking because of a lack of knowledge. This could be related to the differences between the '*map*' and '*tour*' knowledge of the respondent, as highlighted by Gale and Parker (2015a) and earlier in this dissertation.

The above can be related to the idea of a 'corporate family', postulated by Warin (2016), who stated that Bourdieu saw a corporate family as one who reproduce their power and privileges using a variety of strategies from economic, inheritance, matrimonial and educational. In this sense, the family encourage their children to follow in their footsteps using the economic and social capital they have inherent in their dispositions and *habitus* from their own success. From reading Bourdieu it may be that he was referring to middle class families who have the dominant discourse and are able to reproduce their power and privileges, however, it is easy to see how this would translate to working class families who are successful, perhaps through a form of social reproduction. Moreover, St. Clair *et al.* (2013) highlighted the importance of the family in that a member of the family might already have the job that the young person aspires to, or because the idea for a particular career came from the family and so the family can help that young person develop the dispositions they need to be successful.

However, Respondent 9, *S6 female*, said that a young person who follows in their parents' footsteps maybe limiting their options or are being narrow minded by not exploring other options. It was commented in several interviews that if an individual's parent had chosen a particular post-16 destination then, they would encourage their child to do the same, possibly because the parents are secure in their knowledge of this 'known' post-16 destination. In the case of working class or disadvantaged young people and families, this could translate, as Gale and Parker (2015a, 2015b) commented, that working class or disadvantaged families may not have the confidence or knowledge to suggest alternative careers or aspirations, and so through social reproduction, this could limit working class horizons while the middle classes reproduce their advantage and position. Moreover, respondents commented that if an individual's parents attended university then it would be easier for their child to progress to university because '*from the beginning they have more resources than people whose parents didn't go to university...but not impossible for*' those young people; they may need to work harder. This can be related to Bourdieu's (1977) cultural capital, where individuals whose parents have been through the academic (dominant) education system are able to help their children negotiate the education *field*, playing by the preconceived, unquestioned rules of the game; that is agreeing, perhaps unconsciously, with the *doxa* in the education *field* (Deer, 2014). In this case, parents are able to supply their young people with the 'correct' actions and behaviours, or dispositions, that would allow them to be successful, thus moulding their *habitus* towards the dominant *habitus*.

From the discussion above it can also be said that parents' views can have both positive and negative effects on young people's aspirations, and that in order for parents to fully support their child, parents themselves need to be given access to the correct information and guidance and also information on different routes and progression pathways that young people can take. This can be related to the process of inculcation where traits, behaviours and dispositions are taught, as Bourdieu (1977) described, which begins in the family and are developed through the education system from experiences and choices young people make and are given. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, this difference on routes and progression pathways is also related to the difference of '*map*' and '*tour*' knowledge exhibited by young people and their parents (Bok, 2010; Gale and Parker, 2015a). It also needs to be acknowledged that with recent new progression pathways, for example Foundation Apprenticeships, the map knowledge young people and their families have may need to be updated.

Respondent 8, *S6 male*, referred to the influence of friends, in that they have ‘*subliminal peer pressure and you don’t quite realise it...without them even saying or telling you*’. Peer pressure was mentioned in several interviews. One respondent spoke of the positive effect friendship groups can have, if they have the same interest in doing well as the individual in question has. Respondent 10, *S5 male*, spoke of the huge impact that friends could have because they play a huge role in a young person’s life; a young person may spend a lot of time with their friends, feel comfortable around them, and so if friends give advice or make suggestions, a young person may take this more seriously than a teacher, parent or sibling for example. This can be related to the relational aspect of *habitus*, which Costa and Murphy (2015) described as being influential when sharing social spaces, and that this can affect people individually and collectively in relation to developing their dispositions. Similarly, Respondent 8 spoke of this relational aspect of *habitus* and stated that if a young person’s friendship group is as ambitious as they are they will thrive together by sharing a common trait of ambition, possibly by sharing the dispositions needed for success. It is important to acknowledge the opposite could be true; if a young person’s friends lack motivation and aspiration then this could easily transfer to the young person. Warin (2016) highlighted this negative effect of social capital through a case study that demonstrated peer influence could be negative in the sense that it could cause negative behaviours (and dispositions) to be copied, for example, truanting from school. Moreover, in a study by Zipin *et al.* (2015) one interviewee commented that focusing on school was much more important than her social life and that spending less time on her social life was ‘*a necessary sacrifice*’ (p. 232).

Respondent 11, *S6 female*, suggested that when choosing subjects for National Qualifications, it is important for a young person to consider what their aspirations are over and above what subjects their friends are choosing. This can be particularly important as subject choice can either enable progression or limit progression to certain aspirations and post-16 destinations if the ‘wrong’ mix of subjects are taken. Gale and Parker’s (2015a) Australian study highlighted some of the misconceptions some young people had about what qualifications were required for their occupation of choice, for example one young person they interviewed talked of wanting to aspire to a Nurse or Veterinary Nurse by going to university, but in Australia this is done through FE. This is something that Principal Teachers of Pastoral Care (PTPC) have to deal with on a yearly basis; trying to encourage young people to think about the bigger picture and the future of their lives, while at the same time understanding the comfort and security friendship brings. This comfort and security could be seen as a barrier, as young people are afraid to step outwith

their comfort zone, and indeed to travel outwith their local area, which may limit the opportunities they are presented with. This is why it is important for young people to develop a positive, future based thought process in relation to their aspirations and post-16 route. PTPC, and educational institutions in general, have a key role in providing young people with the opportunities to develop their disposition at school. This is considered further in Section 6.3.

### **6.2.2 The Effects of Economic and Social Factors and Accessibility of Resources**

When considering the economic and social factors that can affect a young person's dispositions, and perhaps their aspirations, the importance of challenging assumptions, misplaced or otherwise, about different pathways young people from socially disadvantaged areas can take was prominent in several interviews. Respondent 1, *S4 male*, made the assumption that people who attend university are smart, have financial capital they can access from their parents, come from a good area and go to a good school. Here it was possible that there is a recognition that doing well in school and getting a good education can help someone from a socially disadvantaged area better themselves. This further highlighted the myths or misunderstandings that some young people may have, in that it is important to recall the discussion on meritocracy from Chapter Two, where working hard and reaping the benefits does not always pay off. Bourdieu (1977) highlighted the importance between social class background and success through the concept of linguistic capital, where those middle class individuals who speak the same language as the dominant class, are more successful. Mu (2016) stated that Bourdieu claimed that the language that an individual uses is related to their *habitus*, by perceptions and practices; that is how they think and how they are used to communicating through their inherent dispositions. Moreover, Bourdieu (1977) stated that the repetitive nature of social practices developed in the family reinforce dispositions so much that they become embodied. Zipin *et al.* (2015) referred to these dispositions as *primary* dispositions that allow young people to align themselves or otherwise with certain aspirations.

During the interviews some caution was noted, however, in that young people from socially deprived areas might find it more difficult to fit in, initially, but that this would change as they get used to their new environment. Here there is the notion that as an individual adapts to their new environment, they will gradually change their dispositions and how they act and behave, to fit in with the new environment. As one respondent put it, difficulties may arise due to lack of socialisation with others outwith '*their normal group of friends*'. It was also commented that it is important for these young people to fit in

because if they are not included, it may result in them being isolated or secluded. Generally across all interviews it was assumed that if a young person comes from a more affluent area, they would be more successful:

*‘...growing up in a house and car and being in a fairly affluent area, she could have been more driven to get a degree and get a better job and to crave for those type of things when she’s older’.*  
(Respondent 4, S5 male)

*‘...if he’s possibly staying in an affluent area, he would want to do things other than a trade, because it tends to be people in trades come from working class backgrounds’.*  
(Respondent 11, S6 female)

This was justified from Respondent 11, *S6 female*, in the sense that those young people from working class backgrounds want to start earning money as soon as possible and that years of study at college or university does not provide this. However, Devine (2004) talked of middle class young people and parents and the notion of deferred gratification that goes along with perhaps going to college or university before seeking employment. Deferred gratification occurs when middle class parents use their own economic, cultural and social resources to able to support their children to be successful in their studies and perhaps give them a boost within the labour market, hence by deferring their child’s gratification by waiting to earn once they complete their studies. This is how middle class parents use their resources, and their social and cultural capital, to get their children middle class jobs; resources that the working class may not have access to. Burke (2008) highlighted this by commenting that middle-class people, graduates in Burke’s study, were able to negotiate the employment market easier as they appreciate their position in society. These middle class people already know the ‘game’ how to play the game; they have the dispositions, thoughts, values and actions, to successfully master the game. This can be related to the discussion in the previous section that highlighted this as the method by which middle class parents can use their *habitus*, and hence dispositions, to the benefit of their children.

Devine (2004) went further to acknowledge that whilst this process of giving their middle class children a boost is more difficult than in the 1950s or 1960s, it is still a process that middle class parents will adopt, even if it has become more difficult with changes to the labour market. St. Clair *et al.* (2013) found that the labour market could not support young people’s aspirations because the jobs were not available, so even if working class people applied themselves they may not be successful, as other ‘sorting’ devices will

be applied to select based on characteristics more focused perhaps on middle class values which require middle class dispositions. Moreover, Devine (2004) discussed Goldthorpe's critique of Bourdieu that working class young people suffer from poverty of aspirations or low cultural capital. From the researcher's experience, and from Gale and Lingard (2015), poverty of aspirations in working classes is not something that is greatly experienced as highlighted by the increasing proportion of young people who progress onto Higher or Further Education in the school this research is carried out in.

Respondent 10, *S5 male*, also spoke of young people from socially deprived backgrounds who may have a strong work ethic installed in them because they have witnessed their parents, and others, working hard for what they have achieved, and not taking success for granted. Again, this reinforced the discussion from the previous section, where witnessing hard work can develop an individual's dispositions toward success as they have witnessed positive examples of their parents, and others, being in steady employment. Furthermore, mixing with people from different (socio-economic) backgrounds means individuals are '*learn[ing] different things because people have experienced different lives*', thus being able to develop their social and cultural capital. Respondent 10 went on to suggest that this is formed from '*different outlooks and...being able to compare different experiences*'. It is possible to see how young people can develop their dispositions from those of different social class, by being exposed to different experiences, behaviours, actions and opportunities that offer a way for their *habitus* to be modified. Bourdieu (1977) reminded us that the educational system is good at the '*process of differential elimination according to social class*' (p. 87); this is the outcome of the interaction of factors that determines (an individual's) class-position within the school system. Bourdieu (1977) also stated that the factors that define an individual must be taken as a whole and any one factor cannot adequately describe or explain an individual's actions. That is, an individual's dispositions are shaped by many factors and not one factor on its own can explain an individual's dispositions. Devine (2004) stated that the influences of an individual's actions should be studied at the micro-sociological level; that is, at the family and individual level, as opposed to at the macro-sociological level of social class.

Interestingly, only Respondent 6, *S4 male*, stated his impression was that people from more affluent areas speak properly and try to promote each other, where as those from more deprived areas talk slang and may not treat each other as nicely. This can be related to Bourdieu (1977) in his discussion of those who use *Bourgeois* dialect as those

who are successful in the practical mastery of language, and those who are successful have a better relation to language due to the school and the individual's upbringing. It can be argued that mastering this language is related to middle class dispositions associated with a middle class *habitus*. However, the researcher has personally experienced working class young people who have mastered the correct way to talk by 'switching on' their middle class dispositions when required. This is important because it suggests that successful working class young people can move between their pre-set working class dispositions and their new learned middle class dispositions when required to do so. Bourdieu (1977) referred to this difference as the formal language of the middle classes and the public language of the working classes. It is therefore important that working class young people are taught the appropriate situations for using language, perhaps more formal language for work-related situations and even being knowledgeable about issues surrounding dress codes for interviews.

Bodovski (2015) further suggested that young people from middle class families are more likely to communicate effectively because they have heard and observed their own parents communicating in this manner, and that these young people are more likely to be involved in decisions that affect them through their strata of society and class. This relates back to previous discussion where young people learn their dispositions and develop their cultural capital from their parents. Bourdieu (1977) suggested that this could be explained because these young people learn the (unwritten) behaviours and norms (confidence and assertiveness) associated with the social strata they grow up in, which results in similar actions and decisions being taken. These unwritten behaviours and norms are the dispositions that young people learn from their parents. Devine (2004) also discussed the norms associated with social strata, for example, that short-range social mobility was the norm because it was difficult to move from manual work to non-manual work, but that this has decreased from the mid-twentieth century onwards as more people with working class backgrounds demonstrate upward mobility into middle class employment. Working class young people learning middle class dispositions can perhaps explain this upward move in mobility, in part, through deindustrialisation and the rise of the service sector.

### **6.3 Education Field**

This high-level theme will be analysed and discussed using the following sub-themes derived from the literature review and the methodological framework. First the influence of the school and teachers on developing dispositions will be considered linking

the notion that hard work pays off. Second, the effects of leaving school at the end of compulsory education will be considered. The third sub-theme to be considered will be the impact of experience gained through education and participating in programmes to help young people develop their dispositions, for example thoughts and actions, and aspirations to aid their post-school transition.

### **6.3.1 The Influence of the School, Teachers and The Notion of Hard Work Paying Off**

According to Bourdieu (1977) education and the school establishment are central in reproducing the culture and status of the dominant classes; that is, the middle class ‘rules’ with which education has allowed itself to be defined by. During the discussion the notion of experience and choices offered by the school the research took place in and the influence of teachers and experiences gained through education, through the DYW policy, will be brought out.

Respondent 1, *S4 male*, identified a connection between subjects studied at school and possible post-16 destinations: ‘...*liked to do practical subjects, so that’s probably led [onto] thinking ‘I like practical stuff’*. This respondent made this comment when discussing Woodwork and trades, however, it was also important to acknowledge that practical subjects do not necessarily involve Woodwork or Home Economics, there are also practical elements to other subjects, for example, PE and the Sciences. It is important to consider the influence of practical subjects along with the academic profile of an individual. Also, here the effect of certain subjects starts to influence an individual’s dispositions in terms of acting and thinking in certain ways about certain subjects that can re-affirm, or otherwise, their like for certain subjects. This is important because then dispositions will play a key role in shaping a young person’s assumptions about subject areas and even career sectors. One common misconception that the researcher comes across regularly is the misunderstanding about what a career as an Engineer actually involves. The researcher finds that on deeper questioning of young people who say they are interested in engineering, they actually mean construction. Again, this highlights the lack of detail or knowledge that young people may have in relation to the difference between their ‘*map*’ and ‘*tour*’ knowledge and how they use this to navigate their aspirational route (Bok, 2010; Gale and Parker, 2015a).

The CES specifically points out that education institutions should aim to develop a meaningful purpose for a young person’s career and personal development. In relation to

choices, the CES point out that young people should have access to the broadest view of subject choices that are available to them and know how these relate to their proposed future career. A study by St. Clair *et al.* (2013) found that only 60% of young people with high aspirations received good careers advice near examination time and points to an issue with knowledge of pathways that exist. This can be related back to the importance of choosing the correct subjects and correcting misunderstands about pathways, which was discussed in Section 6.2.1. Moreover Burke (2018) identified that some working class young people need to take an extra year of education because whilst at school some subject choices were not available or they choose the wrong subjects, demonstrating the need for robust careers advice for young people from low socio-economic status. Within the context that this research is carried out, the school involved does attempt to improve on this with S3 pupils in relation to choosing their subjects for S4. All S3 pupils are given a free choice from all subjects available in the school, except for 'core' subjects, which are compulsory. The only core subjects that must be taken are Maths, English, Physical Education, Religious Education and Personal, Social and Education. The free choice is then used to create the subject options form that contains the list of subjects that pupils can choose from, thus maximising choice.

Bourdieu (1977) argued that the degree of success an individual has is related to how well they receive what they are being taught, and that this has a direct relationship to the amount of (linguistic) capital a young person has. It is important to remember that a young person can only receive the message if they have the dispositions capable of accepting and processing this message. Moreover, Bourdieu (1977) also suggested that sex, class and social origin could affect how well a young person receives the educational message. However, Bourdieu (1977) also noted that unequal selection of different characteristics does not explain if a young person is to succeed or fail, and that one factor may stand out more so than others, and so the other factors are not taken into account when planning this young person's learning. So, for example, a young male from a working class area might not 'receive' the message as well as a young male from a middle class area because they have not been subjected, or exposed to, or have access to the same degree of capital, be it social, cultural or linguistic; not taking account of their sex. This resonate with the discussion in Section 6.2, where it is important that all factors are taken into account in looking for ways to develop dispositions in young people and challenging any misconceptions and misunderstandings that young people have.

Furthermore, the difference in social position between the teacher and the young person needs to be taken into account also and the pedagogic communication given by the teacher, or school, which implicitly gives a middle class message. Teachers, or educators, are generally regarded as well educated individuals who have developed a middle class *habitus* and middle class dispositions. It is important that when teaching working class young people that educators take their middle class dispositions into account during verbal and non-verbal interactions with young people. In addition to the importance of the academic side of schooling, one respondent also mentioned the importance of school to:

*‘...develop social skills and interact with people, but I would definitely say the exams are the main point, especially when you get into the later years because everything you do in school is aimed towards exams’.*  
(Respondent 7, S6 male)

It is important to note that this respondent was aiming for HE or FE and, understandably, had their focus on examinations. This respondent had a *primary habitus* that resonated with their upbringing in an SIMD 1/2 area, but had develop their *habitus* towards the more dominant institutional *habitus*. They also commented that they thought all young people should leave school with at least one Higher. However, passing examinations is not for every young person. Bourdieu (1977) suggested that middle class young people are over represented, within academic subjects suggesting that some individuals take an alternative route to success. For working class young people may take non-academic alternative options which they see as ‘easier’ for them, for example; Practical Woodwork, Sports and Recreation and certain Home Economic based subjects or routes, where ‘easy’ relates to the fear of failing a written examination, which is less likely as the subjects are more practical-based. Bourdieu (1977) suggested that those who are excluded from learning do so themselves, as self-exclusion, because they do not have the required dispositions or developed *habitus* before sitting (National) examinations, and that this is related to social class where working class young people will self-exclude (or self-eliminate) from certain exams before they show themselves not to cope or to fail. Burke (2015) related what Bourdieu describes above as being unable to play the game. This could be due to under developed dispositions and lack of confidence and ability. The school has a key role to play in allowing young people to develop the agency, dispositions and knowledge they need to be successful without fear of failure. This is highlighted by Gale and Parker (2015b) in that young people from working class backgrounds or those

who have suffered disadvantage should become not only navigators of their aspirations routes, but cartographers of the routes they take.

Tarabini and Curran (2018) related this to the institutional *habitus*, where working class young people's *habitus* is not in line with the taken-for-granted assumptions of the institutional *habitus*. Reay (2009) suggested that the experiences working class individuals get from education are surrounded with danger, embarrassment and risk, perhaps because they do not think or act in the same way as the education institution or share its values. This can be extended to explain why some young people rule out certain post-16 opportunities or destinations early in their school career; where these young people assume they will fail or that a particular post-16 route is not for them and, rather than attempt to go down that route and find that it eliminates them, they will self-eliminate early and regulate to a particular path because their dispositions are subconsciously telling them to do this.

Dumais (2002) further highlighted that (through the education institution's *habitus*), schools are excellent at rewarding young people whose *habitus* and practice is more aligned to theirs thought having improved cultural capital (and more aligned dispositions). Practice is defined here as the habits that are enacted, absorbed and reproduced over time. Thus if a young person from an area of low socio-economic status has practice rooted in the dispositions they have been exposed to from an early age, their practice is not aligned to the middle class, dominant school's practice and so they are at risk, as Reay (2009) described above, through symbolic violence. Dumais (2002) described practice and *habitus* as dialectical: practice can be shaped by *habitus* and *habitus* can be shaped by practice through behaviours, actions, values and attitudes; that is dispositions. Scandone (2018) suggested that taking account of the notion of practice enables young people to develop their dispositions and alter their structural position within the education field. This is important in that educators and practitioners should consider practice when designing activities, experiences and providing opportunities that are meaningful for young people to develop and transform their dispositions and *habitus*.

In addition to this, Bourdieu (1977) stated that perhaps the school is good at hiding its social function of promoting the dominant class culture, *habitus* and dispositions through its technical function of producing qualifications based on the current labour market needs. Those who are successful in school, according to Bourdieu (1977) are so because they come from families that have the required cultural capital and dispositions to survive. Indeed one respondent commented that school, and education generally, is preparing young people for jobs in the future that do not exist yet. This demonstrates a

link between skills development and the instrumental purpose of education inherent in neoliberalism. (Gale and Parker, 2015). Bourdieu (1977) qualified this by suggesting that, in modern society, there is an increasing need for school to produce skilled individuals to meet economic needs; and that this limits the autonomy of the school while promoting the structure of the educational establishment to promote dominant class cultures. This need to produce skilled individuals through education establishments promoting the dominant cultures ignites the ‘battle of the *habitus*’; that is, the battle between a working class young person’s *habitus* and the education institutions *habitus*. This ‘battle’ was highlighted by Stahl (2015b) in work he did in relation to aspirations and found that working class individuals (boys in his study) were in tension with the neoliberal discourse of the field they were in. That is, the *habitus* of these boys was at tension with the school (field), which promoted the discourse of the privileged class. This battle runs deep to consider the differences between how working class young people think, act and behave and how the education establishment promotes middle class thoughts, actions and behaviours. Connelly *et al.* (2016) further highlighted an institutional practice that promotes the dominant culture of the school: encouraging young people to attend and participate in activities that position them for HE, when FE would be a more suitable route longer term.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, secondary schools should be giving career advice to young people early in their school life so that young people make fully informed decisions. This career education is essential to developing and transforming young people’s dispositions by challenging assumptions about certain aspirations. Moreover, and in relation to DYW career education, Rowan-Kenyon (2011) also found that teachers who were educated in careers advice or had some knowledge of post-school transition were influential in young people’s aspirational development. This highlights the need for teachers to embrace DYW policy and link their subject of expertise to career education. If young people are not given the information or knowledge they need to even begin to transform their dispositions and *habitus* they are not going to fare well in the battle described above. An area of good practice in the school this research is carried out in, is that a skills and aspirations audit is carried out with every young person and updated at least three times per year to ascertain what individuals want to do when they leave school. This allows opportunities to be targeted to specific individuals, giving them experiences that can influence their dispositions and what they think about a particular career path.

It is important to take stock of the changes to the labour market that have occurred, and will occur in the future: from manufacturing to services to the advent of digital

technology. For young people to want to do present days jobs and jobs of the future, they need to be able to access experiences and opportunities to enable them to realise these prospects exist. Corrigan (1975) indicated that when dealing with working class boys, it is important that choice is based on the world as they see it, and that all too often professionals such as careers advisers and teachers typically provide choice based on their view of the world and the future. This means that teachers and careers advisers need to try to see the world from the dispositions and lens of the working class young people they have in front of them. This involves speaking to these young people to understand what their views, opinions and conceptions are, identifying gaps in map and tour knowledge and trying to fill these gaps to develop their dispositions using a variety of approaches.

The SEP made reference to businesses, school and other education providers, for example colleges, providing young people with improved career choices and promoting diversity within the workplace. However, it is important to bear in mind here that Ball *et al.* (1999) noted caution because careers advice is not as highly rated by young people as advice from family members. It is possible here that young people's dispositions are more aligned with their family members than the school's dispositions in relation to offering career advice based on the way it thinks young people should think and act. It is important to note that the paper by Ball *et al.* (1999) commented on developments in the UK, however, the study is based in London reflecting the RUK work of Ball. The WPS reiterates the importance of providing improved career choices in the aim and rationale of the policy in order to facilitate informed choices about possible jobs in the future. Connelly *et al.* (2016) commented that career limitations and career aspirations are linked to engagement in the process of learning; if one engages more they are more likely to have higher career aspirations and visa versa. Connelly *et al.* (2006) further stated that engagement is linked to how well developed a young person's *habitus* is at accessing the dominant forms of capital and the *habitus* of the education institution. The idea of making informed choices ties in with Bridges (1997) notion of liberal democracy and personal autonomy, however care must be taken that individuals do not become atomised in society, a drawback that Smith (1997) identified with autonomy.

The importance of communication between parents and teachers was brought out in interviews as being important to allow a bridging of dispositions between the family, the young person and the school where gaps can be filled and new dispositions developed. A further area of good practice has been a newly introduced programme that invites all pupils and their parents to meet with the school's careers advisor at the time young people choose

their subject choices. This allows young people to choose subjects that are relevant for their chosen career, or identify if a young person is unsure of their aspirations. Warin (2016) suggested that increasing parental involvement in the school results in a transfer of *capital*: into educational capital. Indeed, this parental involvement allows the possibility for the development and transformation of dispositions of the young person, as mentioned above. However, it is important to remember that not all parents have the confidence to communicate with the school (or teachers), perhaps because they do not have the necessary capital or dispositions, or because of their poor experiences at school. Respondent 10, *S5 male*, also suggested that the school curriculum should be developed to promote communication and co-operation with people. Indeed, a National Progression Award Construction programme has been developed in partnership with a local college and two well-known construction companies. This enables young people interested in this area to learn from employees of the college and companies and also gain valuable work experience at the same time. This is a valuable programme that allows young people to transform their dispositions and their *habitus* on two aspects: from the aspect of college and from the aspect of the construction industry. This can be related to the discussion above in terms of providing more opportunities for young people and widening their knowledge of careers that exist. Work experience is considered later in the discussion.

### **6.3.2 The Effect of Leaving School at the End of Compulsory Education**

Many respondents commented on the effect of leaving school early, at the end of compulsory education in S4, instead of staying on for S5 or S6. Above all the importance of Higher Examinations was discussed. One respondent suggested that those who leave school without a Higher Examination pass would put them '*at the bottom of the list*' because '*people will accept Highers*', which is not necessarily the case as different post-16 opportunities will require different levels and types of qualifications. This can be linked to the perceptions and misperceptions that young people have about requirements for certain post-16 destinations. This further highlighted that young people need to be given the correct map knowledge to transform their dispositions, for example their thoughts, values and actions. Indeed, through the subject choice process at school many a discussion has been had with a young person who is choosing their subjects saying, '*I need this subject to become...*', again highlighting the importance of providing robust careers information and advice and challenging misconceptions to aid transform of dispositions in relation to how they think about different post-16 destinations.

Bourdieu (1977) suggested that the decision for those who do stay on at school, that is those who remain in the 'system', is based on their academic past, their relationship to the culture of the school and their behaviours, aptitudes and dispositions; that is, their *habitus*. A working class young person who has been able to transform their dispositions may decide to stay on at school, as they have learned the rules of the game. Another respondent commented that leaving school after S4 could have a positive impact on an individual's career path, because they may excel at what they are doing which could lead on to '*bigger and better opportunities*'. In this case a young person may leave school to pursue their aspiration and so develop their dispositions in relation to their particular aspiration. However, this respondent also acknowledged that staying on school for another year could allow an individual to develop in terms of their work ethic and to mature. This could allow a working class individual more time to develop their dispositions. However, this may be that a young person who leaves school at the age of 16 to start work displays a strong work ethic because they are keen to start working or have found a path that is right for them.

Another respondent suggested that if an individual does decide to stay until the end of S6, and they achieve the qualifications they need from S4 and S5, then S6 can be used as an opportunity to take part in more extracurricular activities or even leadership activities, which will develop skills essential for life after school. There is an opportunity for schools to make use of those who have developed their dispositions to 'survive' the system, where they could be used to mentor younger pupils, helping them transform or develop their dispositions. In this way, working class young people would be working together in the battle for the *habitus*, jointly overcoming middle-class obstacles. However, Respondent 6, *S4 male*, commented that qualifications are more important than skills; where qualifications will take you to higher places, '*but if you just have skills, you'll not get as high up*'. After saying this, the respondent realised what they said and then mentioned that is unless there are training courses that can up-skill individuals. This respondent acknowledged that when a young person decides to leave school is a very individual decision.

Archer and Yamashita (2003) summarised the work of Reay, David and Ball (passim) that the decision to leave school at the end of post-compulsory education might be the natural or sensible choice of those from low socio-economic backgrounds and the decision to stay on is for the middle classes. The reason for deciding when someone chooses to leave should be based on his or her post-16 destination, taking account of other

factors. However, as mentioned in the work of Reay (passim), Bourdieu (1986) and Ball (passim), the decision of when to leave might be based on consideration of the relevant risk or privilege, with familiar themes as knowing their limits and not for the likes of us being evident. This would then take into account an individual's capital, their dispositions, actions and overall, their *habitus*. Moreover, Archer and Yamashita (2003) found that leaving school at the end of compulsory education was particularly identifiable with young men. Archer and Yamashita (2003) further identified studies that show boredom with school and learning seem to be the main factors for someone leaving school in addition to relationships with friends, teachers and curriculum content. Tarabini and Curran (2018), however, related this to negative experiences of education associated with the school's *habitus* on some working class young people: constant behaviour referrals, repeating subjects due to failure and a lack of trust in education, again because these young people do not have the dispositions to cope with, or in the words of Bourdieu (1977) survive, the institutional *habitus*. These young people will feel rejected by school. With the ever increasing numbers of young people staying on past compulsory leaving age, schools are in a position to cater for all those who return past 16 years old and should be developing alternative curricula and programmes to cater for these individuals. To cite an area of good practice in the school this research was carried out is the link to local colleges to provide vocational and pre-apprenticeship programmes for those who wish to pursue this route, in particular the NPA Construction programme that was successful in getting some young men into positive destinations. With the introduction of Foundation Apprenticeships and expansion of vocational education there is even more scope to develop these programmes.

### **6.3.3 Early and Later Experiences Gained Through Education**

Respondent 10, *S5 male*, suggested that '*more engagement with...pupils from a younger age*' would allow them to look forward and not be '*trapped by society and the area you live in*'. This respondent suggested that the reason why some young people do not reach their aspirational goals is because they do not take advantage of the opportunities that school presents to them, for example, school trips, work place visits, visits to colleges or universities, or work experience. These opportunities are not taken because young people feel safe and comfortable in the environment they are in and fear the unknown. Moreover, Bourdieu (1977) argued that when a young person has a certain experience it stays with them; that is, that experiences restructure a young person's *habitus*. From this it can be argued that in restructuring or transforming the *habitus*, dispositions are transformed also. That is the experiences a young person has can alter the way they

behave, think and act. This could be of benefit to young people as they consider their aspirations and what they can achieve. In addition, as highlighted earlier in this dissertation, Costa and Murphy (2015) stated that Bourdieu distinguished between the *primary habitus*, developed through early experiences and the *secondary habitus*, which is generated later through school and perhaps other specialised contexts; such as workplace learning, visits to colleges and universities, where the *secondary habitus* is more influential in changing people practices and dispositions. Therefore it could be argued that the influence of school, workplace visits, work experience and visits to colleges and universities, and so on, is of vital importance in developing a young person's *secondary habitus*, to enable them to make changes and choices, and that it is this *secondary habitus* that is key in the battle of the *habitus*. That is, according to Sweetman (2003), the *habitus* is in a state of flux, which adjusts and changes for the different circumstances that young people find them in; that is, the (secondary) *habitus* can be seen as a resource which young people can draw upon to help them in their everyday life and also that this secondary *habitus* offers young people the opportunity to make decisions and choices related to the unknown and that this could lead to *habitus* transformation.

During several interviews respondents highlighted the importance of work experience, in that work experience should be relevant to what young people want to do when they leave school and, if possible, it should be for a prolonged period, for example, one afternoon per week for a term, and not just a one week placement, which resonates with the CES. This would, according to several respondents, also allow young people to confirm their chosen career or encourage them to re-think and seek more advice:

*'...it should be tailored to what they want to do when then leave school because it gives them more of the chance to think about what they want to do and it's the right path for them'.*  
(Respondent 2, S4 male)

As the rate of staying on past compulsory leaving age is increasing, Scottish Government's (2016c) Pupil Census data showed that from 2000 until 2016 the staying on rate until S6 has increased from 44.9% to 62.6%, the DYW policies state that it is more important for young people to engage in work experience at a time that is best for them. Respondent 11, S6 female, expanded by commenting that one weeks' placement would limit the skills an individual would be able to develop. More than one respondent commented that parents could be very influential in organising or arranging work experience through their 'connections' and said that there should be a greater range of

work experience placements available. It is important to remember that not all parents will have access to these connections or networks to provide work experience opportunities. There is an opportunity for schools to develop their business partnerships with a range of sectors, through effective implementation of DYW policy, to provide connections for young people to gain valuable and relevant work experience, mentoring and other activities aimed at developing young people's dispositions that can help to transform their *habitus*. This should be considered in relation to providing opportunities relevant to all possible sectors of study and employment.

A further area of good practice in the school where this research was based, is tailoring work experience to be taken during the year an individual is planning on leaving school. Respondent 11, *S6 female*, and others, suggested this was advantageous because it gives more time for an individual to consider their aspirations and gain more relevant work experience. It was also commented that this work experience would develop essential skills and that no one should leave school without taking part in work experience. Furthermore, Respondent 11 suggested that during the summer holiday was a good time to gain an extended work experience placement, which does not interfere with losing time during the school year. In terms of carrying out work experience that is interesting to young people and relevant to their aspirations, Respondent 9, *S6 female*, commented that it would be beneficial for young people to source their own work experience as it would be something they liked doing in relation to their aspirations. This would also develop their confidence and dispositions associated with their *habitus* through connecting with people outwith their social strata. It is important to recognise that those from socially disadvantaged areas may not know relevant people, and if this is the case, furthers the divide between the middle classes who may have networks of people in similar positions able to provide connecting opportunities which the working classes do not have access to. An example of this type of work placements in the school where this research was carried out was a young person from an SIMD 1/2 area who aspired to be a surveyor, using the connections the school had with one of their business partners it was possible to source a work placement as a surveyor for this young person. It should be noted that the suggestions given from the respondent above might not be realistic for every young person taking account of the barriers and constraints discussed throughout this dissertation.

The SEP considers the importance of work placements that are geared towards individual's aspirations, with a clear link with developing skills for life, learning and work. It can be recognised here that the SEP is attempting to develop young people's dispositions

towards their chosen aspirations but also allow young people to develop in a competitive neoliberal market. This was also highlighted in *Building the Curriculum 4* (Scottish Government, 2009), as discussed in Chapter One, which stated that CfE should provide a flexible work placement model, relevant to young people. This was reiterated in the WPS, however it is important to consider which skills would be developed by work experience; the *soft* skills of values defined by liberal education or the *hard* skills defined by neoliberalism and the knowledge economy as discussed in Chapter Two and highlighted by Robeyns (2006) in relation to developing young people to benefit the economy.

The CES comments on the importance of formal and informal learning opportunities for young people to experience a range of activities and learning opportunities that will have a positive impact on their future decisions and indeed provide opportunities to transform their *habitus*. However, it is important to point out that not all experiences and learning opportunities will be positive to all young people. Even negative experiences are just as important as positive experiences in that they may ratify, or otherwise, a young person's decision to take up that experience or opportunity. The focus of DYW on identifying appropriate experiences and opportunities for young people, related to their aspirations, may be a possible solution to this. Indeed from the NPA Construction programme that is run in school, where young people are given construction-related work experience, young people are given the opportunity to go on site visits to construction sites and attend college two days per week to work in a construction environment. It is clear that there is a link between these opportunities and experiences and motivation when back in school. It has also been evident that this programme has transformed the way these boys think and act in relation to their education when in school, realising the link between education and work and seeing the outcome as a possible positive future, that is their ideal post-16 destination. This programme has transformed the boys' dispositions in relation to education, whilst retaining their dispositions in relation to their family, friends and the community. Whilst some of these boys might not like all of the school aspect of the programme, they know that it is essential if they want to take part in the hands-on construction aspects they do like. Dumais (2002) related the different *habitus* that boys and girls may develop due to their different experiences of school and different positions in society. This can translate into the gendered differences in dispositions, attitudes and practices between males and females and warrants further investigation. Moreover Biggart and Furlong (1996) stated that those who disengage might do so because of lack of opportunities and this may limit the realisation of a positive future. DYW could help remedy this problem and encourage those who might have

disengaged to remain engaged if opportunities and experiences are targeted to these individuals and their aspirations. It is important to remember that there are various reasons that young people may disengage from education such as health or family commitments as discussed throughout this dissertation.

With reference to early experiences and how these influence a young person's aspirations, Respondent 10, *S5 male*, said these are important because they allow '*young people to identify a talent or something they feel they're good at. They can work in it and build on it*'. Respondent 11, *S6 female*, elaborated on this by saying that early experience and/or opportunities '*help you start to understand...before you make any big decisions*'. Respondent 4, *S5 male*, said experiences are more important as a teenager because of the important transition between teenage and adulthood. Respondent 9, *S6 female*, delivered a note of caution with regard to early experiences; not to let them limit, or narrow, a young person's aspirations, but that early experience should be used to expand young people's knowledge of different careers or opportunities that exist. This again highlights a running theme through this discussion that additional knowledge, opportunities and experience can be used to develop a young person's dispositions and ultimately transform their *habitus*. The school that this research was carried out in has introduced a 'World of Work' week, incorporating businesses, Higher and Further Education, this exposes young people from S1 to a variety of different careers and has resulted in developing a greater awareness of different careers. There is potential here to use these connections and develop a similar activity, albeit age and stage appropriate in Primary schools.

All extra opportunities and experiences that young people engage with, that are different to the ones that created their *habitus*, could result in individuals' *habitus* being transformed. Again it is important to take into account knowing what actually exists out there: how can someone aspire to something if they do not know what exists or what is required to achieve their aspiration. Moreover, Burke (2015) suggested that changing the *field* an individual is in, results on restructuring structures that helps this *habitus* modification. This change in *field* could be taking part in widening access activities that involve visits to universities, workplace visits, work experience and college visits and taking part in school-college programmes, which are considered in the next Section. It can also be argued that the *habitus* of working class young people in SIMD 1 and 2 areas can be described as a set of structured structures formed by their early experience in the family and then later from school and society over the course of their lives with reduced opportunities to exercise individual agency.

Moreover, the SEP recognises the importance of developing young people from an early age and states that ‘*skills for work should be developed from the Early Years onward*’ (p. 6). This resonates slightly with a neoliberal view of education, as outlined in Chapter Two, and shows that, while not to the same extent as education policy in RUK, Scotland’s education policy does have some traits of neoliberalism, which can be in tension with the liberal aspect of developing the well-rounded individuals of CfE through the four capacities of responsible citizens, effective contributors, successful learners and confident individuals. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the aspirations of young people change over time, and as they get into their mid-teenage years, become more realistic. Perhaps it should be the case then, that if skills and career management skills are to be taught from a young age, they should focus on general aspects of career management skills and skills for life with a view to becoming more specific as a young person’s aspirations become more realistic.

#### **6.3.4 Participating in Programmes to Develop Aspirations and Dispositions**

Taking part in school-college programmes over an academic session allows young people’s *habitus* to begin to adjust to the new *field* over time and allows them to develop more effective communication and dispositions (a restructured structure) that are aligned with the new *field*. However, this change is not as simple as above and will not happen over night. This is a long-term process over the course of many years, perhaps generations, and experiences. It is also important to remember that these young people whose *habitus* is being adjusted are returning to their family home or area where they are exposed to the predispositions that formed their original *habitus*, an exposure that contributes to the battle of the *habitus*.

In relation to applying to university, Respondent 7, *S6 male*, said that experiences gained through widening access programmes are important in S3 or S4, as this is when young people choose their subjects and receive advice and support in relations to applying to university. Furthermore, Respondent 1, *S4 male*, commented that the benefit of such programmes is in helping young people fit in with the new environment (or *field*). As mentioned above, this change in *field* can result in dispositions being transformed. This was supported by Respondent 11, *S6 female*, who said that these programmes would help young people, from less affluent areas, ‘*feel more comfortable*’ and help to overcome any potential barriers such as feeling out of place or meeting new people. Rawlinson’s (2017) study found that the effect of an individual’s *primary habitus* is strong and so strong that it may prevent transformation, however the continued use of widening access programmes

and providing other opportunities and experiences relevant to other aspirational routes, may result in *habitus* transformation. From the interviews there was huge consensus on the benefit of widening access programmes to young people from less affluent areas in terms of breaking down the barriers discussed earlier. Rowan-Kenyon (2011) found that young people who had taken part in addition programmes in schools with more resources available were able to articulate their careers and what they needed for their careers more clearly and confidently.

Respondent 7, *S6 male*, elaborated on widening access programmes, suggesting that a prolonged period of exposure, perhaps over three years (in S4 through to S6) is better than a one year programme because it prepares you over the course of a long-term and gives you a better taster of what could potentially be on offer at university. It is argued, using Bourdieu (1977), that these programmes may transmit the necessary linguistic capital and scholarly language that a working class individual needs to survive in Higher Education, that is, developing the dispositions; thoughts, actions, behaviours and values, that will aid in transforming the *habitus*.

Respondent 10, *S5 male*, said that mixing with '*people who are doctors or accountants, or wealthy professions...you would become comfortable and used to that, so that becomes the norm*'. Here there was an acknowledgement of the importance of networking and growing up in a particular culture, where there may be more opportunities in more affluent areas compared to disadvantaged areas. Indeed, to combat this in the school where this research was carried out a mentoring programme has been established along side a major university on the West of Scotland. A key aim of the inter-generational mentoring programme is to expand the network of people that young people have access to via the school. One former pupil who applied to, and was accepted into, Medicine relied on their mentor, a retired General Practitioner, in order to gain access to relevant work experience. These mentors have the opportunity to act as role models to young people. The importance of role models was mentioned in several interviews to build confidence and, if the role model has a career in a similar area to what they young person aspires, the young person can access knowledge and resources they may need. Furthermore access to mentors and role models will develop young people's cultural capital, which corroding to Gaddis (2013), will improve their confidence resulting in transforming their *habitus*.

Tramonte and Willms (2010) stated that if additional cultural capital can be developed in young people from low socio-economic backgrounds from a younger age,

they are more likely to find school less intimidating and be more successful and improve their social mobility. Moreover, according to Dumais (2002), this additional knowledge and capital may be imparted to allow them to modify their dispositions, and hence, *habitus* by accessing experience and resources that are outwith their reach allowing them to develop their aspirations and navigate the educational institution's *habitus*. Dumais (2002) further suggested that out-of-school experiences and opportunities are just as important to add capital and hence transform the habitus of young people from low socio-economic status. The caveat here, as Dumais (2002) highlighted, is that this could involve a significant amount of parental involvement, and parents from this social strata may be reluctant or unable to get involved due to various constraints, such as their own poor experiences of education and activities, financial constraints and lack of knowledge about what activities exist.

#### **6.4 Intended and Actual Aspirations**

This section will consider the high-level theme: intended and actual aspirations. The discussion that follows will consider Zipin *et al.*'s (2015) notion of *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations in relation to different post-16 destinations that exist and how important it is for young people to follow their own interests. The discussion that follows will outline the competition that exists between expected/traditional aspirations of young people and aspirational aspirations including a look at where the young people involved in this study actually transitioned to upon leaving school. This section will also consider the aspirations of the participants in relation to Zipin *et al.*'s (2015) definitions above and outline and changes in aspirations.

##### **6.4.1 Different Post-school Destinations and Assumptions about Careers**

It was assumed that if a young person was aiming for employment it would be necessary for them to travel from home: '*well, if you want to for example, work you need to travel every time*' (Respondent 1, S4 male), and that if a young person did not wish to travel for their chosen post-16 destination they could be viewed as lazy and that they do not really want to travel '*out of their comfort zone*' (Respondent 1). It is important to acknowledge that this is not true for every young person who does not want to travel and that other factors, for example, illness or personal issues such as anxiety may deter a young person from travelling. Also it is important to note that it may not be the fault of individuals, but of structures that results in a young person needing to move for work or further study, for example the location of a company or institution or a lack of local employment. Indeed, some young people are reluctant to travel outwith their local

community due to the fear of the unknowing, anxieties or perhaps due to family or financial constraints. For these vulnerable young people, the mentoring programmes described earlier can help them by taking them out of their local community and reducing the stress and anxiety felt by these young people by building networks, confident and self-efficacy. This further highlights an important trend in this discussion that it is important to challenge assumptions and correct misunderstandings through the variety of activities discussed which could develop a young person's dispositions of their thoughts and actions.

Furthermore, if someone is willing to travel to college or university, or indeed any post-16 destination, it shows his or her determination and passion to be successful. However, for many young people the rational decision, and financially responsible decision, is to stay at home and go to a local college or university. Again here the notion of individual responsibility could be seen: education has, subconsciously perhaps, been successful at inculcating a neoliberal discourse. However, the cost of travelling was also mentioned as a barrier to a young person following a particular destination. The respondent who commented on the cost of travel may have been unaware that for Further or Higher Education it is often possible to claim back the cost of travel, however this claim is limited and conditional.

Due to the changing nature of apprenticeships, what is offered from an apprenticeship needs to be considered in relation to a young person's aspirations, for example, the introduction of Foundation Apprenticeships to target Scotland's unemployment rate and give young people an industry based qualification (Skills Development Scotland, n.d.). It is interesting that only one respondent was able to talk about Foundation Apprenticeships in relation to this being a school-college programme that young people can do for one or two years. Almost all respondents were able to articulate that an apprenticeship involved getting paid a salary while learning and working. Just under half of respondents went further to suggest that some apprenticeships involve attending college to learn for part of the training. Respondent 1, *S4 male*, suggested, perhaps naïvely, that a possible difficulty surrounding apprenticeships is that: '*you have to try juggling studying and working at the same time*', and that studying provides you with the essential skills needed for the job you are doing. Three respondents made the relationship between apprenticeships and skills explicit. This was interesting because it demonstrates that the emphasis on skills development and preparing people for jobs that exist now and in the future and implicitly implies a knowledge-based environment with an educated workforce inherent in neoliberalism. Respondent 11, *S6 female*, thought that

apprenticeships are aimed mostly at practical jobs, for example, in the construction industry or in a hair salon. This was the thought of most respondents and only a couple realised that apprenticeships could be offered for other sectors, for example, engineering, business and accountancy and that some apprenticeships could involve completing a university degree whilst working for a company. Again, the importance of supplying young people with correct information to navigate their pathway, develop dispositions, attitudes and practices and to challenge misunderstandings is brought to light.

One respondent said that apprenticeships may be new to certain individuals and may not be '*the norm*'. The opportunity to expose young people to ideas outside the norms allows a further opportunity for young people to develop their attitudes, behaviours and thoughts; their dispositions. This differs from the German system as highlighted by Chesters and Smith (2005) earlier, where apprenticeships could be seen as the norm due to the structure of their education system. Costa *et al.* (2018) suggested that by giving young people experiences that are 'out-of-environment', that is outwith the norm, it is possible to see changes in practices and attitudes associated with their dispositions and that this can then be seen in terms of a transformed *habitus*. It is important to remember that some apprenticeships, such as craft apprenticeships and associated trades were the aristocracy of the working class, as highlighted by Corrigan (1979), and were strongly unionised with relatively good terms and conditions. Two respondents said that going to university was the best option because young people get a good experience and assumed that having a degree means an individual has a better chance of getting a job. However, the Economic and Social Research Council (2014) reported that 70% of 16-24 years olds in Scotland have low or medium-level skills.

Burke (2015) also stated that the graduate labour market has not been able to keep up, where the over production of graduates coupled with the financial crash in 2008 has resulted in the devaluation of degrees. This results in graduates having to rely on other forms of capital, such as economic, social and cultural, instead of the scholastic capital they developed whilst studying for a degree, to be able to access the labour market. Respondent 9, *S6 female*, spoke of the opposite: where there is an assumption that people from more affluent areas have the academic ability to progress to university, but find out it is not for them. In relation to working in the construction trade industry, Respondent 8, *S6 male*, commented that there is an assumption that people who work in the trades come from working class backgrounds. This was stated based on the experiences of Respondent 8 who said that, coming from a working class background himself, he personally knew of

men who worked in the construction industry. Here it is clear to see how this respondent's socio-economic background has influenced their dispositions and assumptions. When asked about this in more detail in terms of the importance of experiences, Respondent 8 said:

*'I feel that experiences are the defining factor in what people make, you can be told about the things and be shown things, but until you actually do something and experience it and, whatever that is, you're not going to know for sure, until you do it'.*

(Respondent 8, S6 male)

Respondent 9, S6 male, commented on the need for some young people to take time and think about what their aspiration is, and that perhaps going to college for a year after leaving school will help them decide. This also affords them an opportunity to develop their attitudes and practices associated with their dispositions. There can be a variety of reasons for this and in the school this research was carried out in, these have mainly been due to: maturity, additional support needs and/or undecided in general about their aspiration. This is ratified by Sinclair *et al.* (2010), who carried out a study in a deprived area of Glasgow; similar to the area the school this research was carried out in, and found that aspirations could be categorised as: high aspirations (going to university or starting their own business), medium aspirations (going to college, getting a job or apprenticeship) and low aspirations (signing on). It is important to remember, what is a medium aspiration to one person might be a high aspiration to another person, taking account of the barriers and constraints discussed throughout this dissertation.

Many respondents commented that secondary schools could be doing more to give young people (and parents) an idea of what different post-16 opportunities there are, particularly in fourth year<sup>11</sup>, for example, by inviting different companies, colleges and universities into the school to speak to young people about the benefits of working for their company and the qualifications they need. The 'World of Work' week discussed earlier does this and has already had a positive impact in that young people are more aware of other opportunities that exist for them and have started the process of transforming their dispositions based on new knowledge they have imparted. Upon evaluation of this programme some pupils have commented that it has made them aware of wider prospects for employment opportunities upon leaving school, this is especially true for less academically inclined young people. This evaluation serves as evidence that young people

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<sup>11</sup> Fourth year of secondary school in Scotland is the last year of compulsory education. Young people who turn 16 towards the end of this year are entitled to leave school, if they wish.

have developed their dispositions of thoughts and values and indeed their knowledge of the aspirational map they are developing. Several respondents commented on the importance of having careers education, where two respondents suggested adding an extra career-based class, or course, that focuses specifically on different opportunities that exist. However, there are overlaps here with the Personal and Social Education course and what the careers service offers. Moreover, the CES states the context of the policy in relation to CfE in terms of: increasing the number of young people in positive and sustained post-school destination and placing the young person in the centre of planning and learning. If young people are placed in the centre of planning and learning, this gives them an opportunity to transform how they think and act, and thus transform their dispositions.

#### **6.4.2 Following Own Interests, Self-belief and the Effects of being Pressured or Forced**

Under this theme, the main argument that came out was that young people should follow their own interests and dreams about their aspirations without being pressured or forced into any particular route. A recurring, and interesting, concept that emerged through this discussion was that of self-belief and young people believing in themselves. Referring to one's self, Respondent 10, *S5 male*, when on to say: *'you are your own person and you should do what you feel is best to you and you're most comfortable with'*. Bodovski (2015) demonstrated the important link between self-concept in relation to improved achievement. From this study, there is a similar link between self-belief and success. This self-belief also allows an individual to remain open to accepting new knowledge, experiences and opportunities that can help to shape and transform their dispositions and ultimately their *habitus*. However, inevitably if pressure is placed on a young person in terms following a particular post-16 destination, conflict will arise, which may block any notion of accepting transformed dispositions. Respondent 5, *S4 male*, emphasised the notion of being your own person, emphasising his own personal experience:

*'Everyone tried to change my mind and get me into something that is well paid instead of a working class job, but it's not my type of thing to do. I would rather fix cars and do what I like rather than do what anyone wants me to do'*.  
(Respondent 5, *S4 male*)

This can be related to a different type of capital: *identity capital*, which is defined by Côté (1996) as the extent of investing in yourself. Côté (1996) acknowledged that those

from middle (or upper) class backgrounds are more likely to be capable of this, possibly because, although not mentioned specifically, these individuals have more of the other forms of *capital* and a more developed *habitus*. Identify capital thus has the ability to open up an individual and make them more susceptible to transforming the way they think, act and behave about their aspirations. Rawlinson's (2017) study commented that the decision making process of working class (young) people is aligned to their understanding of the *field* they wish to enter and is influenced by the constraints of their working class *habitus*. While this study related to entering the *field* of Higher Education, it is clear to see how this decision making process would apply to most, if not all, aspirational routes that are unfamiliar or unknown to those from low socio-economic areas.

While Respondent 5, *S4 male*, summarised following your own interests quite bluntly: '*it's his choice and his option, he shouldn't have other people telling him what to do*', he should '*follow his dreams*'. Respondent 6, *S4 male*, extended this by suggesting that even if a young person is the first in their family to go to university, there is nothing to stop them because '*that's their choice, that's their decision*'. Interestingly, Respondent 9, *S6 male*, agreed and elaborated by relating doing what a young person wants to do, to being independent. It is important to remember as highlighted by Furlong and Biggart (1999) that aspirations change over the course of a young person's childhood and become more realistic as they get older. Also reflecting on modern-day society it is possible that someone will change jobs several times during the course of their working life. The CES states that personal development should take place, not only through school, but also through various partnerships, for example, with businesses, colleges and community learning and development, and that this can be done individually or in a coaching role, supported by practitioners and the careers service. All of these should combine to allow young people to grow and provide personal challenge, taking into account their likes, dislikes, strength and weaknesses, and their dispositions.

Connelly *et al.* (2016) commented that young people who have low self-belief are less able to look at their aspirations in the long term and instead focus on their immediate future and that this low self-belief comes from lack of capital (and less developed dispositions, attitudes and practices). This can be related to what Gale and Parker (2015; 2015a) called the capacity dependent notion of aspirations. If young people have the capacity to chart the education system and their aspirations they are more likely to have self-belief and links to the notion of developing map knowledge to navigate different routes. Forbes and Maxwell (2018) noted that schools that promote individuals agency do

so through a culture that promotes and inculcates self-belief, confidence, resilience and high-levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

It is possible to see a link between promoting equality and the development of a young person as an individual in DYW policy; a key idea of a liberal approach to education as highlighted by Enslin (1999). Indeed, the CES discusses the notion of equality and entitlement in some depth, highlighting how important equality and entitlement of opportunity are in this policy. Also, the CES states that employers should create learning experiences and work-based experiences that should enable young people to make ‘*progressive career options*’ (p. 12) and that employers should be there to support young people at transitions stages, including during recruitment, particularly for those young people most at risk of not securing a positive destination. Again, as mentioned above, that may be slightly an ideal-type situation due to resources and time that are available from employers.

The CES standard sets out a series of ‘*I can*’ statements that young people should achieve at key transition points: by the end of Early Years (Primary 1), by the end of First Level (Primary 4), by the end of Second Level (Primary 7), by the end of Third Level Broad General Education (BGE) in S3 before entering the Senior Phase and by the end of the Senior Phase. One item that comes across strongly in all these policies is that young people, from Early Years, through the BGE and into the Senior Phase, are given as many opportunities, experience and choices as they can in order to develop their knowledge and skills, to equip them to make correct career choices. Whilst not explicitly mentioned, there is an implicit assumption that, with the help of key stakeholders: parents, carers, employers, the careers service and teachers; young people will develop critical, reflective skills that will help them to evaluate the opportunities and experience they get. This hopefully would result in modifying their dispositions of thoughts, actions and behaviours that could help to modify their *habitus*. Again, this might be ideal and utopian in nature.

#### **6.4.3 The Habituated, Doxic and Emergent Aspirations of Participants**

To paraphrase the respondents, no particular post-16 destination, whether college, university, employment or an apprenticeship, appeared any more important or valid than the other. Every young person is an individual with individual strengths, talents and potential barriers that may fluctuate at different points in their lives. As a reminder the three types of aspirations outlined by Zipin *et al.* (2015) were: *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations. *Doxic* aspirations are those that are formed from taken for granted

assumptions, the dominant way of doing things and have a degree of symbolic violence associated them. They are natural to an individual or group of people; for example, obtaining a university degree may be the preferable route for many middle and upper class young people. *Habituated* aspirations are arrived at by means of young people's dispositions; that is their actions, thoughts and behaviours, their lived practices that are the result of their biological and historical circumstances from their family, sociocultural and socioeconomic group; that is they are embodied in their *habitus*. *Emergent* aspirations are those that are changed as a result of capacitation through the school, family and community. In the interviews it was possible to see traits of *doxic*, *habituated* and *emergent* aspirations coming to the foreground either individually or in a combination of these types of aspirations. A few examples of these aspirations will be detailed below.

Respondent 6, *S4 male*, left school at the end of S5 to progress to college; within approximately eight weeks he had returned to school for S6. This was because the college he attended was a significant distance from his home and he realised very quickly he had chosen the wrong course. He was afforded the opportunity to come back for S6 and then progressed onto a more advanced college course, which allowed articulation with a Higher Education degree in Year 2. This was the correct decision for him and shows that even if young people make wrong decisions, there should be an opportunity to rectify this and get back on the correct path. This was particularly interesting because, going by his social history and family background, this respondent should have followed a *habituated* aspirational route, but instead chose a different route. The reason for this was because they chose to take part in many experiences through school, for example, work experience and mentoring that provided him with the experiences and opportunities to transform his dispositions, thoughts and their *habitus*. This transformation was capacitated and resourced, according to Appadurai (2004), by education processes that improved this respondent's ability to navigate their aspirations by looking at alternative futures. Zipin *et al.* (2015) referred to this as *emergent* aspirations. This respondent was able to develop his map knowledge and be the cartographer of his aspiration.

*Emergent* aspirations, according to Zipin *et al.* (2015) require young people's knowledge of what is out there to be expanded, not just by the school, but also utilising community and family resources thus developing their dispositions of thoughts, actions and associated behaviours, choices and agency. From the work in this dissertation, this would also include providing extra opportunities and experiences to develop young people's dispositions and give them an opportunity to break away from traditional social-

structural assumed aspirations. Indeed, Forbes and Maxwell (2018) noted a school in Scotland that brings together the institutional *habitus* of the school with the students' experiences and family *habitus* through the process of parents joining their children and teachers in school activities. This school was an elite school with a specifically designed community hub with middle-class parents and pupils, for example, parents could breakfast with their child before school started or attend light opera after school. These parents will already have a *habitus* and dispositions that are aligned to the school and so make participation in these events easier than those from low socio-economic areas who may not have the capacity to engage with the school, and so schools need to engage creatively with outreach activities to encourage families to participate.

As noted above, some individuals may have anxiety and other health issues that prevent them from achieving their desired post-16 destinations. Five respondents (45%) identified depression or mental illness as an issue that affects young people's destinations. This is very topical and relevant as the mental health of young people is at the forefront of Scottish Government policy (Scottish Government, 2017e). Respondent 4, *S5 male*, identified his own post-16 destination in relation to family illnesses; he chose to follow a particular route in psychology because of illness that affected members of his family. Respondent 4 wished to follow the *doxic* route of aspirations following the dominant discourse to allow them to attend university. Moreover, it was demonstrated through the interviews and from Table 6.1, page 141, that these young people do not suffer from poverty of aspirations, supporting the work of Gale and Lingard (2015). In addition Respondent 7, *S6 male*, acknowledged the recognition that ambition, perseverance and determination need to be present for young people to succeed at whatever they want to achieve. This respondent was able to demonstrate both *doxic* and *habituated* aspirations in relation to transforming the *habitus* and dispositions they grew up with to take advantage of experiences in school to transform his *habitus* and develop *emergent* aspirations. This respondent used the institutional *habitus* of the school to develop his own *habitus* and hence aspirational goals. This was a similar case for another respondent, who despite coming from an area of low socioeconomic background, developed *doxic* aspirations while taking part in many wider achievement programmes and work experience, achieved their goal and was accepted to study Medicine.

There was also the suggestion that the stigma associated of coming from a working class area and preconceived ideas this brings with it could affect aspirations negatively. However, Respondent 7 said that '*despite where [you] live, doors are open for every*

*career*'. Again this highlighted the preconceptions and almost stereotypical views that young people have in relation to socio-economic background: if you live in an affluent area you always go to (a good) university easily without working hard and that people from working class backgrounds do not work hard, or mainly do blue collar jobs, but may have to work harder than their peers from affluent areas. These preconceptions are associated with *doxic* and *habituated* aspirations as defined above where young people ascribe to what they know and what is perhaps safe. Respondent 7 showed an awareness of not having these preconceptions and also showed a naïve belief in meritocracy, as discussed earlier, where if you work hard you reap the rewards. Respondent 10 was a male who was intent on going to university to study Medicine despite coming from a working class background. He took all opportunities and experiences offered to him by the school to develop his aspiration into an *emergent* aspiration. He was successful in gaining entry to study Medicine despite the odds being stacked against him – he overcame the battle of the *habitus*!

Table 6.1 over page outlines the participants in the study and their eventual post-16 destination and type of aspiration. From Table 6.1 it can be seen that 91% of the participants realised their aspirations and progressed onto the post-16 destination they had been working hard to achieve. At the time of writing, in some cases these young people were waiting on exam results to confirm their post-16 destination. Table 6.1 also shows which participants followed *habituated*, *doxic* or *emergent* aspirations or mixture of these, where *emergent* aspirations are those who specifically chose or where given the opportunity to take part in extra activities: work experience, mentoring or widening access programmes that afforded them the opportunity to transform their dispositions of their thoughts, actions, beliefs and values, and transform, even to a slight degree, their *habitus*. These respondents used the institutional *habitus* and its associated dispositions to change their primary *habitus* and develop a new secondary *habitus* with new and transformed dispositions of thoughts, actions, behaviours, identify capital and self-belief that allowed them to progress to their chosen post-16 destination. It is the case that this process of transformation may have been subconscious in some participants.

**Table 6.1 – Intended and Actual Destinations of Participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Intended Destination</b>	<b>Actual Destination</b>	<b>Type of Aspiration Followed</b>
1	College	College	Emergent
2	Apprenticeship	College	Habituated/ Emergent
3	University	University	Doxic/ Emergent
4	University	College and Employment	Habituated/ Doxic
5	Construction Industry	Construction Industry	Habituated
6	College	College	Emergent
7	University	University	Doxic
8	College	College	Doxic/ Emergent
9	University	University	Doxic
10	University	University	Doxic
11	University	University	Doxic/ Emergent

## **6.5 Chapter Conclusion**

The factors considered in the discussion in relation to *habitus* transformation and development of dispositions broadly fit into three categories: family, socio-economic status and the education field. These have been considered in a fine-grained analysis in relation to how these factors influence a young person's *habitus* and dispositions, for example: thoughts, actions, behaviours, attitudes, values, and in challenging misunderstandings and taken-for-granted assumptions.

The importance of early experience was discussed, including providing career education early. This does not have to be formal career education in a Primary school or nursery looking at career management skills, as this is unrealistic and impractical for young people of this age and stage, but could simply be an introduction to different jobs or sectors by discussion and visits by workpeople and businesses describing what they do in their job. Stahl (2015b) stated the range of possibilities for individuals is constrained by their previous histories and their future trajectories. Bourdieu (1977) described this as the system of dispositions that are kept alive in the present and preserve themselves into the future. This explains why it is so important to give young people all the opportunities and experiences possible during their time in education; so that their transformed *habitus* is developed as much as possible for them to make informed choices about their post-16 destinations, where they have increased knowledge and awareness of aspirational routes and a developed sense of map knowledge with which to be the cartographer of their aspirational routes. Indeed, according to Forbes and Maxwell (2018), the *habitus*, and dispositions, can change through interactions to different fields. In the context of this dissertation, this is taken to mean that *habitus* and dispositions can change through different experiences and opportunities in different fields, for example, employment sectors, HE and FE. However, this should not overwrite the experiences they have gained in early childhood that have laid the basis of their primary *habitus*, but extends this basis. Stahl (2015b) described this development of the *habitus* as the *counter-habitus*, since it is developing counter to the field it is operating in. Therefore in considering *habitus* transformation, it is important that educators consider the development or transformation of the *primary habitus* into a *secondary habitus*, as outlined in Chapters Three and Four.

This potential transformation of the *habitus* of individuals from an area of low socio-economic status can then take place through the factors considered in this Chapter: the influence of key individuals (family, friends, educators), the opportunities and experiences offered and taken up at school, participation in additional programmes (such as widening access programmes, college tasters, mentoring), work experience, career education and for schools to promote equity of access to resources. All of these factors have the ability to develop a young person's dispositions; that is, change the way they think, act and behave, to promote themselves in an increasingly competitive neoliberal world.

As Harker (1990) points out, there can be an assumption that all young people have access to the same *habitus*, that is the dominant middle class *habitus* that prevails in school

but, as highlighted in this discussion chapter, this is not the case and school and teachers should cater for this; building programmes aimed at developing young people's knowledge and dispositions, taking into account previous histories and experiences. Furthermore, Frank (2015) stated that in society today, young people find themselves aiming for employment opportunities that are far removed from what their families or communities may have done. This is because, according to Frank (2015), these opportunities require different forms of capital, such as qualifications (and experiences). In light of this, it is important the educators and policy makers also consider the role for engaging with families in relation to what their child(ren)'s aspirations are. This does not have to happen in school, as mentioned previously some parents in low socio-economic areas have had experiences of education themselves, where there may be a role for community or family education to take forward.

The CES standard states that one of the aims of the Commission for Developing the Young Workforce is to produce young people with enhanced skills that can contribute to the economic growth of Scotland, one may assume that this is in line with the philosophy of a neoliberal agenda. However, within DYW, in addition to the focus on developing skills to enhance the economy, there is also a liberal approach that focuses on individual personal development, allowing scope for autonomy and the development of agency, and that an aim of DYW is to develop young people's skills so they can enter employment and live a life that they wish to pursue building on their previous biographies and histories.

## Chapter Seven

### Conclusions and Future Work

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The final Chapter of the dissertation will return to the research questions and evaluate these in terms of providing conclusions. Key recommendations for schools will also be made in relation to applying and supporting DYW policy implementation. Following this limitations and suggestions for future work will be discussed together with implications for the researcher's professional practice; that being dealing with young people's aspirations, post-16 destinations and the factors that can be done to facilitate young people achieving their aspiration, overcoming barriers to do so.

This dissertation has presented a study based in the sociology of education tradition. It is important to remember that of the young people interviewed, 91% of interviewees were from SIMD 1 or 2 areas (the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland), and that these young people are speaking from their own personal experiences or experiences they have witnessed. The study was situated within an interpretivist paradigm utilising qualitative research methods of one-to-one semi-structured interviews and a researcher's journal.

One aim of this dissertation was to expand the literature on using Bourdieu's theory as method and as such a methodological approach to data analysis based on developing a Bourdieusian theoretical lens was applied using previous literature on methodology using Bourdieu's theory and concepts (for example: Burke, 2018; Costa *et al.*, 2018; Gale and Lingard, 2015; Gale and Parker, 2015; Zipin *et al.*, 2015). Data analysis was carried out using a three-stage process developed by Burke (2018) which involved coding interview data based on codes identified from the literature review and from the data itself. Sub-themes were then identified and related to the Bourdieusian theoretical lens developed in this dissertation. Following this theoretical analysis of the data took place using Bourdieu's (1977) *Theory of Reproduction*, key concepts such as *habitus* and *capital*, other key terms and other sociological theories.

## 7.1 Conclusions

As a reminder the research questions that were proposed are stated below. Each will be considered in turn followed by a concluding discussion. Key recommendations in supporting youth transitions will be stated, as an outcome of this research, following the response to Question Two.

1. How are young people's dispositions, associated with *habitus*, affected through factors such as the school, social class and the family in relation to their aspirations, in an area of low socio-economic status in Glasgow?
2. To what extent can the school assist young people in transforming their *habitus*?

In considering the first research question above there was no one particular factor that affected a young person's dispositions or *habitus* in relation to their aspirations on its own. The development, and indeed transformation, of dispositions and *habitus* is the result of a combination of factors, such as: the influence of family, friends, teachers and the school, the socioeconomic area they grew up in, the decision to leave school at the end of post-compulsory education or whether to participate in additional activities. Furthermore, these factors ultimately translate into whether a young person follows their *habituated* or *doxic* aspiration, a mixture of those, or develops an *emergent* aspiration. Examples from participants in this study were presented suggesting interaction between the factors above and the type(s) of aspiration they followed.

Moreover, this research has contributed to the concepts of *habituated*, *doxic* and *emergent* aspirations and specifically the importance of the school's *habitus* and the role of key staff in schools in the formation of *emergent* aspirations. This can be achieved through providing experiences of different aspirational routes, making full use of third-sector partnerships, for example, business and college, university partnerships, additional opportunities and activities and by breaking down barriers to transform individual dispositions and *habitus*, as described by Gale and Parker (2015) and Zipin *et al.* (2015). This research provides some evidence of transformation between *habituated*, *doxic* and *emergent* aspirations and the transformation of *habitus* using opportunities and experiences given in school (Stahl, 2015b). This research has also demonstrated that it is important to develop individual agency in young people from an early age so that their dispositions and *habitus* are fully developed to take account of their future aspirations in relation to developing positive post-school destinations. This can be achieved by developing *identity*

*capital*, as defined by Cote (1996), which allows for a transforming of the way young people think, act and behave; that is, their dispositions.

*Habitus* transformation of young people involves them taking the best of both worlds: their original *habitus* and its associated dispositions and their new transformed *habitus*, which will have new dispositions associated with it, developed from the education institution's *habitus* and the experiences and opportunities taken. In a sense then, the transformed *habitus* comprises of dispositions present from the young person's original *habitus* and the school's *habitus*. This could involve some small shift in the dispositions of certain values, behaviour, attitudes or thought processes or an alignment with some of these dispositions. Respondent 10, *S6 male*, served as an example of this, as he was able to utilise the opportunities given to him to allow small shifts in his dispositions; his thought processes, attitudes and values, to overcome the 'battle of *habitus*' to progress to HE to study Medicine despite being from an area of low socioeconomic status. However, depending on what a young person's aspiration is, some of these dispositions will be different and aligned to their chosen post-16 aspiration. This will allow a transformed *habitus* that, according to Stahl (2018), takes account of an individual's agency within their social structure.

In turning to the second research question Bourdieu (1984) reminded us that for working class individuals to be successful in an educational field, they must be confident of their ability and to recognise the game. However, it is important for educators and policy makers to remember that in an area of low socioeconomic status not all young people will come to Secondary school with a *habitus* that has been developed in the same way, due to differences in cultural capital for example. Here the importance of developing resilience in working class young people is posited. However, this resilience can mean acceptance of, or resistance to, the institutional *habitus*. This is where the battle of the *habitus* takes place for those from areas of low socio-economic status who are resistant to the institutional *habitus* because they are unable or unwilling to accept the rules of the game. This research has identified two groups of young people this battle applies to. First are those unable to play the game because they do not have the dispositions and primary *habitus* aligned to the institutional *habitus* but wish to do so, for example, those young people who wish to progress to any positive destination or an aspiration different to their family. Second are those unwilling to play the game because their primary *habitus* is far removed from the *institutional habitus* that they simply do not have the necessary dispositions to survive and engage with education either at or before the end of post-

compulsory education. Therefore, when considering planning around young people's aspirations, schools must take these two groups into account by providing opportunities and experiences to develop their dispositions; that is, the school uses its *institutional habitus* to better develop the *habitus* of those from low socio-economic status. This planning should take into account all positive destinations and not reify one over another. Rawlinson (2017) noted in her study that the pull of the *primary habitus* meant that more students were stopped short of *habitus* transformation, this study has highlighted that the continued supply of opportunities and experiences for the development of the *habitus* needs to take place for such a transformation of the *habitus* to take place. Indeed this should take place from an early age to allow the *habitus* time to modify, adjust and transform.

This research has identified a number of areas of good practice from the school this research was carried out in that enabled young people to transform their *habitus*, for example, the mentoring programmes discussed that allow subject-specific mentoring, mentoring to improve self-belief and self-efficacy, intergenerational mentoring for those who wish to progress to FE or HE and the tailor-made NPA Construction course which was tailored towards a particular group of young people who were at risk of disengaging. Other areas of good practice identified were the efficient use of school-parent communication with parents attending careers interviews with their child at a key point where young people were choosing their subjects, the use of school-college vocational programmes and other widening access programmes, and the input from business partners to reinforce career education. Therefore, one key recommendation from this dissertation in supporting *habitus* transformation is for schools to provide more high quality school-college vocational programmes to enhance young people's experiences, for example through Foundation Apprenticeships and business links.

It is also important to recognise these opportunities and experiences to allow individual to transform their *habitus* are achieved through successful implementation of the DYW policies, for example, the *Career Education Standard (CES)* and *Work Placement Standard (WPS)* documents outline the entitlements and expectation of various stakeholders and what the intended outcome should be in relation to better preparing young people for their post-16 transition. Specific focus should be given to the CES, as the importance of providing career education as early as possible to provide young people with knowledge of careers and career management skills were highlighted in the literature review. This echoed the view of Furlong and Biggart (1999) and Menzies (2013).

Therefore, a second key recommendation is that career education is built into the everyday learning and teaching that goes on in classrooms, where teachers actively link aspects and elements of learning to achievable aspirations and future careers.

A third key recommendation of this dissertation is that work placements are given as a matter of priority to pupils in S4 to S6, which should be tailored and targeted to a young person's aspiration. It is important to reiterate that it is acceptable for these placements to allow a young person to think: "*I didn't enjoy that*", as that is part of the process of developing knowledge about careers and realising that it might not be for them, saving them from making a poor choice later on. These experiences and opportunities should also allow young people to challenge the norm and associated assumptions about different post-16 destinations thus developing their *habituated*, *doxic* or *emergent* aspirations.

Key stakeholders include: parents, carers, teachers and practitioners, the careers service (Skills Development Scotland), the Local Authority and employers. Schools should actively engage with these stakeholders to help young people transform their dispositions and develop their *habitus* through the various activities and programmes discussed throughout this dissertation. By challenging the taken for granted assumptions of *habituated* aspirations and challenging the dominant discourse associated with *doxic* aspirations to allow young people, if they wish, to develop their own *emergent* aspirations which are fully informed and allow them to achieve positive and fulfilling career opportunities.

It is argued what DYW is aiming for is a culture change in Scottish Education where, as educators and practitioners, we do not seek to turn everyone into an academic with a university degree – we should be saying: it is perfectly acceptable to develop a trade and take up an apprenticeship, but the opportunities and experiences should be there should you wish to try something different.

Throughout this discussion it is important to remember that not everyone will realise their goals and that there will be a few young people who do have low aspirations due to the constraints put upon them that are not of their doing, for example, being born into poverty, caring for a ill relative or other limiting factors. Furthermore, DYW policy, when implemented effectively, can be adjusted to cater for local needs of young people in

schools and has the potential to directly influence young people's thoughts and acts, their dispositions, and transform their *habitus*.

This research has highlighted the various programmes, events, experiences and opportunities that are afforded to the young people in this school situated in an area of relatively high socio-economic deprivation. It is important to acknowledge that in reality jobs are rationed and finite and there are inevitably losers in the game. Some of these losers may be those young people who disengage, encounter challenges or barriers, or those young people who come from socially disadvantaged areas with families who do not have the access to the appropriate resources to transform their dispositions or their *habitus*. It is the job of educational practitioners and the various stakeholders discussed earlier that through these experiences and opportunities, the number of losers is minimised and that young people realise their potential. There is a particular role for school here through the *More Choices More Chance Team* and the process outlined in the introduction.

Lastly, it should be noted that the DYW policy does not lend itself to a particular theoretical approach; it is neither completely based on liberal or neoliberal philosophy. There is a liberal notion within the policy in terms of providing a breadth of knowledge, skills, opportunities and experiences, and also through the promotion of young people's autonomy through recognising that each young person is an individual with different aspirations who will progress, achieve and aspire at their own pace. However, with the emphasis on skills development and the need for skills to be developed in relation to the current and future labour market, it can be argued that the DYW policy may lean towards the neoliberal use of skills, however, DYW also recognises the social usefulness of education as a public good. The DYW policies do not discriminate between different post-16 destinations or aspirations in that regardless of what a young person's aspiration is, they should be given equity of opportunities, experiences and choices.

## **7.2 Limitations**

Through out this research several limitations were realised. It may have been appropriate to target specific groups of people from different areas of society, instead of selecting random participants or indeed by choosing a larger and more representative group of young people. However, there would be an ethical issue with this in that it is important not to be seen as targeting a specific group of individuals. A further limitation may have been not seeking the views of professionals who work within the sector of improving post-16 destinations, for example, key individuals within the Scottish

Government, Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland. A further limitation was not involving the voice of parents and carers to get their thoughts on the research topic and perhaps to compare how things have changed from their time at school and what influenced them to choose a particular post-16 destination, compared to what is influencing young people today because it is often possible to infer about parental contribution or lack of it. As highlighted in Chapter Five, it was also possible that the role of the researcher as an insider-researcher could provide limitations in that the responses to the interview questions might not have been as full as they may have been if the researcher had been unknown to the interviewees.

### **7.3 Future Work**

A future study might involve a bigger sample of young people, involving more schools from different socioeconomic areas to allow a comparison. Furthermore it would be interesting to revisit the participants in this study in 10-15 years as a follow up to investigate whether or not they achieved their aspirations. Furthermore, future work might involve professionals in the education sector, interviewing teachers and other key professionals, such as careers staff and those mentioned above to find out to what extent they promote skills for life, learning and work. Furthermore, with the introduction of the new Foundation Apprenticeships it might be suitable to follow the progress of a case study group of young people, examining their choices and experiences, and the opportunities that are presented to them as they progress through this new post-16 destination. This idea could be developed to investigate a gender-based approach to young people's aspirations as there is a focus in developing gender roles in particular labour market areas, for example, encouraging more girls into engineering and the automotive industry.

There is also work to be done exploring the extent of promoting careers management skills and career education in the classroom. A future study might examine different ideas and methods for doing this, initially on a small scale, for example through a particular curricular area or in a particular school. This could also focus on the experiences, opportunities and choices of a particular group of young people as a study follows them at key points in their journey towards their aspirations and through their educational career onto their post-16 destination.

Future work could involve a comparative analysis of the factors that influenced parents and carers decisions for choosing a particular post-16 destination compared to their young people today. This would focus on the career advice given to parents and the

experiences they had. Furthermore, there would be a focus on policy at the time and how this has changed over the last 30-40 years, taking account the economic and labour market forces at the time, compared to the precarity of the present labour market in many advanced economies where many employees are overqualified. It would also be relevant to consider a longitudinal study of the participants in this research to see what has changed in 3-5 years as it would allow a study to be carried out on the transformed *habitus* to identify patterns and reasons for change. Furthermore, a longitudinal study of young people from a similar area low socio-economic status could be carried out, charting their aspirations from Primary school through to Secondary school. This would allow observation to be made on how an individual's *habitus* can change, and allowing the decisions, experiences and opportunities and individual takes to be mapped and their subsequent effects of aspirations development or restriction.

From the perspective of the DYW policy, future work would be around carrying out an analysis and evaluation of the policy once it completes its implementation period. This would also tie into the Scottish Government's targets and aims to reduce youth unemployment and maximise the number of young people entering a positive destination. These areas would allow the effectiveness of DYW to be examined from the perspective of various stakeholders: pupils, parents/carers, businesses and partners, practitioners, Local Authorities and the Scottish Government.

#### **7.4 Reflections on Professional Practice**

Coming from a scientific background I did encounter challenges in coming to terms with a constructivist way of thinking and from completing the Ed.D., I now see myself as a hybrid researcher having experienced positivist and constructivist research. I believe that there are structures of inequality that exist and must be challenged. One of my goals for inclusive education is that of providing equity of opportunity. Completing the Ed.D. has given me more passion, drive and determination to provide equity of opportunity and support to young people through my daily dealings with young people and their families. Indeed, as the lead on vocational programmes and DYW in school I have used my background reading for the Ed.D. to justify and provide more opportunities for young people. Providing support to social groups who require it ties firmly in with my values of inclusion and maximising aspirations of those from low socio-economic status, and as highlighted from my own experience growing up as detailed in Chapter One.

From my experience as more young people are staying on past post-compulsory education, S5/6 years groups are becoming more socially and culturally diverse. There is a developing mix of different aspirations of young people in S5/6, where S5/6 is no longer seen as the group who stay on at school who wish to progress to Higher or Further Education. I have taken forward a robust system for pupils choosing subjects at key transition points in their school career that also involves their parents. From my experience parents tend not to be aware of what these choices entail or the possibilities for progression. I have found that those parents who may have been educated to degree level, or those young people who have supportive parents who may work in the professions do engage with the school and their child's education to a greater degree. From my experience working in careers education, many of the young people and their families of the school this study is based on do value career education. This is reflected in the fact that over 50% of S3 parents attended a formal careers interview in session 2017/18, however, as noted earlier, more work would be needed to assess how this influenced young people's aspirations, attainment and achievement in the years to come.

I have enhanced communication and built collegiality with Principal Teachers of Pastoral Care, Depute Head Teachers, pupils and their parents through introducing a House system at school. Moreover, because of the work carried out in this dissertation I will be taking forward the DYW agenda at school in terms of cross-curricular implementation and development of the *Career Education Standard* of DYW and cross-curricular work in raising awareness of skills and skill development. Furthermore, I will be leading Career Long Professional Learning sessions on research in education and using research in education to newly qualified and student teachers. I have also facilitated cross-sector primary-secondary practitioner enquiry projects with newly qualified teachers, offering them advice and guidance through the enquiry process that has hopefully resulted in improved learning and teaching and better experiences for young people within their classrooms. As I progress with my career I will always hold my value of liberal education close to me in development of young people as individuals. I have also continued to use my knowledge and skills in research in education by taking up a part-time Associate Tutor post at a local university. This has allowed me to continue being actively involved and engage within educational research.

**Appendix One: Ethical Approval Confirmation**

31 January 2017

Dear Mr Kenneth G. Macpherson

**College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

**Project Title:** Experiences and Choices: A Battle of the ‘Habitus’

**Application No:** 400160065

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

- Project end date: 31/12/2018
- The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University’s Code of Good Practice in Research: ([http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\\_227599\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_227599_en.pdf)) (Unless there is an agreed exemption to this, noted here).
- The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.
- Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The *Request for Amendments to an Approved Application* form should be used: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/>

Yours sincerely,

Dr Muir Houston College Ethics Officer

**Muir Houston, Senior Lecturer College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer**

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## Appendix Two: Vignettes used in Interviews

### Vignette 1

Adam is 15 years old and in S4. He is interested in working in the construction industry when he leaves school. Adam has an older sibling, Lisa, who is at university. Adam has always enjoyed practical subjects such as woodwork and PE. Lisa enjoys reading books, and so enjoys subjects like English and History.

Lisa and Adam's mum and dad are both employed. Mum is a receptionist and dad works as an electrician. Adam has had the opportunity to spend a week's work experience working with his dad and his colleagues. He really enjoyed this, especially the 'banter' from the men his dad worked with.

Lisa and Adam stay in a house with a mortgage in a fairly affluent area of Glasgow. The family have a car; however, Adam travels to school by bus with his friends.

Adam's friends have similar interests: they are interested in working in the construction industry. Adam has been really good friends with these boys since Primary school.

In school, Adam is participating in a college programme, working towards a Level 5 course in Construction. When Lisa was at school, she participated in extra programmes to help her prepare for university. These programmes involved visiting a local university on a regular basis, where she would talk to current students and shadow them at lectures and tutorials.

*What barriers does Adam need to overcome?*

*How could he do this?*

*What influence does Adam's dad's employment have on Adam's aspirations?*

*What barriers did Lisa have to overcome to get to university?*

*How did she do this?*

*What was the benefit of taking part in these 'extra programmes' to help her prepare for university?*

**Vignette 2**

Gemma is 14 years old and in S3. Her current attendance is 63%, however she has started attending school less and less. When at Primary school her attendance dropped off towards Primary Seven. Because of this Gemma never took part in any of the activities or visits introducing her to Secondary school.

Gemma stays in a flat in a deprived area of Glasgow. She lives with her mum and her younger brother. Her parents separated at an early age and she sees her dad once every two weeks. Gemma's dad is employed as a Computer Technician. Mum is currently unemployed; however, she has had intermittent jobs in the past.

Gemma has a large friendship group who always hang around with each other every weekend. Gemma does not like to travel and so spends a lot of her time in the area she lives in, or nearby.

When she leaves school, Gemma aims to go to college to study child care. The closest college is a 30-minute bus journey away in the City Centre.

*What obstacles would Gemma need to overcome to realise her ambition?*

*What impact is / could mum's unemployment have on Gemma?*

*What impact is not liking to travel have on Gemma's ambition?*

*Could Gemma's friendship group have any impact on her immediate future?*

**Vignette 3**

Daniel goes to a school where 1 in 3 of the school leavers progress to university. He lives at home with his dad and younger brother. In S4 Daniel achieved six National 5s at grades 'A' and 'B'. This year, in S5, he is doing five Highers. He is thinking about university, but is unsure if he would 'fit in'.

Daniel has been invited to take part in programmes that will introduce him to university and allow him to find out more about it. He's not sure if he should take part in these programmes because his dad thinks he should apply for an apprenticeship and develop a trade. Daniel's dad is an Engineer as was his granddad.

Daniel lives with his dad in a fairly well-off area in a mortgaged house. His younger brother is in S3 and has just chosen his subjects, which are heavily focused on music and drama. It is his aim to go to the local Royal Conservatoire to study Music.

*Do you think Daniel should take part in the programmes to help him get into university? Why?*

*What advice would you give to Daniel/his dad about what he wants to do when he leaves school?*

*How do you think dad will react to Daniel's younger brother's ambition to study music? Would this have a positive or negative effect? Can you explain?*

**Vignette 4**

Jennifer's aspiration is to work in one of the city's top hair salons, where her mum works. Jennifer is well supported at home, where she lives with mum and dad. Dad is employed full time too. Both mum and dad are very committed to their work and have not taken any time off for a while. They also believe in arriving for work on time.

Jennifer's aspiration stems from a young age when she remembers her mum training and practicing different hairstyles on her. Since then Jennifer has always been interested in keeping up with the latest hairstyles. Jennifer's friends have similar interests and enjoy practicing different hairstyles on each other regularly.

During the summer holiday, Jennifer was in a lucky position where she was offered a 4 week work experience placement in the salon she wants to work in. She was offered this because her mum works there too. She really enjoyed this. It has been suggested that, when she finishes school in S4, she could work for the saloon as an apprentice hair stylist.

*Do you think that the fact mum and dad are employed full time have any bearing on Jennifer's work ethic? Why is this?*

*What impact did mum have involving Jennifer in her training at a young age have on her aspirations?*

*What influence, if any, do you think mum had in arranging for work experience?*

*What impact could leaving at the end of S4 have on Jennifer's future?*

### Vignette 5

Josh and Dean are brothers. Josh is 15 and Dean is 22. Their dad works in the construction industry. Dean also works in construction as a bricklayer. When at school, Dean enjoyed practical subjects where he had to use his hands a lot.

Both boys witnessed their dad doing lots of DIY around the house and helped him to fit a new bathroom and kitchen when they were younger. Josh and Dean were also used to being in the company of dad's friends when they came over to visit at weekends. They would like to go to college to study construction for a year to gain a qualification before taking on an apprenticeship.

At school, Josh and Dean were told about different post-school possibilities, but were not interested in these because they never got the opportunity to experience anything else.

While at school, Josh and Dean were offered an opportunity for work experience. Josh worked in a supermarket for a week, while Dean worked in an office. Both found their experience very boring.

*What factors have contributed to Josh following in the footsteps of his older brother and dad?*

*What influence do you think being in the company of dad and his friends has had on Josh and Dean's aspirations?*

*Do you think there are any advantages to going to college first, before starting an apprenticeship?*

*What could the school have done to broaden their knowledge of different post-school opportunities?*

*How did their work experience impact on their choice to work in construction? What improvements should be made to work experience to enhance young people's experiences?*

**Vignette 6**

Carrie is in S3, she is getting ready to choose her subjects for fourth year. She is interested in working in the business/accountancy sector. She met the careers adviser who said that she could either go to college/university or look for an apprenticeship in this area.

Carrie has never heard about an apprenticeship before and though this might be a better option, as she would be getting paid a salary whilst learning at the same time. She discussed this with her mum and dad at home, who said that she would be better off to go to college first as this is 'what everyone does'. Carrie's mum is a receptionist and her dad is a driver.

Carrie is considering doing four National 4 subjects and four National 5 subjects. She plans to study Maths, Admin and Business as these subjects relate to her aspirations. However, she is undecided in choosing between Home Economics and Art. Carrie's friends would be in most of her classes, except Art if she chooses it. She is very good at Art, better than Home Economics. Most of her friends are choosing Home Economics.

*Do you know what an apprenticeship is? Can you explain?*

*Why do you think Carrie's parents are encouraging her to go to college as oppose to an apprenticeship?*

*Do you think that Carrie's parent's backgrounds are having an influence of the advice she has been given? If so, in what way?*

*Should Carrie's friends (or family) influence the subjects she chooses? If so, why? If not, why?*

**Vignette summary questions over page.**

*Summary Questions (to be asked to all interviewees):*

*What do you think are the main barriers that young people (from socially deprived areas) face in terms of reaching their aspiration?*

*When you choose your subjects at the end of S4 (or S5) what were the main reason you had for choosing your subjects?*

*Do you think that young people whose parents/guardians attended college or university have better chance to success in getting in college or university? Why is this?*

*What influence do you think the community you grew up in has on your post-school destination?*

*Based on your knowledge, can you rank the following post-school destinations in order of preference:*

*Employment*

*University*

*Apprenticeship*

*College*

*What is your aspiration for leaving school? Can you explain why you are interested in this area?*

\*Sub-questions will be asked during all vignettes based on interviewees' responses.

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