An auto/ethnographic study of the influences on a student's dispositions to drop out of doctoral study: A Bourdieusian perspective

A dissertation submitted by

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Certification of Thesis

This thesis does not contain material which has been previously submitted for examination in another course or accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution.

To the best of my knowledge this thesis does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person without due reference being made in the text of the thesis.

The research for this project received the approval of the University of Southern Queensland, Office of Research and Higher Degrees Ethics Committee,

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Signature of the candidate Date:

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Signature of Supervisor/s Date

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Signature of Supervisor/s Date

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This Doctor of Education thesis has been incubating since early 2008 and is the culmination of a considerable period of personal professional growth and recognition of the complexness of conducting doctoral research. I have a number of people to thank for their assistance and perseverance to bring this study to a temporary close. My research in this topic has only begun.

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It was during this absence from doctoral studies that the notion of completing the research as an autoethnography supported by ethnographies was developed and incorporated into the latest version of the research proposal. The notion of using an autoethnographic methodology was supported by Dr Jon Austin and Dr Andrew Hickey during a series of enquiries prior to re-enrolment. I appreciate the manner and sensitivity with which my request to be reinstated into the EdD program was expedited by Robyn, who was now the Coordinator for Doctoral Studies. It was with the encouragement of both Andrew and Jon that the research proposal was completed. Andrew was to become my fourth supervisor as Principal Supervisor assisted by Dr Geoff Danaher as an adjunct supervisor and knowledgeable interlocutor of Pierre Bourdieu's philosophies and concepts.

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Abstract

This research study explores the influence of dispositions as sociological features of doctoral student dropout as experienced by a group of participants from different Australian universities. To elucidate these influences the research poses the two questions of what are the influences on students' decisions to dropout and how is this experienced by the student? Using an analysis of these personal experiences the study suggests a range of outcomes which illuminate the experience of dropout (and dropping out) through a Bourdieusian[1] decision-making lens. These outcomes are the basis of the research conclusions regarding possible approaches to reducing the incidence of doctoral student non-completion. In addition, suggestions for further research into specific aspects of the dropout and dropping out phenomenon are developed.

Dropout research has historically been focussed on various 'risk factors' attributed to students and tertiary institutions. These factors focus on the effects of student income, race or ethnicity, academic achievement, and behaviours and attitudes on student progression and success (Brown & Roderiguez, 2009). The research project sought to contribute to the understanding of student *attrition* expressed via dropout and dropping out. This is undertaken by drawing on an application of Tinto's (1975) theories on student dropout and applied to *disposition* as an influence on attrition. The focus of the research is doctoral level student dispositions, habitus and the cultural and social capital of a group of participants and that of the author/researcher in professional and academic doctoral research programs.

A methodology involving the recollections of the research participants to provide ethnographic (recollections by others) and autoethnographic (self-recollections) data was selected to collect personal experience of doctoral program dropout. An interpretative analytical method framed (Chang, 2008) the concept of dispositions, habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977b) to 'make sense' of the collected data. With *dispositions* understood as inherited and oriented around personal and collective beliefs as borne-out in the cultural capital of the student, this research supposes that student dropout can be ameliorated by influencing students' beliefs and understandings - their *disposition* - towards further study. This supposition is examined with an exploration of the durability of dispositions with respect to student dropout. The exploration analyses the influence of such factors as the student supervisor relationship, student inadequacy, student life changes and a lack of student cultural capital relative to doctoral research study.

Within the framework of the sociological model of Bourdieu (1984a, p. 101) dropout decisions are not habitual but developed over time. Dispositions are durable with the influence on the habitus arising from the person's capital which may result in a deterministic decision to withdraw from doctoral study contrary to one's disposition. A student's experiences of doctoral supervision, especially inadequate supervision does have an adverse effect on the student's cultural capital, which results in dropout. The endurance of the

[1] The term Bourdieusian is used in this thesis based on a consensus of opinion as suggested by Professor Derek Robbins (Bourdieu Study Group, 2012) of the University of East London.

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intrinsic disposition to learn of the student is a factor in the student's recommencement of their doctoral program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Outline

An autoethnography of my experiences and dispositional development towards higher education and postgraduate education in education are articulated to provide the association between the research questions, and my rationale and emotive beliefs and understandings. As background information to this thesis, this Chapter investigates the development of professional and academic doctorates and their global history and positioning within the Australian Qualifications Framework. I discuss my personal and professional provocations and rationale for undertaking this research project leading to the presentation of the research questions and the significance of the research personally and to the wider community. The scope gives an outline of the thesis.

1.2 Life in Reflection

My Confirmation of Candidature letter arrived in the post several days after receiving an emailed confirmation. This represented a milestone in my doctoral journey from vocational to higher education and resulting in this acceptance into a Doctor of Education degree. As I reflect on the journey thus far, I am reminded of the many people who have had an influence on my educational travels and the various tertiary institutions and personal moments of both elation and frustration that have been encountered along the way.

I was not expected to undertake a university education being one of five children from a blue-collar demographic household. The expectation was that I would follow my father into the metal trades by gaining an apprenticeship. Any suggestion I made regarding higher education was received with a quiet calm and an explanation of the economic commitment of such an undertaking. I learned later that blue-collar workers were protective of their artisan skills and that there existed a somewhat fierce opposition between vocational and professional socio-cultural groups. The loyalty of blue collar people was demonstrated by a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) teacher colleague who reflected on an exchange with a metal trade teacher from the same campus whilst attending a student graduation ceremony. The Institute Director was providing an annual report of the Institute's achievements when my colleague commented to the metal trade teacher that the Director used to be a boilermaker by trade. The somewhat gruff reply to this comment was "well he couldn't have been any good then". Conversely when I remarked to a university lecturer that academic and or trade qualifications were not permitted to be shown on TAFE business cards the wry, irony-laden reply was "that's because they don't have any" (Hickey, personal communication, June 10, 2013). To me, both comments were seemingly made without malice but which represented a possessive pride in the respective cultures of the two groups.Both groups have developed their own cultures which can be a barrier to seeking a professional or higher education by people from vocational or, (in this case) "blue-collar" cultural backgrounds (Thompson, 2013). I reflected on this situation after reading an autoethnography by Mary Kosut (2006) whose reflections on class, culture and the academy I personally resonate with.

I had to confront the reality that I knew their culture, yet they did not know the culture I was entering. It became clear to me that the closer I got to the title of [Ed.D], the more distance was being wedged between myself and my blue-collar

familial roots. I began to feel detached from my family because I found it harder to pass in their world (Kosut, 2006, p. 246).

My entry into higher education was through a vocational education and training qualification from an Institute of Technical and Further Education pathway which does not prepare one fully for the rigors of academia; particularly the challenges faced by academic writing protocols. As I later learned from reading the philosophies of Pierre Bourdieu, linguistic capital or the accumulation of linguistic skills both written and orally expressive were considered to be class reproduction processes. As there was no one within my immediate family who had attained a university education, my linguistic skills were definitely 'blue-collar' and sustained within the vocational education I had achieved to date.

Figure 1.1 PNG Working Resident Visa

What or who, would motivate me at the age of forty to begin the pursuit of higher education qualifications? The Australian stock market crash of 1987 was the impetus to re-educate and the emotional support of a grandparent, who although having attained a Year 8 level of formal education provided the encouragement needed to aspire to a university education. Having worked in a technical support role for many years within the geosciences industry I was constantly interacting with university graduates from undergraduate to postgraduate levels of higher education. Higher education had been familiar to me; I just hadn't embarked on undertaking study at this point.

After some years in this role I was becoming uninterested with the requirement to record the results of geo-research investigations and desired to be able to undertake research myself. The lustre had gone from my vocationally based role and was replaced with the desire and a hunger to solve problems cognitively. However, 'life' got in the way of achieving my goals of higher education in the form of administrative and managerial roles within Australia and the islands of the south-west Pacific. Ironically, I was working in Papua New Guinea and communicating by radio telephone and facsimile when I completed my undergraduate degree.

What I did gain from this overseas work, and did not understand until much later, was an appreciation of the differences (but with marked similarities) of other cultures. Working overseas opened my eyes and my mind to the underlying frustrations of all peoples within these countries to provide for their families, and the solutions to these problems. I was saddened to leave Papua New Guinea for what I thought at the time would be my 'go pinis' or permanent and final departure from this country; I returned some years later for an additional 3 years. I had come to perceive Papua New Guinea as my home, despite having two adult children in Australia. I had enjoyed working with, and living amongst the people and the cultures and held the expatriate lifestyle with affection and felt that I was returning to Australia to an uncertain employment future.

Upon my return to Australia, my fears concerning employment were confirmed; I was seen as a project manager whose skills and knowledge only applied to the mineral exploration sector within the islands of the south-west Pacific region. So it was sometime after the stock market crash in 1987 that I enrolled into an

Associate Diploma course at a Queensland Institute of Technical and Further Education to gain admission to university. I am sometimes surprised by the benefits we gain from various lifetime activities and undertaking an Associate Diploma was no exception with the opportunity to gain research experience. The marketing class lecturer at the Institute owned and operated a marketing research company which undertook smaller and predominantly retail based marketing research projects. I was invited to join this group as a paid researcher. Once again, I was observing the differences between groups of people differentiated by socio-economics, perceptions and dispositions. The contemporary quotation that 'as one door closes another opens' was applicable in this instance.

The completion of the Associate Diploma achieved the planned outcome – admission to an undergraduate business degree at a regional Queensland university. Higher education can be a scary place to some students from vocational backgrounds, as according to Kosut (2006) "…children who are socialized by highly educated parents are more likely to be exposed to a variety of academic concepts and disciplines before entering college" (p. 252). Such exposure is often informal and gained during family conversations and access to books within a home library collection. However, unlike Kosut's upbringing, I and my siblings were encouraged to read books borrowed from the local Council's library, but like Kosut our home bookcase "contained an assortment of knickknacks, a set of encyclopaedias, a few self-help books, and a modest collection" (p. 252) of Readers Digest condensed books.

Figure 1-2 CQ University. With permission of CQ University (10/06/2014)

A few years after completing my undergraduate degree, I was employed by a regional Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) as a business teacher teaching and assessing students who were undertaking business and finance focused certificates and diplomas. Within two months of taking up this role my marital relationship came to an inevitable conclusion as I had effectively been living a solitary life for some years. An aspect of this was my emotions towards the ending of my marriage; there were none. I felt neither disappointment, sadness, relief, elation or any other form of emotion. On reflection my reaction to this life event was surprising even to me; essentially I did not care. Such relationship failures can cause longer term effects as they embody the emotions of grief, denial and personal loss or failure. Such emotional experiences have had an effect on my interactions with other people such as trust, respect and sociability at a personal level that is my disposition towards others

While employed as a Technical and Further Education teacher I completed a Graduate Certificate and a Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and Training and culminating in a Master of Education degree in Adult Education. After ten years of Technical and Further Education teaching I resigned to concentrate on establishing my consultancy and to continue my academic interests; namely a Doctor of

Education degree. I was, once again, devoid of any emotion at the separation of this relationship; on this occasion an organisational professional relationship. My attitude was such that I had disengaged from the organisation at the departmental and organisational levels of that Institute Technical and Further Education. Such separations according to Conklin, Dahling, and Garcia (2013) may be due to negative outcome expectations expressed as a lack of affective and continuance commitment. In other words, I was no longer able to find my place within the organisational culture.

Figure 1-3 University of New England. With permission of the University of New England (10/06/2014)

The outcomes of these expectations manifested as an increasing personal reticence and a withdrawal from the teaching team and Institute, and campus focused organisational meetings. My disengagement from the organisational aspects at that Institute were creating considerable dissonance as I believed in the philosophy of vocational education and training and the student's right to participate in formal and nationally recognised training. This dissonance was the catalyst for my resignation. I do maintain communication with some of my former Technical and Further Education co-workers especially those relationships I value. It was also during the latter part of this period that I met the person with whom I now share my life.

Some years after graduating with a Master's degree, my partner and I were discussing over a glass of wine on a balmy afternoon if we had or would complete all that we wanted to achieve in our lives; our 'bucket lists'. One of the unfinished achievements was my desire to have completed a doctoral degree, which at that stage appeared to be unlikely due more to having foregone a social life for the previous two years to complete the Master's than to any other reason. With the support of my partner and some internet research, a Doctor of Education degree program was located at a regional Queensland university that could be completed in an external online enrolment mode. That the degree would be funded by the Australian Government under the Research Training Scheme was the defining factor. After submitting an application for admission I was elated to be accepted and I was enrolled and the doctoral phase of my higher education journey commenced.

Figure 1-4 University of Southern Queensland. With permission of Crest Realty, Toowoomba (06/06/2014)

I reflect on this process with respect and high regard for the people at the university who provided and continue to provide administrative assistance and academic supervision. However, if I was going to be critical of the doctoral supervision process it was that during my enrolment I have had five supervisors both principal and associate. Now this is partly my own doing for withdrawing from the doctoral program and then requesting to be reinstated and partly institutional by supervisors transferring to other duties or universities. The overall effect is minor as continuity was maintained.

Higher education speaks in strange tongues with its preoccupation for academic jargon which to the unprepared does sound like a foreign language. A vocational education does not prepare one for this differing use of words or the differing academic cultures (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). There are issues for the student working in a vocational education and training institute with its unashamedly vocational culture to progress into higher education. As Kosut (2006) reflected,

> *the working-class speech with which I am familiar is peppered with likes, you knows, ums, am I rights, and double negatives. Its delivery has a tendency to be casual or emphatic, sometimes with expressive facial or arm movements. I had to alter not only what I said but just as important, how I said it. Informality, emotion, and feelings are not rewarded in most academic settings (p. 251).*

The reading component necessary to achieve at a doctoral level is high and requires comprehension of what has been written. There is no space for shallow learning at this educational standard although it had served me well in some instances, namely being time poor and the requirement to submit assignments.

At this stage personal, professional and educational issues began crowding out education in my lived space culminating in my withdrawal from doctoral studies. My initial research proposal was not of a sufficiently high standard; a problem that was discussed during a meeting with my supervisor and subsequent meetings. I was unable or too stubborn to change the proposal to meet acceptable standards. This frustration in conjunction with personal factors which seemed to be engulfing my identity resulted in my withdrawal despite supervisory and professorial interventions undertaken by the university staff with consideration and respect for my circumstances which were prevailing at that time.

The act of withdrawing, although I had withdrawn from educational programs before, was unenjoyable and an affront to me at the actual time this occurred causing frustration, anger and resentment towards my own academic abilities. After withdrawing and with the benefit of hindsight and the rationalisation of my emotions, I saw this as an opportunity to regroup my cognitions and commenced solving the various issues that had prompted my decision to withdraw. When the proposal issues and my emotions were satisfactorily resolved, an approach to the university to recommence my doctoral journey was positively received.

With the prompting and support of my current doctoral supervisor, the research presentation received positive feedback from the research panel and others. This positive response from the panel was followed by an invitation to join with a group of academics in submitting an internal research proposal that paralleled my own research[2]*. My 'mojo' and anticipation at the actual research phase of the journey has been restored.*

All of these experiences bring me to whom and where I am today. A doctoral candidate who due to circumstances, some unforeseen of my making and some not, attempting to understand, self-identify, like and respect myself within a transitional personal cultural environment. This provides me with the self-confidence to explore

[2] As it occurred, due to internal economic constraints this research was however not commenced.

how these experiences have affected my dispositions to undertake the doctoral journey, dropout and the resilience to recommence the journey.

1.3 The Context of Higher Degree Studies

1.3.1 Emergence of Professional Doctorates

Professional doctorates emerged in Paris and Bologna during the twelfth century to provide a qualification that had a distinct professional orientation. This contrasts with the modern form of a postgraduate research doctorate or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) developed in Germany in the early 1800's which was seen to be more academically focused (Bebbington, 2012; Kot & Hendel, 2012; Neumann, 2005). The Doctor of Philosophy became the doctorate of choice for those wanting a qualification to teach and research in the university environment and is the only doctoral degree awarded in "Japan, China, the Netherlands, Mexico, Denmark, Germany, India and South Africa" (Halse & Mowbray, 2011, p. 517). A number of other countries have developed and offer a range of different doctorates including a Doctor of Philosophy by publication, taught coursework doctorates, and professional doctorates which focus on workplace practices. The United States of America offers 24 differing doctoral degrees and the United Kingdom offers in excess of 30 types of doctoral qualifications. While the Doctor of Philosophy appears to be the universally accepted doctorate and perceived as a generalist doctoral qualification, more industry and professionally focused doctorates have been developed. These include the Doctor of Education (EdD) which is but one of a number of specialised doctorates[3] sought by industry and professionals as a specialist qualification (Kot & Hendel, 2012; Neumann, 2005).

In Australia, the professional doctorate emerged during the 1980s gaining recognition as a research doctoral qualification with the adoption of a single national classification system; the Unified National System (UNS) in 1990. The Unified National System sought to combine the binary tertiary education system that existed in Australia until that date. This effectively combined the vocational education Technical and Further Education system with the higher education system which resulted in the formation of dual sector institutes offering both vocational education and training (VET) qualifications and higher education undergraduate and postgraduate degrees (Moses, 2004).

One of the outcomes of this unification was the Australian Qualifications Framework in which both vocational education and training and higher education qualifications were aligned into one hierarchy. This alignment included professional and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. This change to the manner in which postgraduate degrees were categorized provided an opportunity to develop doctoral level research degrees in non-traditional disciplines and professional fields. These degrees offered a specialised doctoral qualification by research (Neumann, 2005) which according to Kemp (2004) required that the university staff who teach and administer such degrees were similarly specialists in their particular field.

This focus on the professions is highlighted by the definition of a professional doctorate provided by the Council of Australian Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (2007):

[3] Such as psychology (PsyD), engineering (EngD), business administration (DBA)

> The term ‘professional doctorate’ is taken to mean a program of research and advanced study which enables the candidate to make a significant contribution to knowledge and practice in their professional context. In doing so, the candidate may also contribute more generally to scholarship within a discipline or field of study (p. 1).

With a focus on their professional context, the students who enrol into this qualification are typically expected to arrive later (as mature aged students) than those who pursue an academic pathway to undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy degree. Therefore it is not unexpected that professional doctorate enrolments may include non-traditional students who are entering the university tertiary education system some years after completing a traditional pathway to admission; a Year 12 education. The effect of these non-traditional enrolments on student demographics is shown in the median age of doctoral students which has increased from students in their twenties to students who are in their thirties (Pearson, Cumming, Evans, MacCauley, & Ryland, 2014). This changing demographic is also observed in the increased proportion of women undertaking doctoral education which had grown to 50% in 2005, up from approximately 41% in 1996. This change in the doctoral student demographics is possibly a reflection of changing employment patterns with traditional and non-traditional students returning to complete a doctoral degree for personal or occupational reasons and an increase in international doctoral students. However, the “patterns of sex, age and enrolment type are largely unchanged, as is the distribution of enrolments across types of institution” (Pearson et al., 2014, p. 528).

During recent years there has been a focus within a number of countries including Australia, Canada, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden and the United States of America to improve the cultural and social capital of that country through the application of government funded research within universities. This public funding of research according to Halse and Mowbray (2011), is focused on developing human capital by education. This has caused concerns within government and industry involving the issues of high attrition rates [dropout], increased time to completion of the doctorate, the contribution of the doctorate to the workplace, changing knowledge economies and to social, cultural and economic development. There has been a national discourse relating to a perceived change in doctoral education which reflect changes in the knowledge economy, concerns for lifelong learning and addition to human capital, as according to Pearson et al. (2014) who suggest that:

> In this global and competitive research and research training environment, policy attention has come to focus on the management of doctoral education, its efficiency, its quality assurance and the employability of graduates (a return on government investment for economic growth), leading to increasing regulation and restructuring by governments and institutions… (p. 529)

This national discourse seeks clarification of the sole purpose and benefits of doctoral education and the rationale and growth of professional doctorates. This suggests that there is an increasing demand for higher levels of specialised knowledge and technical skills for modern post-industrial societies, such as Australia. Pearson et al. (2014), have suggested that this discourse is confused and

that issues of credentialism and corporatisation represent the dominant features in this change to professional doctoral education.

In their conclusions Pearson et al. (2014) suggest that there is a need to critique the relationship assumptions between enrolled status and attendance, cost, efficiency and productivity of doctoral students. In relation to doctoral studies they suggest;

> [that] doctoral research, as with any research, is a creative process that will not flourish within rigid regulation and constraints of time and place. Conditions for research and study need to be as flexible and responsive to individual student needs and circumstances as possible, and outcomes need to be understood and appreciated as unfolding over the life of the graduate and not just 'on completion' (p. 538).

1.5.2 Professional Doctorates in Australia

Professional doctorates in Australia are generally a combination of coursework and research which contrast to the wholly research nature of the Doctor of Philosophy; although some Doctor of Philosophy programs offered in Australia do contain a coursework component (Kot & Hendel, 2012; Neumann, 2005). However Neumann (2005) suggests that, while the traditional Doctor of Philosophy degree structure was perceived to be flexible and accommodate most disciplines, it was thought to be insufficient for such professional sectors as management or education.

A doctorate, whether professional or Doctor of Philosophy, can require the completion of coursework; usually one-third coursework for a professional doctorate (Farthing, 2008). This coursework is focused on how to undertake, develop and structure a thesis, and research methodologies and paradigms, usually culminating in the production of a research proposal. A research component, leading to the completion of a thesis accounts for the remaining two-thirds (Farthing, 2008) and maintains similar rigour to the Doctor of Philosophy. The National Board of Employment (1989) suggested that professional doctorates should be viewed as an equal alternative to the Doctor of Philosophy as there was an expected equivalence of standard and expectation of the research.

Other evidential requirements for a professional doctorate may include artefacts developed and produced by the student such as portfolios of industry-based peer-reviewed published works or publications such as books written in the previous five years or creative artworks (Neumann, 2005). However, as Neumann (2005) suggests, the research thesis is the major or dominant mode of professional doctorate examination with the selection of research topic being similar as that for the Doctor of Philosophy.

However, as Kot and Hendel (2012) and Neumann (2005) suggest there is little difference in the praxis of the Doctor of Philosophy and the professional doctorate. They do suggest that a perception exists concerning the type of research with the research problem for the Doctor of Philosophy being conceptual while the professional doctorate is applied industry or discipline based research. Farthing (2008) suggests that while "both are offered and conferred by universities" (p. 8) the difference between the two doctorates is that "traditionally the Doctor of Philosophy has been esteemed in academic circles, while the newer PD [professional doctorate] has a practical, work-based application recognised at industry level" (p. 8). This is

supported by Illing (2003) who suggests that the majority of professional doctorate students come from industry. Neumann (2005) however, suggests that the main difference between the two doctorates is the mode of entry into the degrees where "a professional qualification and/or professional experience are essential criteria" (p. 178) for entry into a professional doctorate. This reflects the pragmatic professionally based emphasis on the professional doctorate in contrast to the "academic" research of the Doctor of Philosophy.

The social difference between the doctorates is not supported by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) who regard each doctorate as equal in academic standing (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013). The Australian Qualifications Framework offers the following summary of the two styles of doctorates:

> Research is the defining characteristic of all Doctoral Degree qualifications. The research Doctoral Degree (typically referred to as a Doctor of Philosophy) makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge; the professional Doctoral Degree (typically titled Doctor of [field of study]) makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the context of professional practice. The emphasis in the learning outcomes and research may differ between the different forms of Doctoral Degree qualifications but all graduates will demonstrate knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills at AQF level 10 (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013, p. 63).

Further implications of these differences are suggested by Farthing (2008) in that the Doctor of Philosophy is focused towards an academic career while the professional doctorate is focused towards practitioners, although many professional doctorate holders do teach in universities and undertake research. The prime motivation for undertaking a professional doctorate, according to Neumann (2005) is the prospect to undertake research involving a specific problem possibly observed in the workplace.

In reality, there appears to be little difference between the professional doctorate and the Doctor of Philosophy. The distinctions between pure and applied, theory and practice are not as clear as academic discussion would suggest, and there is a blurring of the distinction where the two doctorates overlap (Neumann, 2005). This is supported by Neumann (2005) who suggests that professional doctorate students indicate that their topic of research may have been completed within the framework of either doctoral qualification. Perhaps final comments on the status of professional doctorates are provided by the students, some of whom have rated the degree lower than a Doctor of Philosophy (especially in international standings) (Neumann, 2005). This may suggest that some doctoral students choose a Doctor of Philosophy degree over a professional degree as an issue of academic prestige.

Perhaps a better understanding of the status and application of professional doctorates within Australia may be gained from the comments of one of the participants to this research. Clare, a Doctor of Philosophy candidate and research participant, articulates her understanding of a Doctor of Philosophy and a professional doctorate as follows;

> *I still thoroughly, still believe that the one main purpose of the—really the sole purpose of getting your PhD is to get a job in academia. But that's what it's*

for, um—unless you're doing [a] psychology degree perhaps whereas it's a requirement of professions. I mean more and more people are walking around outside of academia saying I'm a Doctor and using that title but generally speaking or not even generally speaking—the truth is you can't work in a university unless you have that PhD at almost any level now. There's like biomedical research and um chemical research [pause] um the thing about I guess that um depending on the promotion track in universities we, um academics is the persistent peer review so to be published you need to be peer reviewed to get promoted from a 'C' to a 'D' or a 'D' to an 'E' like the professorial levels you have to be you know admitted to the professoriate, but by examination of your peers it might not even be in this country there's not many fields of employment where your promotion depends on what you like—so yes they're researchers and they've got a doctoral degree to say that they can um that they know how to manage a research project and they can research. And whether, you need a doctorate degree to do that I don't know if that means that, I don't know that I can necessarily explain it…

Clare believes that the Doctor of Philosophy is the "higher" doctoral qualification and should be reserved for academics and not those working in industry; her distinction between the two is significant.

1.4 Rationale of this Project

1.4.1 Personal Research Provocation

My association with student dropout began as a teacher within the vocational education and training sector (VET) in a regional centre of Queensland. According to the Government Statistician (2013) this region has a higher than average population of Lower Socio-Economic Status persons. From personal observation, many of the students I encountered were enrolled with the assistance of Centrelink funding (Department of Human Services, 2013) at a reduced or Concessional rate. While some students dropped out of study to accept paid employment, others who did not return to class would not communicate a reason for their cessation of attendance. Others would cite teacher-student differences and tensions as the reason for their disengagement with vocational education and training or specific units of competence. They would, where possible, avoid enrolling into units taught by particular teachers. These dropout students were the focus of staffroom meetings in an attempt to isolate the possible causes of the dropout. My interest in the non-tangible reasons for dropout was developing, which lead to my readings of Tinto's (1993) theories on dropout and persistence.

I also have personal experience of educational dropout having withdrawn from university study four times only to enrol into different qualifications on three occasions, sometimes at different universities. The fourth was to re-enrol into a previously commenced professional doctorate.

The experience with the vocational education and training student dropouts invoked a curiosity to research student dropout, initially within the vocational education and training system and later within postgraduate education. Having been directed towards the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu by a previous doctoral supervisor and having dropped out of doctoral study for a number of research process reasons, the notion to re-enrol and research and analyse student dropout with a new focus was formed. The theories by Bourdieu (1990b) on the dropout decision making

processes people apply based on their dispositions, coincide with the theories of Tinto (1993) relating to the underlying causes of student dropout. Both had hypothesised that prior experiences and or knowledge were part of the basic reason for student dropout.

Where other researchers (Davey, 2009; Gopaul, 2011; Longden, 2004; Reay, David, & Ball, 2005) had focused on Bourdieu's concept of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977b) as a basis for dropout study, I was more interested in the student's beliefs and understandings; that is, their disposition towards education and whether this disposition was dynamic or static and the influences on this disposition. Following discussions with two university researchers, changes to the original research included a shift to autoethnography as a data collection method (Chang, 2008), and in the research setting from vocational education and training to postgraduate student dropout.

Having worked within the mining exploration industry in Australia and Papua New Guinea and marketing research prior to vocational education and training teaching at an Institute of Technical and Further Education, my interest in research using qualitative methodologies was awakened. Marketing research involved interviewing people, seeking their dispositions and possible purchasing tendencies towards various products and services for marketing analysis. Ethnographic research and analysis of landowner concerns within Papua New Guinea refined this interest in sociological research and how people interact with their environments, learn to adapt to changing environments and the effect of these changes on their lives. The short term or immediate effects were readily observable but the longer term effects were more difficult to analyse due to the short durations that these populations and groups were encountered. This experience was invaluable for informing my methodology and focusing my ethnographic eye.

This research project is in part about the exploration of my own identity as a dropout student and researcher and partly about the vicarious information these experiences might provide to other postgraduate students.

1.4.1.1 My Story 1.1

> *My passion for learning is possibly greater than that for teaching. I had found at times that teaching could be less than motivating due I suspect to the sameness of the information from one semester to the next. However, I have a voracious requirement to learn about new concepts either theoretical or practical. This need is intrinsic and does not require external motivation. Thus my selection of a Doctor of Education was not by accident or chance but a very conscious choice based on my reflections of what interested me more than all else. The answer was I love to learn and I love to research how people learn, particularly adults. This is partially reflected in my completion of a Master of Education degree with a focus on adult education within the dual streams of vocational training and higher education. My curiosity lies in why we learn, what we learn and how we learn as adults. What are the effects of our cultural or class background and our interactions with others on our learning and the content of our learning?*
>
> *Having worked with highly educated people for most of my adult life, and based on the notion that I have attained a stage in life where I can activate the self-actualisation level of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, I have attempted to indulge this passion. While a Doctor of Philosophy is considered to be the pinnacle*

of postgraduate education, I chose a Doctor of Education degree for specific reasons. I did not aspire to become a university lecturer but rather my interest was in the research aspect of adult education. By undertaking a research role in education I would be able to indulge my passion for learning and possibly contribute to the learning of other adults. Thus my knowledge of adult education and learning would be focused and intensified and would provide the base for additional personal learning. I also enjoy the academic writing process with its adherence to referencing and peer review. This is an aspect of my doctorate on which I hope to expand in the coming years.

Although the rationale for this research may be recognisable to other doctoral students, it is also about my personal journey of discovery. It is about my persistence and my ability to undertake and complete research that may contribute to the body of knowledge of student dropout or withdrawal. There have been disappointments at the selection of incorrect academic pathways that did not meet my expectations, resulting in withdrawal in the past. This research project is as much about assisting me to understand my own rationale for undertaking this journey of learning as a rediscovery of 'who I am' both professionally and individually.

For some years I have believed that I have 'not belonged' to any school of thought or social space. That is, I had lost my identity due in part to the collapse of the stock market in 1987 and the ensuing underemployment or unemployment that followed that event. This research thesis is possibly my attempt at refocusing my identity within a field of knowledge and praxis that provides me with personal contentment, motivation and an intrinsic belief in' who I am'.

1.4.2 Collective Provocations

With doctoral candidature dropout or delayed completion suggested by Cantwell, Scevak, Bourke, and Holbrook (2012) as ranging from 20% to 40% in Australian universities, there would seem to be a need to understand the underlying factors associated with doctoral dropout. The issue of student dropout or non-completion is problematic due to possible loss of funding for universities and a loss of income for students (Zeegers & Barron, 2011). The potential loss to the community of doctoral qualified people may be viewed as a loss of social capital (Devlin, 2010) in addition to the emotional stress and disruption that leaving a program incurs on the dropout student (McCormack, 2005).

A search of the literature suggests that *there is a lack of research into the influences of student dispositions on dropout* (Longden, 2004; McCormack, 2005) prior to completion of the module or qualification into which the student is enrolled. However, research into student dropout at all degree levels has been largely influenced by Tinto's interactionist theory (Braxton & Lien, 2000; Longden, 2004; Tinto, 1993) involving a student's academic and social integration into the educational institution. Tinto (1993), also suggests that student dispositions formed from their associations with doctoral reference groups such as family, faculty and external professional or social groups, may have an influence on student dropout. This connection between student educational dispositions, and student persistence or dropout is suggested by Tinto to relate to the student's intentions and commitments towards doctoral study; that is their educational and occupational dispositions to higher education research. Thus, causes of program dropout among research students are suggested as including various situational, dispositional and institutional factors (Cantwell et al., 2012; McCormack, 2005).

Therefore, to expand the understanding of the phenomenon of doctoral dropout, the current research explores the dispositional aspects of research students' dropout and dropping out. This exploration includes student expectations and self-esteem, level of family support, prior educational participation and doctoral supervisor support are explored as possible indicators (McCormack, 2005; Wonacott, 2002). The literature to date is dominated by research that attempts to understand dropout using statistical analysis of 'risk factors'. Various findings identify these factors as including student income, race and ethnicity, academic achievement, and behaviours and attitudes as linked to success (or concomitantly, dropout) (Brown & Roderiguez, 2009). The majority of these studies have been undertaken within or parallel to Tinto's (1975) theoretical framework relating to student integration into the academic and social aspects of higher education.

This research involves the cultural perspectives of dropout and **therefore is focused on exploring and understanding the dispositional influences on dropout or non-completion and dropping out or delayed completion from *doctoral research* programs.** The understanding gained from this study could apply to other levels of student dropout and reflects an interest in student's beliefs and understandings about postgraduate research and their knowledge and experience of the expectations for completing such programs. By exploring the influences on student dropout disposition qualitatively, an in-depth study of the affective aspects of student dropout could assist in reducing the incidence of dropout (Berger, 2000; Longden, 2004; McCormack, 2005). In her research on the non-completion of research degrees, McCormack (2005) suggests that non-completion is not necessarily 'failure'. Some of the non-completers (dropouts) do return to complete their research degrees either in the same or different faculties and or other institutions.

Analysing the doctoral completions of the participants to the research undertaken by McCormack (2005) indicates that 41% of the participants completed their higher research degree within the required time frame. A further 24% of these participants either had or will complete with an extended completion date (which is delayed completion). The balance of 35% of participants had withdrawn voluntarily, which is within the dropout range cited by Cantwell et al. (2012) for Australian universities. Of those students who withdrew, 17% returned to complete alternative postgraduate studies (McCormack, 2005).

McCormack (2005) suggests that in relation to doctoral research dropout that "[few] researchers have journeyed with non-completing students across their entire period of enrolment to draw from that experience the factors that contributed to the student's non-completion" (p. 234). She also indicates that there may be three possible causes for such student dropout including "institutional factors, supervisory arrangements and student personal factors" (p. 234) which are considered to be incorporated into the student's doctoral experience. Part of this research study focuses on the student personal factors and the supervisory arrangements in an exploration of doctoral student dropout. By this, reference is made to "isolation (social and intellectual), lack of resources, absence of, or poor supervision and personal crises" (pp. 244-245) as aspects of student personal factors.

1.5 Research Questions

This research explores how a student's choices to persist or dropout are influenced by their dispositions to doctoral study including the effect of the student

and supervisor relationship on these dispositions and a student's extrinsic dispositions to undertake learning. Sociological accounts of the doctoral candidature suggest that dispositions for doctoral research are inherited from a doctoral reference group or developed from learned knowledge, experiences and beliefs relative to doctoral research education (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007; Davey, 2009). That is, if a student is involved with a doctoral reference group such as industry and university researchers who have completed or are undertaking doctoral studies at either a faculty or social level, the nuances of doctoral research may be assimilated from these groups (Kiley, 2009). Dispositions and motives developed from students' predispositions to learning also develop within a parental and family supportive environment during childhood (Grusec, 2011; Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2012). As such, this project is an exploration of how a disposition framed by the student's cultural and social capital influences the persistence to complete and thus gain success in doctoral study.

Thus, this research study applies Pierre Bourdieu's sociological model of decision making (Bourdieu, 1984a) to explore the influence on student dispositions to dropout. The component qualitative variables of this model include Bourdieu's concepts of *dispositions, habitus, capitals,* and *field* (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990b). A pseudo-mathematical model to show the relationship between each variable (with the exception of dispositions which are incorporated within habitus) is articulated by Bourdieu (1984a, p. 101):

"([habitus] [capital]) + field = practice"

The influence on students' dispositions to learning and dispositions to learn a vocation (as "occupational" dispositions), and the possible reason to dropout caused by substandard supervision within the student and supervisor relationship is also considered. Such influences are considered to have an effect on perceptions of success by the student. Such supervisory practices as 'benign neglect' of the student are considered by Wisker and Robinson (2013) to cause feelings of abandonment within the student which may result in perceptions of inadequacy or inability to complete the doctoral program. Such feelings may induce the student to withdraw from the program by countering a 'natural' disposition to learning (or motive to learn) which may influence the student's habitus' and tendency to 'act'. Unsatisfactory emotional experiences may also induce negative deterministic reactions if that experience is retained as an aspect the student's cultural capital by negating any favourable tendencies of the habitus towards learning (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007; Gopaul, 2011).

The conclusion by Davey (2009) from her pre-enrolment tertiary transition research that social group effects alone are inadequate for defining individuals' dispositions or 'tendencies to act' (Bourdieu, 1977b; Villegas, 2007) to post-enrolment dropout are also considered within the scope of this research. In her conclusions, Davey (2009) proposes that student dispositions and motives are not static but dynamic and ever changing subject to new experiences. This is suggestive that social class and class socio-cultural reproduction alone is but one of a number of influences that impact on the development of student dispositions. Capital may reverse the tendency of the disposition towards a particular outcome owing to the power of the particular capital to negate the natural tendency of the disposition or motivation.

Dispositions are considered, in this research, to contain a student's beliefs and understandings of their world and which can determine their preference of possible actions to particular motivations (Bourdieu, 1977b; Villegas, 2007). Such beliefs and understandings are inherited or adopted from familial and social groups that comprise the student's social spaces. These dispositions are thought to be stable by Bourdieu (1977b) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) with any variation in resultant actions due to the moderating effects of the student's cultural capital or knowledge and experiences of the specific situations. That is, a disposition which favours professional doctoral study may not prevent student dropout if such dropout is considered to be the better outcome in a situation where continuing would not be successful. As such, dispositions to drop out of doctoral study are considered to result from non-habitual cognitive actions.

With this approach framing the study, the following questions were posed to illuminate the research problem:

1. What are the influences that frame the dispositions of the doctoral student to dropout from a professional doctoral research program?
2. How is the process of 'dropping-out' experienced by the doctoral student?

1.6 Research Significance

This research is focused on elucidating the dispositional influences and the student and supervisor relationship and their effects on dropout from professional doctoral research programs. This understanding may be *applicable to other levels of student dropout* and reflecting on the enrolling student's dispositions about learning. By applying autoethnographic approaches to this research, in conjunction with ethnographic research of the experiences of others, this thesis seeks to provide an *understanding of postgraduate research student dropout* at the dispositional level.

In addition to the outcomes above is the personal perspective towards the successful completion of a doctoral qualification. There are *personal feelings of achievement, self-confidence, self-value and emancipation* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) that manifest with the completion of a doctorate in applied research. This research study may assist other students to *complete their studies* which would *increase societal levels of educational attainment* (and possibly production capacity) and thus the value of human resources in communities and broader social spaces in general (Karmel, 2014).

In terms of economic benefits to the community Karmel (2014) highlights that postgraduate degree holders have a higher potential earnings capacity compared to undergraduate and vocational education qualification holders. Higher levels of education within a community also increase the productivity of the community. This is evidenced by Karmel who has determined quantitatively that increasing educational levels contribute "to improved productivity" and impacts on the "hours worked by the workforce" (Karmel, 2014, p. 7).

From an institutional perspective McCormack (2005, p. 234) suggests that "today's performance-driven model of higher degree research has constructed student withdrawal, non-completion and slow-completion as *failure*, a problem with 'important economic and professional consequences' for the institution". Additionally, the personal effects on the withdrawing students may include feelings

of inadequacy which may be continued into post university life as students internalise their feelings of failure.

However, many dropout students do return to complete their research based qualification either at the same or a different institution and may be in the same or a different genre of research (McCormack, 2005). While there is a potential net loss to society of knowledge and skills, the doctoral research experience may not actually be the cause of the dropout and hence the gain in the cultural and social capital of the student and society is delayed rather than lost or abandoned.

To understand the qualitative reasoning that precipitates student dropout this research will assist in alleviating that potential loss to the institution, society and the student.

1.7 Scope of the Project

The literature review, *Chapter 2: Literature Review*, is framed by the research questions and the concept of the sociological model of decision-making of Bourdieu (1984a, p. 101). In line with Bourdieu's ideas, habitus includes the dual structures of cognition and motivation, and dispositions which influence the dropout decision through the structures of the habitus. The effects of the student and supervisor relationship, student experiences, characteristics, stratification and withdrawal are reviewed in the literature for their effects on the student's dispositions and accumulated capital and the influence of this capital on the student's ongoing participation within the doctoral research program.

The disposition variable is analogous with the social psychological usage of *intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, aspiration and expectation* (Grusec, 2011; Khalil, 2011; Norton, 2011), but for this thesis a patently 'sociological' lens will be applied to understand these from a sociological viewpoint. In this sense, these factors emerged within the interviews either implicitly or explicitly as motivational terms. The *field* for this research are professional doctoral programs, in particular the *Doctor of Education (EdD)*, but for context also included is relevant research from Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs.

The methodology for this research study, *Chapter 3: Methodology* details the incorporation of ethnographic and autoethnographic narrative approaches to uncover the participants lived experiences of doctoral study. Ethnographic data in the form of interview narrative situated within an exploration of the wider social context of the participants is included within the research findings to represent the participants' reflective thoughts and feelings towards doctoral study, their dispositions towards postgraduate learning, and the development of their disposition from familial and social group influences. Autoethnography and ethnography are complimentary data collection methods that allow for the integration of the two data sources. This integrated data in combination with the Applied Thematic Analysis method (Guest et al., 2011), can result in an in-depth exploration of the dropout phenomenon. A profile summary of the participants is provided as background to the participants.

The study's findings are given in *Chapter 4: Research Findings* which relates the collected and interpreted data to the theories of Pierre Bourdieu surrounding this research. The research findings are a summary of collected data and the analysis undertaken of that data (American Psychological Association, 2010). The influences of the social psychological notions of genetic predisposition, intrinsic motivation and

extrinsic motivation (aspirations) (Grusec, 2011; Khalil, 2011; Norton, 2011) are analysed as Bourdieusian notions as is the effect of the *supervisor student relationship* from the experiences of the student (Latona & Browne, 2001; McCormack, 2005; Norton, 2011).

Whereas the Literature Review sought to predominantly utilise the informational resources of published research papers sourced from scholarly journals, publications, and conference proceedings, the theory contained in the Findings principally sources the philosophies and literature authored by Pierre Bourdieu. This combines with narrative data from the transcribed interviews and autoethnographic reflections to assist in developing an understanding of how dispositions to drop out of doctoral research might be understood.

The research analysis is presented in *Chapter 5: Conclusions*. The research questions are analysed within the sociological decision-making framework of Bourdieu (1984a). The analysis is interpretativist and follows the qualitative variables outlined in Bourdieu's decision-making framework presented as influences and affectivity to student dropout. This will offer an insight into how dropout might be considered from a personal, affective perspective. This snapshot will also provide some views on the ways that doctoral programs might be enhanced and supervision practice refined to better support research students.

1.8 In Summary

This project explores the dispositional aspects of doctoral research dropout within a theoretical orientation framed by Pierre Bourdieu's (1975) sociological notions of dispositions, habitus, capital and field and the relationship and interaction of these notions within Bourdieu's (1984a) model of decision making. Prior research relating student dispositions and cultural capital to dropout appears to be sparse with three studies to date located in the education research literature; those of Berger (2000), Longden (2004) and Gopaul (2011). As such, the project intends to inform the literature of the experience of dropout and 'dropping-out' of doctoral study. Intertwined throughout the thesis are the reflective thoughts, feelings, provocations and dispositions of the researcher as autoethnographic narratives.

My provocation for undertaking this research project is emotive and considered. It was motivated by the seemingly irrational dropout of TAFE students and extended to my own and others' doctoral dropout experiences. To understand these dropout decisions a conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological decision-making model (Bourdieu, 1984a) was selected to explore this dropout phenomenon. The research questions were developed and constrained by the decision making factors of dispositions, habitus, capital and field. Data collection was commenced with the articulation and recording of my personal lived experiences of doctoral dropout; that is, my autoethnography which includes references to the research literature that resonate with my experiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Outline

Amongst the early resources collected for the thesis were the empirical and theoretical publications relevant to the notions of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology and decision-making model. To understand the usefulness of the model and to explore the emotive and pragmatic nuances of the project, an understanding of Pierre Bourdieu and his notions of the influences on the decision making of people is provided. The literature resources applicable to this research are grouped within the factors that influence decision making; these are dispositions, habitus, capital and field. These factors are described using the notions of Bourdieu (1977) and include the research of other scholars as collected data. The effect of the supervisor and student relationship as influences on the factors of decision-making are addressed.

2.2 Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu (1930 – 2002) the French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher proposed the concepts of '*habitus*' and '*field*' and their application in his explanation of cultural, social and symbolic capitals. His work embraced the phenomenon of class distinctions and the effects of these distinctions on our lives. He regarded class as the dominant force in the reproduction of social structures and beliefs through a process involving the inheritance of class habitus by the retention and development of familial and other socially based *dispositions* (Bourdieu, 1977a).

According to Bourdieu (1977b), dispositions are considered to be embodied tendencies to act on specific situations and within specific fields such that these dispositions appear to be automated reflexes that are activated without prior cognitive consideration. Cultural reproduction was considered by Bourdieu (1977a) to be the process by which class distinctions were maintained between generations and which were distinguished by cultural and social preferences and economic capital. These class preferences were also maintained by the Universities; institutions which Bourdieu (1984a) postulated were controlled culturally and socially by the "upper" classes (Bourdieu, 1984b, p. 140). He suggests that this was accomplished with the application to higher education of specific linguistic capital thus establishing a class inequity between the educated "upper classes" and the "middle" and "lower classes" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

He postulated that this inequity was reflected in the accumulated cultural capital of the middle and lower classes who maintained a lesser proportion of the university enrolments in the French universities. As social mobility in France increased and the middle and lower classes gained greater access numerically to the university educational system, class based representative proportions of students were maintained at similar levels to those prior the provision of wider educational access (Bourdieu, 1984a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). That is, improving university access did not result in an increase of lower and middle class students relative to total enrolments. A similar phenomenon occurred in Australia with the introduction of tuition free higher education (Pearson et al., 2014).

Of importance in understanding the concepts of Bourdieu are his notions of *reality*, and the dichotomy of interpreting reality; *subjectivity* and *objectivity* (Bourdieu, 1990a). To Bourdieu (1977b) reality includes our explicit or experiential practical knowledge and implicit or tacit knowledge which has been accepted from

explicit and actual experiences or accepted vicariously from the experiences of others or implicit knowledge. That is, we do not need to have experienced the actual phenomenon but only need to accept the accounts of that phenomenon as related by credible others.

This is important in understanding Bourdieu's notions on the formation of dispositions and capital commencing in early childhood by the acceptance of parents as authoritative influences on a child's belief system (Grusec, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is extended into adolescence and adulthood with the acceptance of a similar level of tacit and implicit experiences within formal education and socialisation experiences. These acceptances and experiences are the basis for the formation of dispositions. This includes the disposition to learning as an enjoyable experience and occupational dispositions or what to learn, which does influence the decision to drop out (attrition) or persist (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007).

2.3 Habitus: The Decision Maker

Central to the decision making theorised by Bourdieu (1984a) is the construct and performance of the habitus to ensure considered decisions and practices. Using the sociological perspective of Bourdieu (1990b), the analytical framework for this research study situates dispositions as part of the *habitus*; a concept comprised of "durable and transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53). According to Coulangeon and Lemel (2007)

> *habitus* can be understood as those aspects of culture that are anchored in the body or daily practices of individuals, groups, societies, and nations. It includes the totality of learned habits, bodily skills, and other non-discursive knowledge that could be said to ''go without saying'' for a specific group (p. 95) [emphasis in original].

That is, the habitus is the controlling feature of our decision making within the dual structures of cognition (memory) and motivation (disposition) (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990b). Habitus may be individualised, corporatized or representative of a social group's collective dispositions or tendencies to act.

According to Bourdieu (1990b) persons have one habitus which connects them to many fields or social spaces simultaneously to allow for their transposable dispositions to be applied to the many situational fields of involvement. The habitus is the terrain upon which dispositions are enacted and come to *mean*. Also suggested by Gopaul (2011) is that the habitus is responsible for moderating or controlling individual action by limiting such activities to those that will result in success or benefit, based on past experiences and available resources or capital. In other words, habitus provides the context upon which dispositions are mobilised, made sense of and ultimately enacted.

The development of an individual habitus is suggested as being possible by Bourdieu (1977b), Davey (2009), Fuchs (2003) and Reay et al. (2005) due to the varying ways that experiences and knowledge are assimilated within the habitus and cultural capitals. This difference in interpretation of similar or the same experiences is possibly a reflection of the individual's genetic predispositions and the childhood environment which determines their early realities of the world as suggested by Grusec (2011). Davey (2009), Fuchs (2003), Palmer (2001) and Reay et al. (2005)

all propose the possibility of the development of individual beliefs and attitudes outside of the influence of familial and social groups. Their collective notion is that such individual beliefs and attitudes may be developed due to the differing cognitive interpretations of the same experience. Individual habitus may be observed in the behaviours and stated beliefs and understandings of people in their respective social spaces. That is, their physical and emotive reactions to specific situations may reveal their true beliefs and understandings of that situation. Thus any one person's habitus may hold an amalgam of social, familial and individually developed dispositions.

2.3.1 Bourdieu's Model of Decision Making

While the *opus operatum*, that is the work done by the habitus may be overt and observable as 'practice', the *modus operandi* or the process by which this work is done is covert, cognitive and unobservable (Bourdieu, 1990b). A *process model* of the functioning of the constituent parts of the habitus has been developed and is represented below as Figure 2.1. An articulation of the decision making model is required to assist in understanding the interrelation and depth of integration of dispositions and experiences to commence and to withdraw from doctoral research. The depth and interrelationship of these dispositions and experiences, expressed as the dispositions and capitals, is such that any individual part of the model will influence decision making (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007).

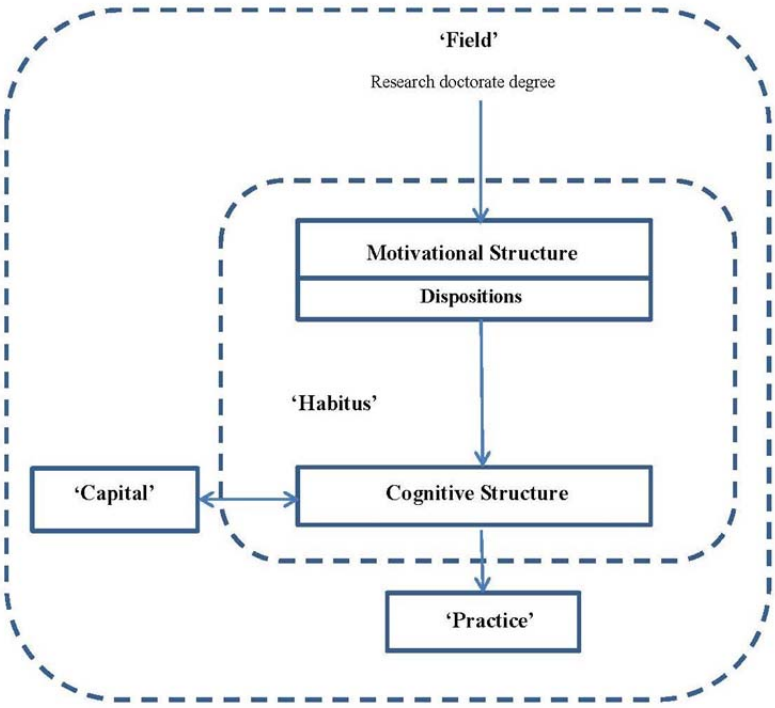

Figure 2-1 Decision-making 'Modus Operandi' after Bourdieu (1984, p.101)

According to Bourdieu (1977b, 1984a, 1990b) the habitus is the repository for dispositions and in addition has *motivational and cognitive structures* which generate and organise information received from a '*field*'. Information from within the field of education may be a threat to the completion of a doctoral degree as suggested by McCormack (2005) and Thunborg, Bron, and Edstrom (2013). This can include life changes, perceptions of non-completion of the student or

unsatisfactory experiences of the doctoral research program that affect any or all of the students accumulated capital, if processed within the habitus and with consideration of dispositions within the *motivational structure.* The motivation structure contains educational dispositions and occupational dispositions in addition to the disposition to learn which are subject to alteration or abandonment depending on the intensity of the field information assimilated into the student's accumulated capital.

The cognitive structure processes information by reference to the motivation structure for a belief or understanding and the accumulated capital within the respective field. The disposition is then regulated, modified or developed with reference to the accumulated capital (cultural, social, financial and symbolic) relative to the situational field of endeavour. Where the capital, which is held external to the habitus, supports the disposition an observable '*practice*' is enacted such as student persistence or early departure. Should the capital not support the held disposition there may be no ensuing action and the disposition or motivations may be modified and then enacted by the habitus.

If the capital overrides the disposition then the decision is considered to be deterministic due to the strength of the capital to negate the disposition to learning or occupational disposition to achieve in a particular educational program. If the person has no cultural capital relative to the field the person may commence an information search to accumulate specific capital to support a disposition and enact a practice. The habitus does have the controlling function to allow only those practices that will be successful for the person to become actions (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990b; Gopaul, 2011).

However, Davey (2009) concluded that the habitus was controlled by capital and that the pseudo-algebraic formula could be written as [(habitus) x (capital)] + field = practice (Davey, 2009, p. 277) and the combination [(habitus) x (capital)] should be used as a single element in the decision-making process. The inference of this formulation of treating habitus and cultural capital as one element is that capital may also have an influence on the development of dispositions. This, Davey concluded provided habitus with the "scope for change and improvisation" (Davey, 2009, p. 283) suggesting that dispositions within the habitus are not necessarily enduring but subject to modification or abandonment and replacement especially as the field changes.

2.3.2 My Story 2.1

By reflection and self-analysis I assume that my habitus towards doctoral study is positive. I base this conclusion on my favourable disposition to learning, my educational aspiration or motivation to successfully attempt a doctoral qualification and a neutral to positive embodied cultural capital about university education. My decision to drop out of study was deterministic based on my feelings of inadequacy to complete the doctorate requirements. My habitus has currently returned to its original status of self-belief in my ability to be successful.

2.4 Field

Space or field may then be considered as the physical and intellectual resources allocated to or by an individual or an institution (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007) to attain a common or individual goal. That is, field may be constituted by a

physical or cognitive capital. Thus attaining a doctorate is an aspiration or motive shared by faculty of the university as supervisors and teachers and the students who allocate time, intellectual resources and physical space to achieve that goal. Multi-field membership by individuals or institutions is possible dependent on attainment goals. Doctoral students may also be members of the faculty when they are employed as tutors or lecturers while undertaking their own doctoral studies or hold a cross-faculty role within the institution.

'Field' is considered to be a social space. This social space is conceived as being "constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution active within the social universe in question" (Bourdieu, 1985, pp. 723-724) and having the capacity to provide power and or influence to those in the social space. Such power is attributed to the institution or individual occupying the field (Jenkins, 2002) from the capital accumulated within the particular social field. Social fields are considered to be groupings of institutions or individuals who accumulate similar types of capital (Bourdieu, 1985).

The limits of these fields of influence or power are constrained to where the influence of the field becomes negligible and therefore becomes "a space within which the effect of the field is exercised" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007, p. 100). That is, when the influence on others within the proximity of the field is no longer influenced by the power of that field then the field is constrained at that juncture. This may be observed from the influence over people of two or more fields of endeavour or occupations. As doctors are not trained or within the same field as electricians then the juncture between the relative powers of each is defined by their occupations.

There is according to Swartz (1997) a polarisation within Bourdieu's concept of the field. This polarisation occurs with the coalescence of the members of the field around the autonomous and heteronomous poles of the field. Swartz explains this polarisation as

> the relative autonomy of the literary field, for example, suggests that this cultural arena is polarised by two opposing principles of organisation. On the one hand, there is the tendency toward autonomy where peer reference and review assumes priority. At the extreme, this results in "art for art's sake". On the other hand is the tendency away from autonomy, where legitimacy and reference are sought outside the field in forms such as book sales, public appearances, honours, etc. (Swartz, 1997, p. 127).

When the concept of field polarity is applied to an educational field, autonomous learning (autonomy) corresponds to the personal 'enjoyment' of learning. This suggests a disposition to learning as enjoyable, in that learning expressed as 'learning for learning's sake' takes on value as something personally fulfilling to the learner. Such a disposition can evolve into habits of lifelong learning instigated by the individual who embraces higher degree learning, including within Masters and Doctoral degrees, as more than the instrumental accumulation of a credential, but as a process of acquiring new knowledge. Such a belief in education may be personal or group oriented and vocational rather than an intrinsic predisposition to learning (Grusec, 2011). The concept of autonomous learning may be characterized by an individual's need to research and disseminate knowledge in

peer reviewed publications. Such a need is an intrinsic disposition that enhances the person's cultural and social capital.

The tendency away from autonomy is towards the heteronomous pole; a belief in the external benefits or capital that accrue from education, such as occupational legitimacy, employment, industry recognition and status. Field may influence the accumulation of capital. Cultural capital is enhanced by the knowledge gained from research; social capital is gained by increased peer recognition; symbolic capital may be gained from the 'expert' status attributed to the researcher; and economic capital may be improved as a result of the expert knowledge gained from the research which may result in greater income for the researcher.

A further aspect of the autonomous and heteronomous polarity of the field may be the differentiation between the Doctor of Philosophy degree and the professional doctorate. The Doctor of Philosophy is considered by many to be an academic qualification sought by those wanting to pursue a career in higher education, as suggested by Clare. The autonomous pole has greater influence within the field of education than the heteronomous pole. The heteronomous pole has influence in the education field with its emphasis on external legitimacy.

2.5 Dispositions

People are not born with their lifelong dispositions. However they are born with *genetic predispositions* that influence their physiological and psychological Self. A physiological predisposition refers to the inheritance of corporeal and physical genetic characteristics while a psychological predisposition refers to emotive and cognitive characteristics such as personality. Some dispositions begin to develop from beliefs learned from parents in early childhood in association with the parental and family supportive situation or environment. These family inherited dispositions are generally socially oriented reflecting acceptable social behaviour within the family environment and society (Bourdieu, 1977b; Grusec, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000). That is, our dispositions are a reflection of our socialisation throughout life as suggested by Bourdieu (1977b) within our familial and social groups.

As individuals age, these childhood dispositions are further developed to the expectations of the social world outside of the family and generally from the acceptance of beliefs and attitudes learned from others, whilst retaining some of the dispositions and expectations from the parental environment. Proof of the accuracy and acceptance of these beliefs and attitudes is not always required depending on the credibility attributed to the persons and or social group from whom the beliefs and attitudes are learned (Bourdieu, 1977a).

The development of a learning disposition or *intrinsic motivation* is formed from the beliefs, attitudes and emotions received from learning (Grusec, 2011; Khalil, 2011; Norton, 2011; Thunborg et al., 2013) that intensifies the desire to learn. The desire to learn may also be developed during the early socialisation process. This individualistic disposition to learn is developed from the genetic predisposition emotive responses to environmental stimuli. This is a concept Grusec (2011, p. 246) identifies as being those "genetically mediated features of human behaviour that predispose human beings in general to be more responsive to some experiences than to others". That is, they develop a belief of positive self-ability and a disposition to

learn if learning is rewarding. This is also the notion of Gopaul (2011) who suggests that:

> The early (childhood) socialization of doctoral students may provide them with particular tools or schema for understanding some of the pressures, relationships, tensions, and rewards of the doctoral process. Further, some doctoral students may possess considerable academic habitus and are able to go through the doctoral process with ease (p. 14).

Sociologically, dispositions are an integral part of the individual's decision making processes. Dispositions are envisaged by Bourdieu (1977b) as being an essential component of the habitus and are "in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination*" [emphasis in original] (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 214) to act with a particular behaviour. Bourdieu perceives the habitus as being "schemes of perception and appreciation deposited, in their incorporated state" (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 17) that is *dispositions*, that are accumulated into the habitus. Villegas (2007), notes that dispositions are *tendencies to act*, that is, dispositions are cognitive intuitive judgements that are constructed of our own realities.

According to Villegas (2007) dispositions are not the actions themselves but precursors or indicators to possible action within a particular social space or situation. These dispositions are predictive of future actions and may imply patterns or indicators to dropout under specific influences. In relation to a disposition or the tendency to drop out of study, Villegas suggests that student beliefs may support or act as a barrier to the disposition to dropout. This is also a notion of Gopaul (2011) who indicates that in terms of some students having dominant favourable academic dispositions, that this will allow them to progress through doctoral study without incident.

Additionally recent research by Cantwell et al. (2012) poses the notion that the factors of the disposition towards doctoral dropout, including "underlying beliefs and attitudes about learning" (p. 69) may assist to explain student responses to the research environment; that is, to persist or dropout depending on the favourability of these beliefs and understandings. Such pre-existing beliefs and understandings about research and the university research environment are supported and developed from student experiences or inherited from influential others within familial and social groups (Berger, 2000; Bourdieu, 1990b; Gabb, Milne, & Cao, 2006; Gopaul, 2011; Ishitani, 2008). The effect of the familial and education environments are documented by Kosut (2006) as follows:

> Students that can drop names make links between disciplines, and use examples from obscure literary references stand out. Aesthetic-cultural knowledge may accumulate through attendance of elite institutions (including primary and secondary schools) that promote a classic, liberal, well-rounded education. Aesthetic-cultural knowledge may also be transferred via the family. For example, children who are socialized by highly educated parents are more likely to be exposed to a variety of academic concepts and disciplines before entering college (p. 252).

Thus students who belong to a group with higher academic qualifications than themselves may inherit or absorb the favourable dispositions towards doctoral research by association with that group including habits of mind, skills and

knowledge of the learning and cultural environments; that is their *cultural capital* as proposed by Gardner, Hayes, and Neider (2007).

The notion that beliefs and attitudes are factors of dispositional development and that dispositions are the singular cause of student dropout is a notion suggested by Villegas (2007), Longden (2004) and Tinto (1975). However, intrinsically motivated dispositions may be moderated within the habitus by extrinsically motivated dispositions and capital which can have an effect on the decisions from the habitus. Aligned with the notion that dispositions are tendencies to act, and are not the action themselves suggests that dispositions are hence not the cause of dropout. However it is noted that dispositions *applied* within a specific social space or field may result in student dropout.

Hence, it is the habitus, as influencing the tendency to dropout, that provides the context for withdrawal or dropout. This influence is in combination with any requirements for learning in certain ways and according to certain systems of knowledge, predicated by 'disciplinary knowledge' (Breen & Lindsay, 2002) within the doctoral program. Understanding a disposition toward dropout hence requires an understanding of the setting within which the doctoral program is conducted and what other motives and capital accumulations may contribute to influence the disposition.

Within the higher education sector, fields of study such as Education have particular ontologies and knowledge banks, research paradigms and methods. These 'disciplinary knowledges' tend to influence the beliefs, attitudes and culture of students (Breen & Lindsay, 2002; Seidman, 1998; University of Southern Queensland, 2013) and their resultant dispositions. Thus dispositions framed by collective group beliefs, attitudes and the culture of the setting in which the doctoral study is undertaken may be adopted, accepted and reproduced by the students. Berger (2000) and Gardner et al. (2007) refer to this process as social reproduction, with its influence determining and shaping dispositions of significance.

2.5.1 Disposition Duality

There is a need to understand the differences between dispositions that is, those that are internalised and intrinsic as a *disposition to learning* and those that are extrinsic or occupationally motivated as *occupational* or *educational dispositions* to relate dispositions to the research data. According to Swartz (1997), this tension within the dispositions is caused by a reticence by Bourdieu to define dispositions in terms of non-habitual behaviour. This is articulated with:

The dispositions of habitus predispose actors to select forms of conduct that are most likely to succeed in light of their resources and past experiences. Habitus orients action according to anticipated consequences. Unfortunately, Bourdieu gives little insight into the how the process of internalisation becomes activated into a process of externalisation. We learn little about the triggering mechanism at work or whether certain types of internalisation are more easily externalised than others (Swartz, 1997, p. 106).

Dispositions are motivations according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). Dispositions may be intrinsic or extrinsic dependant on their separability from the student. An intrinsic disposition is "*to be moved* to do something" [emphasis in original] (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54) which exists in people in differing levels and

types. While the intensity of the motivating force defines the level of the disposition, the type of disposition defines the orientation of the disposition involving the underlying aspirations and expectations. An intrinsic disposition or motivation refers to "doing something because it is interesting or enjoyable" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). This has been suggested as being an important phenomenon in education due to its association with learning and achievement resulting in a high-quality of learning and creativity according to Ryan and Deci (2000). These are desired attributes of doctoral students as suggested by Gardner et al. (2007) that are necessary to complete a doctoral research degree.

In contrast, an extrinsic disposition or motivation is defined by Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 55) as "doing something because it leads to a separable outcome" such as an occupation, thus increasing a person's accumulation of capital (Bourdieu, 1977b). With regard to the effect of extrinsic dispositions on student attrition, Ryan and Deci suggest that:

> Students can perform extrinsically motivated actions with resentment, resistance, and disinterest or, alternatively, with an attitude of willingness that reflects an inner acceptance of the value or utility of a task. In the former case—the classic case of extrinsic motivation—one feels externally propelled into action; in the later case, the extrinsic goal is self-endorsed and thus adopted with a sense of volition (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55).

Thus, doctoral students may complete their doctoral research with an extrinsic disposition such as an aspiration to attain a particular occupational role, without the need of a high level of intrinsic disposition to learn.

According to Baird, Rose, and McWhirter (2012, p. 294) dispositions can be "psychological characteristics which are held by and the responsibility of the individual". Dispositions may be developed around education and employment and are subject to contextual constraints and in conjunction with other dispositions and abilities of the student. The literature on disposition suggests that as people age their dispositions are influenced by their specific interests and abilities. The inference is that doctoral students will undertake a doctoral qualification and select a topic as part of their educational disposition developed from the environmental influences and opportunities within their social spaces or fields (Baird et al., 2012; Bourdieu, 1985).

Therefore a student's selection of qualification and research topic is represented by the existence of a relationship between educational ambitions and relative academic performance according to Homel and Ryan (2014). They suggest that there is a minor correlation between educational dispositions and the socio-economic background and cultural belongings or identities of the student. The factors that correlate to this relationship are the student's "motivation, perseverance, ambition," and their "ability or beliefs about the value of education" (Homel & Ryan, 2014, p. 7). They suggest that

> there are, however, significant interactions between aspirations and real and relative academic performance, which suggests that high-achieving individuals are more likely to realise their aspirations [dispositions]. Furthermore, those who considered their performance to be average or below average were less likely to realise their aspirations…(Homel & Ryan, 2014, p. 7).

The implication of educational dispositions is that they may be continued throughout a person's life to include all forms of learning in a manner quite separate to extrinsic dispositions. An intrinsic disposition is the desire to learn, that is a disposition to learning while aspirations are the extrinsic disposition of what to learn to achieve a particular outcome. According to Gemici, Bednarz, Karmel, and Lim (2014):

> In the Australian context, aspirations have been linked to gender, Indigenous [cultural] status, home language and location. Moreover, external influences play a role in the formation of aspirations. Such influences include parental expectations for their children and the educational plans of their peers (p. 8).

This suggests that the formation of an educational or occupational disposition is an external phenomenon embodied within the student as a extrinsic disposition or reason to achieve rather than an intrinsic attribute, or an enjoyment of learning for the sake of learning; an intrinsic disposition. However, extrinsically motivated dispositions may influence the decision to drop out of doctoral study depending on the intensity of the disposition to influence the habitus in assuming an unfavourable outcome to continuing with the doctoral degree studies.

2.5.2 Inherited Dispositions

The theoretical framework of social reproduction proposed by Berger (2000) introduces the concept of inherited or social reproduction of dispositions (beliefs and understandings). Social reproduction relies on the concept of class habitus or the intergenerational or class transference of class beliefs and behaviours between social groups. According to Bourdieu (1985) the "social world can be represented as a space (with several dimensions) constructed on the basis of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties within the social universe in question" (p. 724). People are defined by their relative position and power within this social space based on their cultural, economic and symbolic capital. It is this position within the social space that confers on them their powers of influence on others within the same social space or group.

Social reproduction therefore is the accumulation of dispositions and capital from external sources to which the individual has membership. An individual then might inherit beliefs and understandings from the respective social class or other group. In conjunction with this inheritance of capital and dispositions is the inheritance of relative class or group power which serves as a class and group controlling function to maintain relative social beliefs and practices, that is dispositions (Bourdieu, 1977a). A similar and analogous situation occurs within the academic and other occupational groups.

2.5.2.1 My Story 2.2

> *I am convinced that social reproduction does happen as I have accepted and live by a number of the ethical, legal and social practices taught to me by my parents, grandparents and the laws of society. I am also convinced that we arrive in this world pre-conditioned favourably or otherwise to certain psychological features in our personality which if supported in our growing-up environment become dispositions and therefore tasks to which we become proficient. My parents referred to this as traits, especially when one of my siblings was observed behaving similarly to a close relative in the same blood line. However, there are other parts in our*

personality that are latent in their development such as, in my case a university education. My desire for such an education was enhanced more by observing the person with whom I worked; that is social reproduction by group socialisation.

2.6 Cultural Capital

Bourdieu's (1986) notion of cultural capital was as a theoretical tool to enable a sociological explanation for the scholastic achievement of students. In particular, cultural capital is utilised in the explanation of unequal achievement which he attributed to the differentiation of the population into social classes. His notions of cultural capital of education encompass the accumulation of predominantly intangible assets inherited from family and other groups as knowledge of the educational system. Other aspects of cultural capital of education are the tangible assets; the tools of learning including books, calculators and other learning resources and the testamurs of learning. He concluded that cultural capital was a dominant factor in the successful achievement of learning and not necessarily a result of natural ability (Bourdieu, 1979, 1986).

In their conclusions Lareau and Weininger (2003) suggest that two dominant interpretations of cultural capital have developed from empirical studies undertaken into cultural capital. They indicate that these interpretations are based on and originate with the research studies of DiMaggio (1982). DiMaggio considered that cultural capital "refers exclusively to knowledge of or competence with "highbrow" cultural activities, and that as such, it is distinct from, and causally independent of, "technical ability or skill" (Lareau & Weininger, 2003, p. 597). That is, DiMaggio classifies cultural capital relative to class stratification.

In suggesting that such an interpretation as used by DiMaggio and others is too narrow a focus of cultural capital, Lareau and Weininger (2003) conclude a preference for a broader definitional interpretation which is based on the notions of Bourdieu (1977b). Their interpretation includes cultural and familial cultural reproduction including education, cultural tastes or distinctions such as literature, food and the arts, and academic skills and is not constrained by social class. That is, while class may constrain cultural activities, such activities are not the absolute domain of particular social classes such that a disposition to learning may be observed in all social stratifications, the only constraint being the family and social environment in which they participate and their genetic predisposition (Grusec, 2011).

According to Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012) there have been a number of empirical studies which reflect the effect of parental embodied cultural capital on the academic performance of their children. They discuss the effects on the child of the parent's accumulation of cultural goods and their participation in cultural activities. They suggest that this involvement with culture possibly leads to the collection of cultural artefacts and participation in cultural events. Education and learning is considered to be a cultural activity which when present within the family or other social environment may result in a learning disposition developing within the child.

The exploration of cultural capital was suggested by Longden (2004) as an alternative theoretical approach to the sociological study of student dropout due to the influence in the habitus on student disposition by social capital. The notion of cultural capital is suggested to include language skills, cultural knowledge including

knowledge of education, mannerisms including a commitment to education, ideas and educational credentials (Gopaul, 2011; Longden, 2004; Swartz, 1997). As Kosut (2006) suggests:

> Thinking the correct way means challenging, deconstructing, and questioning the material with which you are presented. As a potential academic, you must successfully digest the canon and be prepared to quote passages verbatim. However, in doing so, you must demonstrate the understanding that all theories and treatises are imperfect, if not fundamentally flawed in some fashion (p. 253).

Cultural capital within a field of doctoral study implies that the student is cognisant of the expectations of the universities. These expectations possibly include an understanding of what the university perceives "as the skills, habits of mind, and dispositions needed" (Cantwell et al., 2012, p. 287) or the cultural capital to successfully complete a doctorate.

Also, Davey (2012) suggests that a student's capital may be used to sociologically differentiate doctoral students based on their accumulations of the four types of capital; *cultural, social, symbolic and economic*. According to Swartz (1997) and Reay (2004) cultural capital may be further disaggregated into the *embodied, institutional and objectified states*. The accumulation of the relevant capitals may be a prerequisite to the commencement and successful completion of a doctorate, particularly economic and cultural capital.

2.6.1 Embodied Cultural Capital

Embodied cultural capital is initially accumulated from childhood as the cultivated or inherited long-lasting dispositions of family (Fuchs, 2003; Ishitani, 2008; Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2012; Lareau & Weininger, 2003) and later from other social groups, and may be related to academic study at all levels. It is accumulated as a lifelong process commencing in childhood and according to Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012), continues somewhat unconsciously for the life of the individual. As embodied cultural capital is incorporated into the person it does appear to be a natural and culturally differing phenomenon. This transference of cultural capital is possibly a disguised form of "intergenerational capital transmission" (Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2012, p. 210) otherwise thought to be analogous with, and referred to by Berger (2000) as social reproduction.

The accumulation of embodied cultural capital is suggested by Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012) to be related to their parents accumulation and participation in cultural activities which are congruent to their cultural tastes and which could be reproduced in their children. This may be possible with the cultural activities being the situational reinforcement for genetic predispositions. Such reinforcement is postulated as strengthening the enjoyment the child attains from the cultural activity (Grusec, 2011). This would increase the child's accumulation of embodied cultural capital in the form of cultural events.

The possibility of an effect occurring on the child's cultural behaviour due to the intensity of participation levels of the parents must be considered. A child's cultural participation including education may be mediated by the parents' cultural activity in education. Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012) pose the possibility that the reason for the adoption of cultural taste is similar to that of Grusec (2011). They

suggest that the parental behaviours are an example for the children and therefore are an influence on, and possibly a reinforcement of the predispositions of the child. Cultural tastes within the parent's such as an enjoyment of learning that may develop the disposition to learn within the child.

That there exists an interconnectedness between embodied and institutional cultural capital is suggested by Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012). The testamurs of academic achievement of the student are considered to be institutionalised cultural capital. The documents reflect the cultural participation and activities of the student within an educational institute. Such academic participation is considered to be embodied cultural capital due to student experiences and the ensuing assimilation of doctoral practices into the student's knowledge.

2.6.2 Institutional Cultural Capital

Institutional cultural capital is considered by Swartz (1997) and Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012) to include educational credentials and knowledge of higher education. In my research project, doctoral research and the administrative and academic protocols relating to doctoral study are considered to be institutional cultural capital. Institutionalised cultural capital exists because of its being the objectification of embodied cultural capital in the form of physical artefacts of education. As such, these educational artefacts exist independent of the student.

According to Bourdieu (1977a) cited in Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012, p. 211) "academic credentials serve to legitimate the social transmission of privileges" so that any information shared as cultural capital is qualified by the academic standing of the transferrer. The issuance of degree testamurs, also referred to as academic credential documents, by the examining institution is one example of this form of cultural capital. This form of capital may serve to reinforce the disposition of the student to persist with their education to completion by decreasing any feelings of inadequacy and issues of failing.

2.6.3 Objectified Cultural Capital

Objectified cultural capital refers to the tangible objects or artefacts that are used to undertake a doctoral research program including books, pictures, dictionaries, instruments and machines utilised in attaining the accumulated knowledge and experiences incorporated as embodied cultural capital. These objects or artefacts may be transmitted readily but the transmissibility is applied only to these objects and not to the ultimate application of the objects. These artefacts have the dual value of a commodity and a symbol such that books have a monetary value when purchased or sold and a symbolic capital value represented by their ownership. Ownership also implies the books have been read therefore implying an increase in knowledge or embodied capital. The social capital accumulated from the ownership of the books is derived from their symbolic and cultural capital (Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2012).

The effect on the student of such capital is similar to that of the artefacts accumulated as institutionalised cultural capital. Reference books, apart from their symbolic, cultural and social capital value, provide a psychological motivational reinforcement of what the student has accomplished.

2.6.4 My Story 2.3

My personal accumulation of cultural capital with regard to doctoral studies was I consider negligible or very close to negligible. My knowledge of doctorates was constrained within the social space in which I lived; middle class and blue-collar. University study was little known about and doctorates were only for the upper classes who could afford a higher education. However with the introduction by the Federal Government of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), university education became accessible. Thus began my accumulation of higher education accumulated cultural capital which was restricted to an undergraduate and a Master's degree by external study at two different universities. This accumulation of cultural capital and the knowledge that doctorates were research based degrees was the capital that I had from my interactions with colleagues who had completed their own PhD; even this knowledge of doctoral experiences was very limited and I too believed that a doctorate was undertaken as a kind of learning journey. As I discovered from university websites, doctorates could be completed as external or online students. However I still believed that a 'doctoral journey' involving myself and a supervisor in a collegiate relationship was the usual pedagogy. My beliefs were correct and I have accumulated a considerable collection of cultural capital including embodied, objectified and institutionalised. I only need to observe my bookcase and reflect on my experiences to realise the extent of this accumulated capital.

2.7 Social Capital

Social capital is the accumulation of social recognition from the social resources attributed by others within the social space. According to Bourdieu (1985),

> the social world can be represented as a space (with several dimensions) constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active within the social universe in question, i.e., capable of conferring strength, power within that universe, on their holder (p. 723).

There is a theoretical complexity of social capital according to Flemmen (2013), which seeks to distinguish social class on the basis of the *social space approach* (SSA) or the *field analytical approach* (FAA). With the Social Space Approach, class is analysed on the standing of individuals within a defined social space such that classes are distinguished on the composition of accumulated capital. That is the mix and attributed value of cultural, economic and or symbolic capital within a social space. In comparison, the Field Analytical Approach form of social capital focuses on the accumulation and conversion of capitals to enhance the accumulation of social capital (Savage, Warde, & Devine, 2005). Flemmen concludes that both approaches have been used by Bourdieu concurrently to assign social space. There is a congruency between Bourdieu's assignation of social space and the assigning of social space within Australian society where inherited wealth and new wealth co-exist within this society (Bennett, Emmison, & Frow, 1999).

Within this social space, Portes (1998) suggests that it is possible to differentiate the three functions of social capital. The first is as a source of social control which is the mechanism used by those who are attributed with authority such as police, teachers and parents who by exercising this function seek to maintain discipline and compliance with social norms and rules. The second function is the

support of family which is beneficial to the children in their education and personality development such as support for the development for genetic predispositions of personality. Portes further suggests that family support enhances the educational attainment of children and reduces attrition which may be caused by negative personality support.

The third function is "as a source of benefits through extra familial networks" (Portes, 1998, p. 9). These are the social networks that extend beyond the influence of the immediate family and are the social capital assets accumulated from such networks referred to by Bourdieu (1986). The social capital gained from these non-familial networks is used in the concept of social stratification. The assets accumulated within these social networks may be beneficially activated to gain access to employment, workplace promotions and entrepreneurial success. This third function is central to social reproduction of social and cultural capital and its influence on dispositions and other capital. As children increase in age, the influence of family may be partially replaced by non-familial network members such as the influence on doctoral students by the postgraduate research group of a university. Such non-familial influence would possibly be greater where the family do not have, or have limited exposure to the cultural or social capital pertaining to doctoral study.

The decision to acquire social capital is considered and purposeful involving the acquisition and accumulation of economic and cultural capital which is "characterised by unspecified obligations, uncertain time horizons and the possibility of violation of reciprocity obligations" (Portes, 1998, p. 4). Social capital is intangible in comparison to other forms of capital which is acquired from the structure of the relationship with the holder of the required capital. Recipients of social capital are members of a social group who hold the particular capital, and from whom the capital is obtained either by sharing or the conversion of other types of capital. Thus to gain increased social standing within the faculty, social capital may be acquired by the acquisition of cultural capital in the form of knowledge and which must be recognised and attributed by the faculty within the educational social space.

Generally social capital is adopted from both the family and wider society composed of social networks. Wider society social networks may include groups to which an individual has membership including occupational, employing organisations, educational institutes and hobby or leisure groups. Although individuals within these social networks or spaces whose membership may be formed across differing economic and cultural capital (class) accumulations, it is the trajectory of the individual that determines the differences and complexity of the relationship. This is reflected in the Australian class classification system where members of the lower class (Lower Socio-Economic Status) may become members of the middle or upper classes by the attainment of relatively higher incomes or educational attainment which effectively alters their class trajectory. Such occurrences can promote their social standing within the classes to a higher level (Reay et al., 2005).

The connection between social capital and student attrition or dropout is better examined using Tinto's theory of social and academic integration. The essence of this theory is the socialisation process between the individual student and the

student's fellow students and the faculty (Tinto, 1993). Within the field of doctoral study Gopaul (2011) suggests that the process of student socialisation involves the role acquisition stages of anticipatory, formal, informal and personal which lead to the accumulation of social capital within the faculty. Social capital is acquired by learning the cultural aspects of doctoral study from either observation and interaction with peers to understand "the expectations, standards, rewards and sanctions" (Gopaul, 2011, p. 11) of the faculty and the institution.

It is within the fourth stage of role acquisition that "the integration of self-image and professional identity comes to fruition. This occurs as prospective group members mirror and model the behaviours and broader codes of conduct after established members" (Gopaul, 2011, p. 11) leading to role identification. The acceptance of this role within the social space of doctoral study possibly reflects an accumulation of social capital within the field. Capital can develop and be accumulated as students participate in professional activities with an internalisation of the identification and commitment to their role. This acceptance of their role can provide students with the social capital to be recognised by their peers and by their contribution to the student and supervisor relationship thereby establishing a social standing within the faculty. Such a social standing may serve to reinforce the disposition of the student to persist with their doctoral research.

2.7.1 My Story 2.4

At a guess I would say that my social capital within the faculty increased slightly from the presentation of my research proposal and has alleviated any self-doubt that I retained about my abilities as a consequence of my withdrawal from my studies. This guess is based on an email received from my doctoral supervisor which states "as per unexpected solicitation following the proposal presentation this morning (your doctorate has already gained notoriety- a great thing to have happen) …It was a very composed, erudite and engaging presentation. I've run into a few folks who noted that the presentation was a ripper (and I am thoroughly enjoying basking in the reflected glory- keep it up!)" (Andrew Hickey, personal communication, 20 June 2013). This was a personal note and I have difficulty in articulating my emotions when I read the email. There was a mix of relief and happiness at the recognition from the faculty and that I had achieved the very obstacle that resulted in my drop out. This does encourage me to complete my doctorate.

2.8 Symbolic Capital

Symbolic power "…is defined in and through the given relation between those who exercise power and those who submit to it, i.e. in the very structure of the field in which *belief* is produced and reproduced" according to Bourdieu (1991, p. 170) [emphasis in original]. That is, symbolic capital, or symbolic power as a resource, may be represented as prestige, reputation, honour, authority and distinction of the holder of the capital and may be accumulated in tangible or intangible states. This form of capital may be a conversion of symbolic power attributed to public authority and enacted for the good of society such that economic capital is converted to philanthropic endeavours. Such conversions are regarded as the covert pursuit of personal self-interests to non-interests. That is, by the conversion of symbolic power such as economic monetary power to a resource of symbolic capital with the purchase of artefacts. Similar to that of symbolic power, symbolic capital may be accumulated. The conversion process may be reversible with the conversion of

symbolic capital goods to economic capital in that the symbols of high office may be sold or converted to high income occupational roles (Harrits, 2011; Putnam, 2009; Swartz, 1997).

Symbolic capital is recognisable by the use of identifying symbols including titles, insignia, uniforms and other identifying paraphernalia to indicate belonging to a particular social group or organisation or level of power within a group. These identifying methods may represent personal identity and power or capital in the cultural, social or economic areas of life only if that symbolic power is legitimated by the duality of those who believe the power and those who wield the power (Holt, 2012).

An association between cultural capital and symbolic power and capital is suggested by Hallet (2007) with the aspects of demeanour and deference. His notion is that demeanour is part of embodied cultural capital which in its behavioural form of deference becomes symbolic power. This is thought to be due to the disposition of demeanour being an aspect of cultural capital which is a respectful behaviour displayed towards others. When this demeanour towards others is displayed Hallet suggests that this is a "process of legitimation in which the forms of capital (when valued in the situation) are converted into symbolic capital" (Hallet, 2007, p. 153). Thus demeanour, a symbolic capital, may be utilised as the symbolic power of deference. That is, we provide a level of symbolic capital when we defer to the knowledge and abilities and social standing of others. While such symbolism is possibly cognitive it may be observable in the behavioural attitudes of the persons involved and may assist in the acceptance of the student into the research fraternity; a motivation to academically persist.

That a plausible pathway exists between an individual's identity narrative located as social capital and symbolic power is suggested by Holt (2012). By using what Holt considers a "conferred identity" (Holt, 2012, p. 930) which is considered to be a narrative identity constructed over time that effectively becomes networks of relationships within time and space or social capital. Holt suggests that these identities are powerful and assume the status of symbolism for the individual who establishes such identities. This notion is demonstrated by Holt as enabling

> students to play the education game by investing what I call a 'conferred identity' of being 'smart' and 'going somewhere' onto the young women, and how this builds and enables the required emotional attitude for the young women to leave home, move to university in the city and draw on a self-understanding of belonging at university and not in their rural towns (Holt, 2012, p. 930).

Within the education system and particularly the postgraduate research area of higher education, symbolic power and hence the ensuing symbolic capital is held by the professoriate and faculty. They are the research supervisors and coordinators and the administrative department of the higher degree research office within the various institutions to whom the student defers (Hallet, 2007). Compliance in the form of the timely completion of Semester Reports is a type of deference to the institution by the research student which builds the symbolic capital and power of the institution. Other forms of compliance include the format of the research proposal and the final thesis of the research project and attendance at research student seminars and

conferences. These activities do enhance the acceptance of the student into the research community which reinforces the disposition to undertake doctoral research.

2.9 Economic Capital

According to Bourdieu (1986, pp. 3-4) "…*economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights" [emphasis in original]. Economic capital conveys the notion that it is the accumulated wealth of an individual or institution which is represented by the liquidity of the accumulated assets. Liquidity is the accumulated cash plus the cash equivalent at the prevailing market value of any convertible assets owned by the individual or institution. In addition Fuchs (2003) considers that economic capital is unevenly distributed throughout society such that economic inequality contributes to the distinction between the social classes.

Therefore within the French class classification system Fuchs (2003) suggests that the economic capital of the upper class is accumulated by commercial and industrial employers; craftsmen and shopkeepers are classified in the middle level of economic capital accumulation. While these vocations accrue the greater economic capital due to their higher incomes, other groups depend on their cultural capital to achieve membership to the classes. According to Fuchs higher education lecturers and secondary school teachers would be classified within the upper class while primary school teachers are located within the middle classes. This analysis of economic capital and income potential would also apply to the Australian class classification system model based on socio-economic status. Income is congruent with occupation and partially utilised as the measure and the distinction of class within Australia (Bennett et al., 1999) and as a predictor of possible student dropout.

Similar to the inheritance of cultural and social capital, economic capital may also be an inherited resource within the familial group in a class reproduction process which may effectively maintain the longevity of the family class according to Gopaul (2011) and Berger (2000). The ability to provide financial support to one's children is thought to be beneficial to the educational opportunities of the child as this provides for the choice of educational institution. Such institutional choice allows postgraduate students to select to undertake their doctoral studies within a perceived or actually better learning and supportive environment suitable to their research (Lynch & Moran, 2006; Pitman, 2013). Such options as the selection of university may assist in the integration of the student and the institution.

The effect of the cost of tuition is less dependent than everyday living costs on the doctoral education aspirations of students within Australia (Pitman, 2013). One aspect of the lack of resources for doctoral candidates as noted by McCormack (2005) is the availability of economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986), that is, the financial resources necessary to live whilst completing a doctoral degree. In a number of countries government funding in addition to private scholarships is available for students to undertake tertiary study. Within Australia the Commonwealth Government provides economic resources to cover the tuition costs of university education and diploma level vocational education studies (Kiley, 2011b).

With the decision by the Australian Government to enhance access to higher education in 2005, methods of student support including the deregulation of university fees and the introduction of Commonwealth Supported Places were

introduced. As Kiley (2011a) suggests the Research Training Scheme introduced by the Australian Government effectively negated the cost of tuition to the student. Thus the requirement for economic capital to undertake postgraduate research studies was decreased and provided greater access to those families and students on lower incomes or in part-time employment.

While the Research Training Scheme funding provides for the institutional fees, there are other funding sources including scholarship schemes such as the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) and opportunities within the Australian Research Council (ARC) and similar competitive funding for personal living expenses. Doctoral degree research funding is typically for the duration of four years with a possible extension of six months. For a number of Australians undertaking Masters or Doctoral degrees by research, Governmental provision of economic capital as a strategy to decrease attrition and reduce completion times has resulted in successful outcomes (Kiley, 2011b).

Among the personal benefits of economic capital is that it provides access to cultural, social or symbolic capital by the conversion of economic resources. According to Flemmen (2013) economic capital has an inflationary effect on the esteem of the individual which would effectively enhance the cultural, social and symbolic capital of the person. Flemmen suggests that this inflationary effect of economic capital on an individual's status indicates that this form of economic power is legitimate.

A reverse process that converts cultural and social capital into economic capital is suggested by Portes (1998) such that

> through social capital, actors can gain direct access to economic resources (subsidized loans, investment tips, protected markets); they can increase their cultural capital through contacts with experts or individuals of refinement (i.e. embodied cultural capital); or, alternatively, they can affiliate with institutions that confer valued credentials (i.e. institutionalized cultural capital) (p. 4).

And as Bourdieu (1986) perceives, the value in monetary terms of cultural capital is conferred by the conversion of economic capital to that particular cultural capital item whether it is tangible or intangible. This may also determine the value in the open market for the particular qualification relative to other qualifications. Similarly most forms of non-economic capital may be allocated a monetary value within defined marketplaces such as the labour market.

This value, material and symbolic, may possibly be enhanced by the scarcity of the academic qualification with respect to skill and knowledge demand. There is also the possibility that the economic costs invested in terms of time and effort could reduce the expected financial return on that qualification. It is possible, based on this reasoning, that the habitus which supports success will nullify the person's disposition to learn or other dispositions and reject the opportunity to attempt the program of study or cause the student to drop out of a particular program of study. If the student drops out of the program there is a threefold loss of cultural, social and symbolic capital in addition to the personal or familial economic loss (Fuchs, 2003; Harrits, 2011; Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2012; Reay, 2004)

2.10 The Student and Supervisor Relationship

One of the factors that contributes to student dropout is, according to McCormack (2005) a student's experiences of a lack of access, or poor supervisory support resulting from the application of doctoral research pedagogies that are inappropriate to the student's situation. The selection and application of the correct pedagogy is dependent on the requirements of the institution and the student. Pedagogies are the protocols and processes of instruction and supervision applied to the doctoral education process. Doctoral education is, according to Cotterall (2011) a "unique and paradoxical mode of institutional learning" which "proceeds through instruction and autonomous discovery, and can be intensely individual and quintessentially social." (p. 413).

Doctoral student pedagogies within Australian universities are suggested as being adaptions of the,

> British (Oxbridge) model of supervision; that is, a substantial one-to-one relationship between candidate and supervisor, and with little in the way of formal coursework. While many Australian universities are moving to a panel or co-supervisory system of supervision, the quality of the main supervisor has been the focus of much attention…(Kiley, 2011a, p. 587).

The adaptions to this model are in tutorial assistance based on the mode of enrolment, either full or part time campus based or external. That is, it is the communication medium between student and supervisor that are adapted between the various types of enrolment. Thus campus based doctoral candidates may communicate in person with their respective supervisors, while online and other external students rely on the written (email) and audio (telephone) or video styles of online communications.

Pedagogic models of doctoral supervision include the Master and Apprentice where the doctoral student learns the practice of research from the doctoral supervisor, while in the Mentor and Protégé approach the student is assisted and guided in the research process. Both are hierarchical relationship developing approaches between the supervisor and the student relative to doctoral research (Kelly & Lloyd-Williams, 2013). The application of these hierarchical pedagogic models of doctoral supervision appear to be problematic with non-traditional students as suggested by Malfroy (2005). The issue is that

> despite the greater sense of collegiality and acknowledgement of the extensive professional experience and senior positions occupied by many of the students in their workplaces, this did not prevent some students feeling awkward about their positioning as 'student', in a relationship with a 'supervisor', a dilemma faced by many mature-aged doctoral students (Malfroy, 2005, p. 169).

This relationship between supervisors and students is one of unequal power and therefore hierarchical rather than collaborative. A collaborative relationship would recognise the expertise and industry standing of the student.

With respect to collegial pedagogies Malfroy (2005) suggested that the supervisor and student relationship which had been dyadic needed to change to be more collegial, but would retain an unequalness due to the academic protocols of doctoral study. However,

> whilst the importance of the primary relationship between a supervisor and a student remained integral to the overall management and creative endeavour, the addition of other factors, including the use of panels, the changes to management of candidatures, and the unacknowledged sharing between supervisors in supporting the students' research ideas, indicated more flexible and open practices and processes in doctoral education… (Malfroy, 2005, p. 176).

Such supervisory practices would according to Malfroy (2005) reduce the uncertainty and confusion caused by a misalignment of expectations by supervisors and students.

The expectations and pedagogic models adopted by universities for doctoral studies are transparent and are made available to students via such media as the university websites and handbooks of courses. This does provide for some acculturation into doctoral research to occur early in the student's enrolment. Thus any prospective student is aware of the formal rules and processes of the doctoral qualification (Overall, Deane, & Petersen, 2011) and the supervision method. This knowledge may be accumulated into the cultural capital of students prior to enrolment into a particular qualification.

Doctoral supervision provides cumulative experiences that may be incorporated in a student's cultural capital of doctoral study. Latona and Browne (2001) and McCormack (2005) have identified a number of factors as being relevant to the completion of higher research degrees. These factors include disciplinary differences, student characteristics, student admission and enrolment characteristics, and quality of supervision. According to Tinto (1993), students who attempt postgraduate research require a disposition to research and an integrative personality (a student characteristic) towards the faculty and other students. Other student characteristics refer to the student's demographic profile and the psychological personality traits of reduced tendencies to procrastinate and perfectionist behaviours (Norton, 2011). Quality of supervision includes issues relating to supervision and the student and supervisor relationship such as a supportive collegiate pedagogy and personal respect. Student admission and enrolment characteristics refer to the issues of entry qualifications and enrolment modes. Being a full-time student is more conducive to completion of a doctoral degree according to Latona and Browne (2001).

Tensions within the supervisor and student relationship according to Wisker and Robinson (2013) are caused when the supervisor practices the 'supervision by abandonment' (orphaned) or the 'benign neglect' method of supervision. This issue is created when there is a conflict in supervisor and student interactions such that the supervisor is unsupportive and the student is expected to undertake the research study autonomously and complete their thesis. Other doctoral students may become 'orphaned' if the supervisor relocates or departs the university so that the student is without supportive structure.

Some of the causes of the issues of 'benign neglect' and 'orphan' according to Wisker and Robinson (2013) may be

> the result of hierarchy, personality, differences in culture, learning background or learning approach and some the result of inadvertently negative interactions

> or institutional processes. A particularly traumatic, yet surprisingly common, experience is when supervisors or even the full supervisory team change, move on, leaving the student with emotions resembling those caused by loss of family or others who normally care for their development (p. 301).

Such psychological distress may result in student "confusion, disruption and traumatic experiences" that can result from "supervisor neglect, poor communication, absence and loss" (Wisker & Robinson, 2013, p. 301). According to Overall et al. (2011) the relationship between supervisor and student is possibly manifested as academic and personal support in providing timely feedback on progress, emotional support and increasing student confidence. Such support reinforces student beliefs of their capability to complete the doctoral program; that is, their self-efficacy. A poor doctoral supervision relationship with students is suggested by Overall et al. as being a precursor to student dropout.

This personal student and supervisor relationship is possibly the more important source of candidature support which is perceived to have an influence over the 'doctoral journey'. Although this aspect of doctoral pedagogy is discussed there is a need to suggest a focus on this relationship as supervisors should be the first to suspect and to know if possible, prospective and actual student issues that may be developing. Supervisors are often the only ongoing contact between the student and the faculty and institution and their mode of supervision can affect the ongoing candidature of the student (Overall et al., 2011).

Hence, understanding the role of supervision as an aspect of the habitus of doctoral study and an influence over the dispositions to doctoral study will be a key aspect of the inquiry in this project. Gopaul (2011) suggests that issues between the student and supervisor may be manifested because "in the context of doctoral education, habitus of particular students may mediate their ability to cultivate important faculty and peer relationships as well as to understand the broader practices and processes of doctoral education" (Gopaul, 2011, p. 14). This does relate the habitus to Tinto's (1993) integration theories of student's attrition and persistence. The development of a student's belief in their capabilities to complete the doctoral program is reliant on the relationship between doctoral supervisors, 'others' within the student's social space and the student. This may be accomplished by reinforcing their self-efficacy, which accentuates the educational disposition to persist through the motivational structure of the habitus.

In an attempt to enhance the supervisory experience there have been attempts to standardise doctoral study and supervision practices within Australia according to Kiley (2011b) and summarised as follows:

> These changes have been significant in that universities are now strongly motivated to minimise attrition (non-completion equals no funding), to assist candidates in completing within the four years stipulated by government funding, and to ensure high levels of candidate satisfaction (p. 630).

One of these changes was the introduction of the Research Training Scheme which funded universities on research student completions. An outcome of the change to research funding was the requirement by the universities of their supervisors to closely monitor progress and to focus on those students who were likely to complete within the four year funding period. There was also a requirement

of the supervision teams or panels within the university faculty to ensure that the selected research topic was achievable within the funding period (Kiley, 2011b).

With the requirement imposed on the universities with respect to research student funding, came a need to educate and train supervisors to retain students to meet the funding on completion requirement of the Research Training Scheme. According to Kiley (2011a) the student and supervisor relationship is the "single most important factor in student decisions to continue or withdraw" (p. 588). Thus student satisfaction with the supervisory relationship is critical to this decision but also relates to timely completions. With respect to supervision Kiley suggests that there are six issues, including three identified by Heath (2002) that may critically effect the relationship including "the provision of appropriate feedback, the frequency of meetings, making an early start on writing, clarifying expectations, positive candidate/supervisor relationships and keeping the same topic and supervisor" (Kiley, 2011a, p. 589).

With the identification of supervisory issues that affected the timely completions of doctoral students, the universities have introduced training programs to facilitate student completions and satisfaction with the supervisory process. The content of these programs has been summarised into 'most common' and 'least common' by Kiley (2011a). Within the 'most common' grouping of training topics are such issues as the student and supervisor relationship, the need for clarification of roles and expectations, student progress, supervisor obligations such as supervisor role and responsibilities, and university policies including student monitoring.

The summary of 'least common' training topics could be confronting depending on the interpretation of why they are the least common. This group of topics may be either well known or practised or that the emphasis placed on these topics is perceived to be not of particular importance. The inclusion within this group of affective topics such as cross-cultural relationships, team building and the ability to manage breakdowns in the student and supervisor relationship could be the result of critical issues in some topics in the 'most common' group but are critical to student completions. The remaining content includes institutional doctoral 'housekeeping' topics relating to the selection of examiners, intellectual property, and publication authorship and mentoring of new supervisors (Kiley, 2011a, p. 594).

Given the emphasis placed on the affective factors of doctoral student drop out by researchers (Kiley, 2011a; Overall et al., 2011; Wisker & Robinson, 2013) within the literature, there is an expectation that these issues would be a priority in the training programs. The administrative aspects of doctoral research supervision that are of institutional origin and suggested as being outside the control of the student would be expected to have a lesser tendency to influence student drop out.

2.10.1 My Story 2.5

My enrolment and supervisory experiences have generally been favourable with a few gremlins in the online semester self-enrolment process and a turnover of supervisors. However none of this has been disruptive or frustrating to my studies as the university faculty and administrative staffs have readily and helpfully assisted in solutions to any issues. Supervisors have come and gone for a number of reasons, either intensely personal or institutional and were appointed by the faculty as two person supervisory teams. Access to my supervisors, rather than being a scheduled

time and date is an on-demand method using emails, telephone and Skype video communication methods. I have never experienced feelings of isolation or frustration with access to supervisors as discussed within the literature and by other participants to this research project.

Whether this is due to having no explicit expectations outside of the institution produced information or a personality to adjust to various situations outside of my influence I am not sure; however there is no lingering anger or frustrations with the supervisory pedagogy either institutional or with the student supervisor relationship. Indeed, a comment by my current supervisor to the effect "that I was stuck with him" when I commented on my supervisory experiences to date during one of our infrequent face-to-face meetings, was sort of reassuring. However, he too has changed departments within the same faculty but unlike previous supervisors there is an intention to complete the supervision arrangements with the current research student cohort.

2.11 Doctoral Learning Experiences

The completion of a doctoral degree program as a career development strategy does require a major affective commitment and a belief in one's abilities to undertake and complete such a program (Andrew, 2012). That is, a disposition to learning combined with an occupational disposition and an emotional attachment to the field of study is suggestive of a student's persistence to complete and to succeed in such a program (Conklin et al., 2013). Students may dropout due to feelings of isolation and non-support by faculty or their student cohort. These feelings are largely contradictory to tacit expectations formed around the undertaking of a doctoral journey of discovery and learning within a supportive environment with close supervisor contact (McCormack, 2005).

These dispositions may also set the boundaries for individual student attainment and perception of their doctoral learning experiences. For Norton (2011), learning experiences are deeply affected by such factors as supervision and other factors. Quality of supervision includes the relationship with the principal supervisor which involves frequency of access and non-interruption of supervision arrangements. Other factors include institutional environmental issues, a sense of belonging and clear guidelines for students and the student characteristics of skills and qualifications, demographics, financial support and psychological factors.

Research undertaken by Long, Ferrier, and Heagney (2006) and furthered in Watson (2008) suggests that

> TAFE [Technical and Further Education] award holders are more likely to be older, to be working full-time and to have family responsibilities. In general, first year attrition rates are higher among students who are over 25 years of age and students who are in full-time paid work and studying part-time (Watson, 2008, p. 44).

Experiences of vocational education and training do not necessarily prepare students for the higher education experience according to Long et al. (2006) who indicate that with its concomitant feelings of inadequacy and isolation (Vines & Vines, 2009) does not support a doctoral research pedagogy. Dispositions to learning (and in particular pedagogy) deployed in technical and further education and higher education settings where learning is externally directed and guided to

enable the accomplishment of pre-specified outcomes, is not paralleled in doctoral research program pedagogies which tend to be solitary and self-directed. This difference in pedagogies can provide a cause of the isolation and inadequacy suggested by Long et al. (2006). This is a significant feature of candidature for many students which in conjunction with the observations by McCormack (2005) suggests that in relation to doctoral non-completion, "the doctoral journey then becomes a story of personal inadequacy that is carried with the student into life beyond doctoral study" (p. 234).

Such feelings of personal inadequacy as indicated by Long et al. (2006) and Thunborg et al. (2013) are suggested as being an influence on the student's habitus to drop out of doctoral study due to decreasing motivation, changing interest in the researched topic, and difficulties with study or perceptions of failing to complete. However, as (McCormack, 2005) suggests, withdrawal or non-completion may be considered as *not failure* subject to the student's ongoing educational dispositions. For some, "…the outcomes of this active process of identity construction was that each [student] left…postgraduate research with a strong sense of personal growth and a feeling of [their] life being in balance" (McCormack, 2005, p. 244).

Thus, there are students who withdraw from doctoral research programs who are not necessarily failing in their doctoral research but use the withdrawal as a strategy to re-assess their goals and priorities. In some cases McCormack (2005) notes that such students do often return to complete their doctorates (sometimes in a new topic area). McCormack concludes that there is a complexity within research students' lives affecting their non-completion including "isolation (social and intellectual), lack of resources, 'absence' of, or poor, supervision and personal crises" (McCormack, 2005, pp. 244-245) which may accentuate the notion to withdraw.

To assist students in developing coping strategies relative to the emotive aspects of doctoral research, various universities have developed a number of support services for those who require assistance to resist withdrawing from their doctorate. Within the Australian doctorate system with its similarity to the "Oxbridge" model (Kiley, 2009) there is a suggestion that it would be beneficial to develop a research culture for research students within the doctoral community. Kiley (2009) and Long et al. (2006) suggest that a culture of peer support within a community of research students is one support strategy that could be implemented to address student withdrawal by supporting the dispositions of students. From an institutional perspective the provision of research related workshops, seminars and short courses on research topics are suggested by Kiley (2011b) as being supportive in developing doctoral student research skills to alleviate the frustration and feelings of inadequacy of students.

Somewhat in contrast other students may appreciate the doctoral experience as a process of personal development. The student may utilise the process for identity building and establishing relationships that form future networks personally and professionally; that is the doctoral experience is transformational. This feeling of transformation by some students is articulated by McCormack (2005) as

> while each [person] held a personally unique conception of research there were commonalities across each of the [participants] conception. Each described

> [themselves] as a life-long learner and saw [their] decision to enrol in a research higher degree as a natural path for a life-long learner. Research was motivated by a passion to make a difference… (p. 241).

This transformation may also involve the enhanced experiences gained from learning within a multicultural group which according to Holley (2013) can produce an "increased diversity [that] has the potential to facilitate innovation by bringing together a broad range of perspectives, insights, and ideas that can be applied across the academic disciplines" (p. 102). This diversity of ethnicities and cultures is reflected in the student cohorts in Australian universities. The beneficial effect of cultural diversity is the expansion of the cultural and social environments to which students are exposed. This expanded cultural exposure results in an enhanced understanding of student's worldviews which may be attributed to

> people bring[ing] an individual diversity to social institutions, shaped by their unique life experiences. The social, cultural, and economic effects on knowledge require higher education to be deliberate in its efforts to recruit a diverse faculty and student body…" (Holley, 2013, p. 100).

The rich multiculturalism within Australian higher education can create a diverse learning experience that increases the satisfaction of learning thereby having an effect on the dispositions to complete doctoral studies. However, external students do not enjoy such diversity of experience while learning so that there is minimal effect of dispositions.

2.11.1 My Story 2.6

> *There is a complexity within the life of a student to which I relate. As an external part-time student there are definitely feelings of isolation not only from the institution and the student cohort but also due to the reduction in socialisation with people of my own age and interests and my family. This was especially noticeable while working overseas in remote locations. Some issues encountered with one's learning do require the input of faculty if more to ease the frustration and possible self-anger of not being able to understand the information in the learning resource. This was part of the decision process I underwent prior to withdrawing from my doctoral studies. The inability to resolve one's learning issues in a doctoral pedagogy of self-directed learning and research proposal development does develop a number of self-doubt issues including feelings of inadequacy, depression, disappointment and a sense of not being able to cope. This does manifest itself as cognitions of failure and a possible stigma that attaches itself to failure. Such thoughts destroy one's motivation to complete a doctoral qualification although not the enjoyment of learning. You simply withdraw from the existing learning project and find and enrol into another.*

2.12 Perceptions of Class

Class is not the sole predictor of a disposition to learning but can be a predictor of the vocational topic or skill that will be learned; an "occupational disposition" (Hidi & Mary Ainley, 2012). Dispositions to learn transcend socio-cultural class (Kosut, 2006) in that regardless of class an enjoyment of learning is intrinsic, whereas an occupational disposition to education is extrinsic and relates to what to learn, that is, it has a vocational expectation. In relation to class Bottero (2004) notes that

> ‘class’ exists ‘out there’ in the public domain, the arena of politics, the media, the workplace, in our encounters with those socially distant from ourselves (again, normally, in various public contexts, or through stereotyped representations of ‘them’) (p. 999).

This does indicate that class is considered to be a social phenomenon, developed in, and maintained in, the social world in that it provides the distinction between various groups of people on the basis of cultural, social and economic characteristics. Groupings of people tend to form around commonalities of these characteristics as suggested by Bourdieu (1985). According to Bourdieu (1987),

> a "class," be it social, sexual, ethnic, or otherwise, exists when there are agents capable of imposing themselves, as authorized to speak and to act officially in its place and in its name, upon those who, by recognizing themselves in these plenipotentiaries, by recognizing them as endowed with full power to speak and act in their name, recognize themselves as members of the class, and in doing so, confer upon it the only form of existence a group can possess (p. 15).

Class is considered by Bourdieu (1990b) to be collective, explicit and oppositional which defines class against the variables of occupation, social status, culture and income. Similarly within Australia, class is distinguished by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the basis of “occupation, social status and culture as well as income”(Hamilton, Downie, & Lu, 2007, p. 9). The literature on class (Bottero, 2004; Bourdieu, 1977a, 1985, 1987; Hamilton et al., 2007) suggests that the defining attributes of class need to be revised to reflect the contemporary use of class as a cultural, individualised and implicit differentiation of societies into groups that share commonalities of socio-economics and culture including education and occupation.

This has led to approaches for defining class that differentiate society beyond economic relations alone; for example the “rational action” approach references attempts to differentiate class on the basis of mobilisation of economic resources and ‘culturist class analysis’, which groups sections of society by the establishment of the classed nature of cultural associations (Bottero, 2004). According to Bottero (2004), in this new class theory it is possible to view class cultures as schemes of differentiation in comparison to types of collectivity. This suggests that the concept of class may be applied to groupings of people who share commonalities of interests such as occupational, educational or recreational interests.

Within Australian society Hamilton et al. (2007) defines “the middle class as those with disposable incomes higher than the bottom 30 per cent and lower than the richest 20 per precent” (p. viii). While this system stratifies the population on the basis of income, the cultural preferences of this society are also differentiated variously on the basis of cultural “tastes” in food, musical genre, linguistics prowess and belief (Bennett et al., 1999). The Australian Bureau of Statistics of the Australian Government does collect statistics relating to an individual’s level of education, occupation, social status and income and use this data to delineate regional populations of Socio-Economic Status (SES) of persons and households.

Importantly, there is a relationship between Socio-Economic Status and levels of education. Lower Socio-Economic Status groups tend not to have attempted or

have not completed a higher education degree. This links to the research of Ishitani (2008), Reay et al. (2005) and Gabb et al. (2006) who concluded that student dropout rates were higher for those students whose parents had not completed a higher education university qualification. According to Gabb et al. (2006) and Grusec (2011) students from Lower Socio-Economic Status families are not exposed to the cultural and social aspects of higher education degrees to enable an accumulation of cultural capital towards university education or the dispositional influences to engender a strong belief in higher education.

However, there is a suggestion that class is less likely to influence the education tastes of Australians in a similar manner to the class categorisation system that was available to Bourdieu (1990b). This is the reasoning applied by Coulangeon and Lemel (2007), Bottero (2004) and Reay (1998) who suggest that society is becoming homogenised with the levelling of incomes. They also suggest that class differentiation does require the addition of culture within the variables used to apply a qualitative component to the quantitative income variable. They indicate that this is necessary to provide a more detailed description of class by accessing dispositions and habitus. That is, a person's "perceptions and appreciations of the social world, and through this, the social world itself" (Bourdieu, 1984a). Thus the transition to and persistence of students within postgraduate research studies is more likely to be influenced by parental educational levels as an inherited educational disposition as suggested by Gabb et al. (2006), Ishitani (2008) and Reay et al. (2005).

This inherited educational disposition is noticeable in the diversity of social class participation resulting from the open access to higher education within Australian universities. According to Pearson et al. (2014) the effect on classed participation has similarities to the French university diversity of class participation as discussed by Bourdieu (1984a) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). This can be demonstrated by an analysis of Australian Government data. The increase in participation for Lower Socio-Economic Status students defined by the postcode of their permanent Australian residential address has increased by approximately 1% in the years from 2004 to 2013 (Department of Education, 2014).

The Lower Socio-Economic Status groups within Australian society are suggested as having similarities to the Lower Class in European and English societies. However, the Lower Socio-Economic Status groups within Australia do have the highest proportion of dropout students when compared to the Middle and Upper Socio-Economic Status groups (Gabb et al., 2006). That is, any proportional variation in the dropout of doctoral students within Australian higher education is not reflective of socio-cultural-economic class participation in higher education.

The parental influence on the student's higher education cultural capital and its effect on student completion of postgraduate research is suggestive of an individualised approach to the class reproduction theories of Berger (2000), and Bourdieu (1977a). By adopting an individualised, cultural and implicit approach to class differentiation, the issue of the geographic or national collectivity of class can be accommodated within the classification system. That is, regardless of Socio-Economic Status group, it may be that the cultural group to which the student identifies is the more reliable predictor of doctoral completion or withdrawal (Bennett et al., 1999).

2.12.1 My Story 2.7

It is interesting when working in overseas' third world economies to observe the poverty and lack of education of the people. By Australian standards they would be classified as 'lower classes'. However, such people seemingly rise above their apparent situation and lead enjoyable lives content within their particular cultural and socio-economic status. This does remind me that perceptions of class are in the mind. Where hierarchies exist within their society there appears to be no development of class. Such hierarchies are based on community decision making not income, chattels or birth right as is the case in our westernised societies. People gain status by their skill in particular activities.

2.13 Student Stratification

An attempt to increase the understanding of the provocations, including personal dispositions, and capital of students transitioning within the English educational system from secondary to either higher education or vocational education and training, was undertaken by Davey (2012). Davey's research into the socio-cultural-economic stratification of these students showed that groupings of students could be delineated on the type of sociological capital accumulated (Bourdieu, 1986), the psychological personality traits (including disposition and the influence of family) and the influence of other social groups on their transition decisions.

One of the distinctions Davey (2012) suggests is that the heterogeneity of the English middle classes is such that a single student profile for the middle class is insufficient to categorise these students with respect to socio-cultural capital. Davey suggests that there are variations in the composition of accumulated cultural and social capital and the dispositions within the middle class. This does have analogies to the Australian middle class as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) which is segmented partly on the basis of income. As income levels change peoples' class status may also alter dependent on their income rather than their socio-cultural preferences. Therefore the stratification of students' socio-cultural-economic class as developed by Davey (2012) may have applicability to the dispositions of Australian students from a social reproduction perspective.

Three distinct student groups are acknowledged by Davey (2012) based on their differing accumulations of capital. These sociological groupings are referred to as "natural, effortless, destined; strategic and ambitious; and aspiring and vocationally-specific" (pp. 3-4). The '*natural, effortless, destined*' group are considered to have high cultural and social capital inherited from highly educated parents and a decision-making process which is extended over time due to the expectation that they will attend university.

The parents, relatives and friends of the '*strategic and ambitious*' cultural group may have attended university and are involved in the educational decision-making process of their children. This group searches for and compares courses and expectations of the various universities upon which they develop their preference of university. Their social capital is broad which unlike the 'natural, effortless, destined' group, is accumulated from inside and outside of the family.

The third sociological group is the '*aspiring and vocationally-specific*' cohort whose parents have little or no experience of higher education. However, they do

accumulate academic credentials (institutional cultural capital) and have little interest in the status of particular institutions in the universities hierarchy. They are primarily seeking to attend university to gain a qualification which they perceive is a requirement for employment and a career. Decision-making is usually independent of families and dependant on social affiliations and possibly deterministically based on the experiences of others. Unlike the previous two sociological groups economic capital has a strong influence on their decision-making.

The study group for Davey's (2012) data collection were the English Middle Class. This research is considered to be applicable to the Australian vocationally trained 'blue-collar' and professionally and vocationally trained 'white-collar' stratified demographics. According to NCLS Research (2013), 'blue-collar' workers would include "those working in skilled trades, craft workers, machine operators, drivers, labourers, agricultural workers and other manual workers" (NCLS Research, 2013, p. 1). Many of the people in this grouping are in the manufacturing and construction sectors and in mining and agriculture. White collar workers are considered to be those employed within the paraprofessional and professional roles relating to education, business, health and science.

Within Australia, according to Andrew (2012) about half of the doctoral students are mid-career and from diverse backgrounds, ethnicity and cultural heritage whose research topic is influenced by their employment. This is reflected in the 'non-traditional' Australian students' doctoral research projects which are developed based on workplace-based problems and the part-time enrolment mode of mature aged students. The characteristics of part-time doctoral students apply to the participants of this research project in that they are middle to later in life professionals working as tertiary teachers and or researchers.

The class background of the participants interviewed for this study is middle class[4]. These participants relate relatively well to the student stratification Davey (2009) identifies in terms of the participants' approach to doctoral study and the familial support structures. The stratification does provide some insight into the disposition of the participants relative to doctoral degree studies and the motivation structures of the habitus to complete.

2.13.1 My Story 2.8

As stated in Life in Reflection, I am the first in family to attend university from a trade and artisan 'blue-collar' family background. I consider myself middle class and by the classification system of Davey "aspiring and vocationally-specific". My parents had a rudimentary knowledge of university education and culture being very comfortable and contented in their middle class 'blue-collar' demographic. They had pride in their artisan skills. The decision to undertake a university education was mine and influenced by my maternal grandfather and work colleagues. I do retain a number of my 'blue-collar' mannerisms and preferences for entertainment genres and dining. The majority of my working life has been in the technical support and administration and project management of mineral exploration. After attaining my undergraduate degree I became involved in the professional occupations of marketing research and TAFE teaching. My income has increased during my

[4] …anyone who works full-time from labourers and shop assistants through to tradies [tradespeople], small business owners, farmers, public servants and low-end professionals such as teachers and nurses (Salt, 2013)

occupational progression reflecting my level of occupation from 'blue-collar' to professional. My tastes in music have not altered as I enjoy much of the popular music within the genres of country and western, classical, and some ethnic music. I prefer to listen rather than be assaulted by music as I enjoy music for its entertainment and relaxation values. My dining preferences are for the less complicated dishes based on seafood and chicken with some red meat accompanied by vegetables or salad. I prefer home cooking or barbeques with friends to dining out, but when we do dine out we seek smaller more intimate restaurants away from the mainstream who offer an acceptable meal quality and ambience. My choice of beverage includes coffee, but not instant coffee, and tea. I will select a red wine in preference to a white wine and enjoy low carbonate beers in an entertainment situation and shared moments with my partner and children. I do not participate physically in sport preferring to read books or watch television of interest on natural science or the less brash European, English and some Australian crime programs and documentaries. Our home is a traditional Australian low set brick and metal roof which is comfortable but not ostentatious on a larger suburban block of land which provides privacy. I have enjoyed my participation and level of learning in higher education more than vocational education and training. Higher education provides a learning platform that encourages critical thinking and problem solving and adaptability of knowledge and skills. I probably revel in my 'blue-collar' family and social background although I have been accused of having an upper class educated linguistic demeanour and in some things, preferences. I have a limited association with my unskilled in-laws due to feeling uncomfortable and unable to discuss their conversational preference topics, and I assume they feel the same about me.

2.14 In Summary

The decision-making model of Bourdieu (1984a, p. 101) is premised on the notion of repetitive and habitual decisions constrained within a social class. The inputs into the decision process are the individual's experiences and knowledge expressed as dispositions, capital and field which are processed within the habitus to make meaning. The habitus will only allow outcomes or practices that are considered to be successful in the current field and situation.

The components of the decision are integrated and have affectedness on the other components and thus the decision. Dispositions and capital may be inherited from family (Grusec, 2011; Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2012) and social groups relative to a particular field or developed from one's experiences and knowledge (Bourdieu, 1977b; Davey, 2009; Fuchs, 2003; Reay et al., 2005). Intergenerational (family) and social group depositions and capital is transferred by social reproduction within a particular field and social class (Berger, 2000; Bourdieu, 1977a).

Decisions are made within the habitus from information held as either disposition or capital which is relative to a particular field and are considered to be durable within that field. Fields are social spaces within which the student has identified such as education and sub-fields such as higher education or postgraduate education. While Bourdieu (1977b) considers decisions are habitual and repetitive based on dispositions and capital, there is a duality of disposition such that they may be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic refers to undertaking tasks such as the completion of a doctorate for the enjoyment of learning while extrinsic refers to an external

benefit that may accrue from the program of learning such as employment (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In conjunction with dispositions, the decision made within the habitus may be influenced by the various forms of capital; cultural, social, symbolic or economic. Capital, which is the accumulation of resources either physical or cognitive, can enhance or affect dispositions such that the natural tendency to act, the disposition, is controlled by capital resulting in a contrary decision. Such contrary decisions are deterministic as they are not the natural tendency to act in specific situations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007). This is often the nature of student withdrawal or dropout decisions where factors external to the student have the greater influence on the student's disposition to persist. Contrary to the preoccupation of Bourdieu (1977b) on habitual decisions, this research project postulates that withdrawal decisions are considered and are developed over time with respect to cognitive and experiential conflicts due to influences on the student's dispositions and capital.

A student's expectations of doctoral study can be affected by the experiences and interactions between the student and the supervisor. Student experiences that can have an effect on disposition and capital are also gained from the student's personal development gained whilst completing a doctorate. To some students there is an expectation that doctoral study will be collaborative between themselves and their supervisor. Where the expectations of this relationship are not achieved by the supervisor's benign neglect or departure (McCormack, 2005; Wisker & Robinson, 2013), the resultant negative experience becomes included in the student's accumulated cultural capital. Such negative experiences can have an effect on the student's disposition such that the student withdraws from doctoral study. In response to the problem of doctoral withdrawal, many Australian universities have been instigating training in doctoral pedagogies including conflict resolution and university administrative processes (Malfroy, 2005).

In addition to the student and supervisor relationship, the experiences of the student within the doctoral studies environment can have an effect on the dispositions and accumulated capitals of the student. Learning may be enhanced with a student's exposure to a multicultural student cohort and prior learning experiences. Unlike prior formal learning experiences, doctoral studies are undertaken in relative isolation in that they are student directed rather than institutional and lecturer directed. While some students experience difficulties with this pedagogy of isolation, other students may undergo a transformational experience and cognitively, culturally and socially develop to complete their doctorates (Holley, 2013; McCormack, 2005).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Outline

Given the requirement to explore the dropout occurrence and the feelings and beliefs of the students, there was a need to develop a methodology to collect data on the students' dispositions of doctoral education and the circumstances of their decision to withdraw from their studies. Thus, the methodology was required to collect data on the students' dispositional development towards doctoral education, their beliefs and understandings of why they were enrolled and what experiences had influenced their departure. The data collected is constrained by the sociological decision-making framework of Pierre Bourdieu (1984a, p. 101).

3.2 Research Methodology

There are a number of recently defined research methods within the qualitative paradigm which may involve

> the studied use and collection of variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artefacts, and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, pp. 3-4).

This statement of qualitative research is analogous with that of Somekh et al. (2007) who suggests that educational research "is not a discrete discipline" (p. 7) but is influenced by the disciplines of "sociology, psychology and philosophy" (p. 7). It is within the qualitative paradigm that the methodology for this study was developed.

As the focus of the research is on the exploration of the influences on dispositions, an interpretative research paradigm has been selected for the study to describe and interpret the student dropout phenomenon (Merriam, 2002b). According to Merriam (2002b) this paradigm will enable participants to make meaning of their situation which is then mediated through the researcher. This invokes an inductive research strategy and a descriptive outcome of the phenomenon of doctoral student dropout. Such a research paradigm can utilize interviews, observations and document analysis or a combination of these methods to construct an understanding of the participants' worldviews. The findings are presented as a rich descriptive account which is related to the research literature to develop themes within the data.

Qualitative research includes such 'modes of inquiry' as semiotics, narrative, content, discourse and even statistical analysis to present data. Qualitative paradigms may incorporate the methods, techniques and approaches of ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnographies, interviews, survey research and participant observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The current study includes the use of *phenomenology, autoethnography, ethnography, cultural studies, interviews and survey research*. The selection of these methods and techniques within a qualitative paradigm were invoked in order to collect data from the participants by questionnaire and interview (Spradley, 1979). This enabled the study of the phenomenon of student dropout and the effect on the participants of this phenomenon.

Merriam and Simpson (2000) describe ethnography as a collection of methods used "to uncover the social order and meaning a setting or situation has for the people actually participating in it" (p. 104). Autoethnography is ethnography focused on the *self*. The method is described by Ellingson and Ellis (2008) as connecting the autobiographical with the cultural and social aspects of the phenomenon of which the *self* is a part. Therefore, autoethnography can produce detailed integrated data of relational and personal experiences. Phenomenology is described by Titchen and Hobson (2007) as "the study of lived, human phenomena within everyday social contexts in which the phenomena occur from the perspective of those who experience them" (p. 121).

The research required the collection of the participants' personal thoughts and feelings of a past event; drop out or dropping out of doctoral research degrees. To collect such reflective critical memories an ethnographic mode of inquiry was recommended within the research literature by Merriam and Simpson (2000). This involved the use of interviews to capture the thoughts and feelings of dropout. The interview was preceded by a questionnaire to collect the family background data to establish dispositional development of participants. The research data collection tactics were determined from the literature on qualitative research methods (Chang, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2002a).

3.2.1 My Story 3.1

Although the literature provided the basis for which methods to use, the final decision was made in conjunction with my supervisors. While a qualitative paradigm was always envisaged, the use of autoethnography was not considered initially. I had read of autoethnography as method by Ellis and Bochner (2006) and Chang (2008) as an extension of ethnography by Merriam and Simpson (2000). I had originally intended to use an ethnographic method only but this altered with the realisation that I had dropped out of doctoral study and my experiences could be utilised as autoethnographic data. An approach to the university to reinstate my enrolment with changes to the original proposal, namely the use of autoethnography was received positively and encouraged by two lecturers to whom I posed this notion. My only concern was whether there would be sufficient data to complete a thesis. On the advice of my supervisor, external participant ethnographies were added to the data collected to enhance the collected data.

3.3 Method

3.3.1 Autoethnography

An autoethnographic method of data collection was selected to develop an understanding of the emotive, cognitive and action aspects of dropout or 'dropping out' from the researcher's experiences along with the application of a number of ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) of participants who considered or indeed 'dropped out' of doctoral study.

Autoethnography is, according to Ellingson and Ellis (2008) the research, writing and method of personal experiences. This may integrate autobiographical narratives to the cultural, social and political spaces when studying a phenomenon of which the researcher is a participant. This integration of data is supported by Chang (2008) who suggests that autoethnography is simultaneously ethnographic and autobiographical. However, the emphasis is on the ethnographic as the method of

research although both are reflective of lived experiences. Dual method studies of autoethnography and ethnography (McMahon & Penney, 2013) have been undertaken to integrate the participants own experiences and inter-relationships with others within the bounds of the research and which may affect the interpretation of the research data.

When analysing a personally lived experience Alexander (2005) has a preference for an autoethnographic method to provide rich description of the participants experiences. Such experiences are a self-conscious reflexivity on the participant's lived experiences which allow the researcher to "see the self, see the self through and as the other" (Alexander, 2005, p. 423). This may bring a closeness, subjectivity and engagement to the research with the personal involvement or personal 'insider' narratives that may not be attained from a detached observer undertaking a phenomenological study. Unlike phenomenological studies, autoethnography does not 'bracket off' or put aside the researcher's biases but instead incorporates this bias into the rich details of the narrative and subsequent analysis. This richness of narrative is articulated by Ellis and Bochner (2006) who consider that autoethnography is "a desire to move ethnography away from the gaze of the distanced and detached observer and toward the embrace of intimate involvement, engagement, and embodied participation." (p. 433).

As the research study has been undertaken to develop an understanding of the issues encompassing the drop out decision and the effect of this decision on the researcher as participant, the researcher's perception of reality including biases is being analysed. There is a time component in the decision to drop out of doctoral study in that the decision involves a personal cognitive process over time. The decision is considered to be emotive with perceptions of failure personally and socially. Such decisions may have personal future implications sociologically, psychologically and vocationally. Thus the use of ethnography of the Self that reflects on the phenomenographic aspects of the decision for emotive details is suggested as being a better methodology with which to develop an understanding of dropout.

3.3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is the study of the lived experiences of others which are captured by observational techniques or interviews and according to Goldbart and Hustler (2007) "literally means 'writing about people'" (p. 16). To Goldbart and Hustler ethnography has the distinctive feature of capturing how people are able to make meaning of their situation and thus interpret their situation within the constraints of their ontologies and epistemologies. That is, they view the world through a lens based on observed knowledge and experience.

Where the researcher is a member of the group and the situation that is being researched Merriam (2002a) is of the notion that the primary data collection method for ethnographic research is that of participant observer. Data collection techniques include "interviews, formal and informal, and the analysis of documents, records, and artefacts also constitute the data set along with a fieldworker's diary of each days happenings, personal feelings, ideas, impressions, or insights with regard to those events" (Merriam, 2002a, p. 237). The researchers' diary does become part of the data sources and allows for reflection by the researcher on personal development and biases during the research process.

For this study, accounts drawn from ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) of the dropout experiences of a small number of participants were collected by interview to add research depth to the autoethnographic account of the researcher's own dropout experiences. These ethnographic accounts were collected via the 'friendly conversation' (Spradley, 1979) of the ethnographic interview to offer points of comparison and similarity to the autoethnographic accounts presented by the author. These ethnographic accounts were intertwined with the autoethnographic narratives to accentuate key themes within the dropout experience. The combined narratives provide a phenomenographic insight into the dropout experience (Moustakas, 1994). These phenomenographic narratives provide a 'thick description' of the biases, emotions and other cognitions of the phenomenon of 'dropping out' and which are the basis for the meaning making of the participants' lived experiences. The interpretation developed from this 'thick description' conveyed the meanings that the participants have of their experiences using in part, some of the interpretation provided by the participants. This meaning includes beliefs and understandings (dispositions) of the participants relevant to the act of dropping out (Merriam, 2002a).

3.3.3 Data Collection

It is the opinion of Chang (2008) that autoethnographic data collection should use a similar process as that of ethnography. Field data is collected by recording "participation, self-observation, interview and document review" (Chang, 2008, p. 49) and verified by triangulation with data from other sources as it is collected. Unlike ethnographic data collection where the researcher maintains contact with the participants, autoethnographic data records the researcher's recollection and reflection of the personally lived experience, which in this study was that of student dropout and re-engagement with study and the involvement of others in that lived experience.

Thus, the collection of the autoethnographic data followed a three stage process of recognition, engagement and conscientisation posited by Hickey and Austin (2007). This process includes the "recognition of Self as a social being formed via a range of processes, engagement with critical consciousness raising activity…as socially formative constructions," and "…the enactment of critical pedagogical concerns as central tenets…" (Hickey & Austin, 2007, p. 24). In practice this involved recording my own memories as responses to the questions posed to the other participants. Over a period of 12 months these responses were written, embellished as additional memories were discovered and arranged by time and by theme. The data is presented as 'Life in Reflection' and 'My Story' throughout this thesis.

Within the boundaries of the research, the ethnographic data relate the participant recollections of the personal experience of dropout from their doctoral program. These personal recollections include input by 'others', who by connection to the researcher's and participant's education journey are parts of the recollections of the experience of dropping out. 'Others' included family members, social friends, and teachers and lecturers within the vocational education and training Institutes and Universities that the researcher and participants have attended. The data from 'Others' was also collected by the researchers' reflection of personal oral and written communications. Where such data was considered to be relevant to the aims of this research it was incorporated in the study.

Participants in this project were interviewed using two methods; the first was a questionnaire to record parental and familial influences on their decision to undertake doctoral research study. The questionnaire recorded the parental and family educational attainment and occupations as cultural background to the student's educational and sociological dispositions. A sample of this questionnaire is provided in Appendix A. The second method utilised personal interviewing using computer communication software as the interview recording mediums (included audio and video formats) to collect a 'thick' descriptive or 'rich' image as a source of data (Guest et al., 2011; Spradley, 1979). These personal interviews were completed in an open-ended discussion manner of recollections of each participants personal dropout experience, university doctoral pedagogical methods and supervision style (Wengraf, 2006).

In practice the interviews were conducted remotely (King & Horrocks, 2012) using the video/audio recording software *Evaer* (Evaer Technology, 2013) attached to Skype video communication software (Skype, 2013). This software allowed for the synchronous recording of audio and video (depending on participant and telephony provider communication technology). These interviews were recorded in a digital format for later transcription and analysis. The analysis included non-verbal mannerisms that enhanced the analysis of the interview data collected. One of the interviews was recorded in audio format alone due to video transmission issues caused by a slow transmission baud rate. The participants were emailed a copy of their transcript for comment and additional detail where necessary.

Naturalistic or non-verbal mannerisms were only available where the participant interviews were video recorded allowing for a visual observation of the participant which has been incorporated into the interview transcriptions. Other audible mannerisms such as laughter or sighs were noted from the audio recordings. Detailed physiological and psychological information of the participants, where possible, has been included in the transcriptions to provide an emotive aspect and personality to the participants' responses. This is thought to enhance the believability of the participant narratives and to assess the depth of emotion attached to their reasons for dropout.

The transcription of naturalistic mannerisms and utterances enhances the interpretation of the transcribed data. There is a difficulty in interpreting the oral utterances and non-verbal content of an interview unless these features are recorded. This is the opinion of Poland (1995) and Lapadat (2000) who suggest that transcription strategies are required to record these sounds and behaviours. Such sounds and behaviours are considered to be reflective of the emotions and thoughts of the interviewee. Lapadat suggests that a single exhaustive system of recording such data is not achievable due to the varying research intentions of researchers. Thus the participant interview transcriptions record utterances as phonetics, while the observable behaviours in the video recordings are described within the participant profiles.

An interview schedule of the topics to be discussed was maintained for each interview as a method of data collection control. The interviews typically ranged in duration from 30 minutes to 45 minutes with later re-interviewing as required to verify themes and 'member check' analysed data. After the recordings were transcribed by the researcher, the digital versions of the interviews and transcriptions

were stored onsite on the researcher's computer and backed up to an external hard disk. All digital data and information is password protected. Paper-based copies of the transcripts and other confidential documentation such as participant identities have been stored in a lockable filing cabinet at the researcher's office. A transcription of one of the interviews is shown in Appendix I.

Interviews were undertaken with a conversational style of inquiry (Moustakas, 1994) using the interviewing approaches of Moustakas (1994) and Wengraf (2006). According to Moustakas (1994) the use of an "empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13). The conversational style of interviewing is regarded by Wengraf (2006) as a coproduction between the interviewer and the participant which then results in the 'in depth' recording of data. Such data allows for the analysis of the emotive and rational aspects of the participants' recollections of their dropout or dropping out experiences.

Two follow-up interviews were attempted to verify themes from the first interview. The first interviews were primarily conducted around two questions:

1. Who or what was the motivation for you to undertake a doctoral research degree? and
2. What were your reasons, thoughts and provocations for dropping out of the program?

The use of this open ended style of interviewing was to provide the opportunity for the participant to respond in a conversational style. The participants appeared to be relaxed with the questions which provided them with the opportunity to respond with a level of detail that was comfortable for them. The detail in their narratives increased as the interviews proceeded which allowed for phenomenological details to be included in the analysis relative to their emotive thoughts and feelings of the issues they were articulating.

Not all of the participants responded to the discussion questions in the order described above. The participants seemed to have reflected on their possible responses from the description of the research provided with the researcher's request for participants for the study. Some preferred to discuss their reasons for dropping out of doctoral study prior to discussing and linking their dropout to their provocations for undertaking this qualification. In an emergent interpretative interviewing technique, questions that were developed from the conversational responses were posed to clarify the participant narratives. These additional questions varied between the participants based on the information provided during the interview.

Data collection was undertaken during August and September, 2013 after receiving the participants' completed questionnaire and Form of Consent as shown in the examples in Appendices C and D. The individual interviews were transcribed during the same period. The participants were emailed copies of their respective transcriptions with a request for additional reflections on their narrative responses. Two of the interviewed participants reviewed and corrected their transcribed interviews for word accentuations. However, words which had not been audible and decipherable from the recorded interviews have not been resolved and are therefore

not recorded in the transcriptions. None of the participants felt the need for further interviews to discuss any aspects or issues with their initial interview.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

An analytical framework drawn from Bourdieu's sociological concepts of dispositions, habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977b) was applied to thematically sort and make-sense of the captured data. Analysis of the data was undertaken to interpret and understand the cultural meanings, behaviours and thoughts applicable to the research focus. That is, *what influences the attitudes and dispositions of the students to dropout or to dropout and return at a later time (dropping out) to complete their professional or academic doctoral research?* The analysis attempted to identify themes within the autoethnographic and ethnographic data using a three stage process of descriptive coding, interpretative coding and identification of overarching themes as described by King and Horrocks (2012). Descriptive coding is the initial reading and identification of the parts of the transcript that are useful in "addressing your research question" (King & Horrocks, 2012, p. 152). The second stage of interpretative coding requires the grouping of descriptive codes that have commonalities of meaning to create an interpretative code while the identification of overarching themes requires the grouping of interpretative codes that are relevant to the research.

This iteration process (Chang, 2008; King & Horrocks, 2012) was undertaken to examine the themes within the data relative to participant beliefs, understandings, habitus, cultural capital and emotions in relation to dropout. This process followed Chang (2008) and involved the review, fracture, categorisation, rearrangement and selection and de-selection of data to "simply gaze at collected data in order to comprehend how ideas, behaviours, material objects, and experiences from the data interrelate" (Chang, 2008, p. 127). This involved reading the interviews and questionnaire data to identify (fracture) and categorise the data into interpretative codes, reorganise the coded data into themes by the selection of data applicable and non-applicable to the research. By removing the non-applicable data from the useful data to be analysed allows for clarity of analysis and interpretation.

Applied Thematic Analysis (ATA) is considered by Guest et al. (2011) to offer a synthesised methodological framework which is rigorous and inductive and designed to identify and analyse themes within data. According to Guest et al. (2011) thematic analysis can move "beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes" (p. 10). Thus dropout commonalities between participants may be identified and analysed from a phenomenological perspective for understanding.

The use of qualitative analysis software such as NVivo (QSR International, 2013) as the analysis tool for the collected data from the literature and the participant interviews was undertaken. The structure of the NVivo software allows for the referencing of data by nodes, the codes used to analyse data thematically. The application of Applied Thematic Analysis provided a mechanism to present an accurate and comprehensive account while preserving the stories and experiences of dropout or dropping out of the participants (Guest et al., 2011). An example excerpt of an analysed and NVivo coded transcript is included in Appendix G. The coding structure developed and used in NVivo is given as Appendix H.

Figure 3-1 Hierarchy of Research Methodology

3.3.5 Participants

Participants who have, or have considered dropping out from doctoral study were the sample population sought for recruitment for this research project. As doctoral dropouts were not known to the researcher or could be identified due to the confidentiality of university student records, the participants were required to self-identify. Therefore a decision to use the reach of social media was undertaken to contact possible participants using social media. An advertisement was placed in LinkedIn and in professional association members' newsletters of the Cultural Studies Association of Australasia and The Sociological Association of Australia requesting the assistance of possible participants in this media.

3.3.5.1 My Story 3.2

The recruitment of participants was a major issue in the collection of data for my thesis. I knew the profile of the participants required but did not have contact with any persons who had attempted a doctorate. My frustration with this issue was discussed with my supervisors past and present without resolution. For reasons of confidentiality, the university could not divulge which of its doctoral students had withdrawn and we considered that it was unlikely that people would freely divulge their dropout status for personal reasons.

The notion to use social media to attract attention to my research project was developed from the employment advertisements on LinkedIn. However, the issue

with this form of recruitment was how to validate that the prospective participants were dropout students. This was discussed with my present supervisor with the result that we believed that validation could be achieved during the interview based on their stated experiences. This was linked to the assessment principles of Recognition of Prior Learning with which I had a number of years of experience. The decision to use professional associations was a joint decision that provided access to a pool of educationally validated people due to the conditions of membership of these associations.

Thus an advertisement using strategies of research appeal and personal interest was written to attract prospective participants. While not hugely successful in terms of numbers of applicants, the people who did agree to participate were genuine in their reflections of their personal dropout experiences and their interest in the project.

Three participants were sought so as to record four separate experiences; the three participants plus myself. Participant interest to be involved in this project was received from two international participants and five from within Australia. From these eight expressions of interest four interviews were completed and transcribed. With the withdrawal of one of the participants citing 'possible future professional issues' the data collected from the remaining three participants and my own lived data as an autoethnography was retained for the analysis. Therefore the participants to this research project include an autoethnographic and three ethnographic interviewees. The possible participants who were not interviewed withdrew their support for the research by discontinuing their communication after the initial exchange of emails without providing their reasons. Because of the small number of interviews completed (four) the interpretation will not allow for generalizability of the conclusions (Lewin, 2007).

The lived experiences of the participants are the focus of this research. According to Ellingson (2011) autoethnographers are those researchers who "study their own lives and/or those of intimate others, community members, or strangers." (p. 599). Thus the researched participants who have been involved in a personal or academic relationship in the dropout experience from doctoral research are the participants to this study. The use of pseudonyms to protect the anonymity for the participants was applied by the selection of a name which in the researcher's opinion suited the personality of the participant.

To enable the data collected from participants to be included within the study a 'Consent Form' was requested and received from those persons who provided the data for this research. A copy of this 'Consent Form' is shown in Appendix D. This agreement to be able to use the data presented in the interviews is a requirement of the University of Southern Queensland (2013) and the National Health and Medical Research Council et al. (2007) for researchers undertaking qualitative research into human experiences. Additionally an ethics approval to undertake the research was issued by the USQ Fast Track Human Research Ethics Committee on 5 July 2013, under Approval No. H13REA163. A copy of this approval is shown in Appendix B.

3.4 Participant Profile Summaries

Participants replied by email after reading the request for participants in members' newsletters of professional associations. Following from this initial contact the process of arranging interviews was undertaken using email, text messaging via mobile telephone or telephone.

3.4.1 Elizabeth

The day of my conversation with Elizabeth, she was at home commenting on the noise and dust from the construction of a three level block of accommodation units being constructed next to her unit building and lamenting the necessity for the destruction of the "lovely big tropical trees" next door. She seemed relaxed and comfortable about explaining her reasons for attempting her doctoral degree and withdrawing within twelve months. The conversation began with an exchange of mutual interests and memberships to professional associations. Interrupting telephone calls were intercepted and recorded by the voicemail facility of the telephone.

Elizabeth completed her undergraduate degree with an honours year and was working as a part-time researcher with a Government department in Australia prior to her current employment. Within her immediate family her father had been a vocationally trained journalist and her mother a stay-at-home mum. Elizabeth's sisters have completed their undergraduate degrees and two cousins have completed Doctor of Philosophy qualifications.

Her decision to undertake a postgraduate research degree was prompted by three reasons; her desire to return to a specific geographic locality; her unsuccessful attempt for an employment role a few years earlier; and the offer of a Doctor of Philosophy candidature as part of an Australian Research Council funded project. This provided her with the financial means to live, which is tutorial fees plus a living stipend. She articulates her provocations to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy as:

> *I had worked…in the early 2000's and 2001 with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and I had been trying to get work back [there]—and this was late 2005. I was completing the Graduate Certificate in Australian Indigenous Knowledges, while I was living in Melbourne and this opportunity came very suddenly for a PhD, so it was the attraction to move back. Also, a few years earlier I had missed out on a job in Melbourne purely because I didn't have a PhD, and it came down to two final candidates. I was told later by one of the supervisory panel that I had, that I was by far the better candidate but the Director of the Institute wanted someone with a PhD. So I thought if a PhD is going to get me the jobs that I want, I'd better get one, and um you know I wanted to return…*

Elizabeth withdrew from her doctoral research program at the completion of twelve months due to the poor research supervision practices demonstrated by her supervisors. This she narrates with

> *I had no real personal or professional respect for my main supervisor. I worked out very quickly that I, as I came up a few months before my scholarship, started to actually help this person to write up some research he'd been doing and I knew about a month, less than two months into my PhD that it wasn't for me. Working with this person was not going to give me the experience that I wanted. I didn't think I was going to learn anything from him That I really had no personal or professional respect for him but unfortunately the scholarship was tied to the funding which he had acquired, so there was no way of taking the scholarship elsewhere…*

Elizabeth has not attempted to recommence her Doctor of Philosophy at her current university or any other university although she does have suggested topics of research interest. Her preference is not to recommence a research doctorate at her current university based on her recent experiences of doctoral supervision and institutional support. Although disappointed by her experiences as a doctoral student, Elizabeth has not absolutely rejected the possibility of recommencing her doctoral journey. She articulates these thoughts:

> *I think it would need to be with my choice of supervisor and my choice of institution, yes. Um the topic I was looking at the working title is 'Passing on Memories' and it was women and social networks and it was looking at how women connect into a place through the types of networks that they, I need to stop for a second. [Long pause] I'm actually having my blood pressure monitored for 24 hours so when the thing goes off I need to stay still.*
>
> *Um, sorry what was I saying about social memory and, yeah that topic is very interesting. That would be a good topic, it would be a very useful topic for policy issues to the Government, but um I'd be very hesitant to do—I actually um I have advised people not to enrol in PhDs at [this university] and I'd certainly be very careful about choosing my supervisor.*

Elizabeth appears to demonstrate some embitterment towards the University due to her experiences during her doctoral candidature. She expresses her disappointment at not having her doctoral research expectations met by her supervisor whom she attributes, along with the University for her non-achievement. She is of the belief that her contributions to the University have not been appreciated including her presentation at an Australian Sociological Association conference or her attempts to establish a postgraduate research community within her University. These losses of expectations are articulated in her interview;

> *So I was really looking forward to being an on campus student in an intellectual community. I was Vice President of the postgraduate students association so I actually had quite a bit to do with the university Chancellors. We got the first postgraduate symposium off the ground in 2006 which was a great opportunity for postgraduate students because then their work [was exposed] to an academic audience. But there just wasn't the interest in promoting a postgraduate community, there just wasn't, there wasn't the interest in developing this as a kind of stepping stone to put people into academic life.*
>
> *In that 12 months I think the university got quite a lot of value from me in I gave a seminar on a theory I was using as part of the school social policy. With that seminar series I helped to organise and gave a presentation at the postgraduate symposium. I also gave a paper at the TASA [The Australian Sociological Association] conference…*

For Elizabeth the doctoral research journey was disappointing and in conjunction with the attitude and behaviour of her supervisors neglecting their supervisory obligations, she has abandoned her aspiration to compete a Doctor of Philosophy degree at her current employing university.

Elizabeth's provocation for agreeing to participate in this research is narrated in the interview as:

No, it's really an interesting topic I mean I know how difficult it can be to get participants in research and when it came around in the TASA [The Australian Sociological Association] news I thought that looks interesting and then when I read the topic I thought yeah that's really interesting and I think the results will be very, very useful. Because one of the things when I was doing the PhD I thought somebody needs to do a PhD on is doing a PhD the best way to develop research skills in people.

This suggests that although Elizabeth is disappointed with the outcome of her own doctoral studies, she has maintained her personal interest in research and assisting others to achieve their aspiration.

3.4.2 Clare

My conversation with Clare was scheduled for 1:30pm; she contacted me at 1:20pm to initiate our discussion. This conversation had been cancelled and rescheduled on two separate occasions, the first prior to Clare departing Australia for a holiday, the second to integrate with her employment commitments. Contact was maintained with text messages while Clare was overseas resulting in the conversation happening on the agreed date; although 10 minutes early. There was a hint of impatience in her actions to commence the interview.

Our conversation was conducted from her workplace at her employing university. The room as it appeared on the Skype video contained the expected filing cabinets and the office door at her back. She smiled as we exchanged greetings and launched into a conversational mode easily and quickly by inquiring about other participants and whether I would be accepting of additional interviews for my thesis. My assumption at the time, and remains so, is that Clare enjoys helping others.

Clare did not arrive at university from a family background in tertiary education. Her father was a retail manager in a small business type of enterprise. This necessitated that he undertake all of the management functions pertaining to business operations and strategy. He was, according to his daughter, successful in business. Her mother was home based caring for her family.

Her provocation for attempting a doctoral qualification comes from observing her lecturers whilst completing her undergraduate degree. Her articulation of her motivation to undertake a doctoral qualification is:

Oh, look it was definitely in my undergraduate degree. My undergraduate degree was in social science ecology. I looked at ecology international studies as double honours and that was, that degree was very much focused towards getting a government job as a policy person or um what have you, you know entering postgraduate programs. At that time I was 37 I had a 10 year old or 11 or 12 year old um and looked around at the people that were teaching in there and I thought 'no' this is where I want to be. I actually thought that all of the academics that were teaching me had much better jobs than I could find anywhere else. You know the hours are pretty flexible they do interesting stuff you engage with students there's a lot of you know colourful people in um in universities and it's always great to work with young people.

Clare's enjoyment of learning from her experiences as an undergraduate was the provocation for her undertaking a research doctorate and reinforcing her belief in

learning or intrinsic disposition to learn. That is, her disposition to learning was possibly developed from her earlier university experiences.

Clare was employed at a different university as a Research Assistant when an opportunity to enrol into a Doctor of Philosophy degree became available as a condition of a research grant. She enrolled and after ten years was withdrawn by the university from the doctoral program. Clare refers to her non-completion to a supervisory method of 'abandonment' which she describes as:

> *When I did my PhD they used to talk about going on with this journey with your supervisor, they say there are these three positions um where your supervisor ah motivates you and there can be supervision where your supervisor learns with you and there can be supervision by abandonment which means, it's a really an old model of supervision where it's a bit like well now you're enrolled you go off and do your PhD and um come back to me when it's done.*

During this period of 'abandonment' Clare became interested and involved in student politics

> *because my supervisor was so bad I got heavily involved in student politics in order to try and change the system and, and that took up a lot of time and um what that lead to was me understanding a lot more about HDR process so that's what interested me with your research too. I think if I had written a PhD in my PhD should have, could have been about the policy and politics of higher education by research study.*

After an exclusion period of 3 years she recommenced her doctorate and has enrolled again with a different supervisor in a peer group environment which she states if very helpful in undertaking her research for her Doctor of Philosophy. Her admiration for this pedagogy in completing her research degree is explained as

> *I just and ah have a much better personal relationship with him and ah I know how to work with him you know we have a much better working relationship. Oh yeah he is really great unfortunately he is very sick, [he's] got Parkinson's disease and I, and the other thing is I work with [my supervisor] in a um research group, there's three of us who are um all oldies um we're all over 50 and we all work in fairly...with two other people in my research group that I deal with—we're in the research group together so we go to [my supervisor's] house and we work on papers together and then just we are just really a productive team because they have the ideas and I have the um, like they guess out of the three of us, I'm the one with the more practical research skills like writing and getting things from the library you know referencing stuff, but they have the courage to, they have the workplace knowledge and the courage to just make the argument. So they know what the argument is that they want to write about um and I have the more practical skills to put that into a paper. So we've been published quite a few times and yeah...*

Clare seems to have accepted her withdrawal with a calmness approximating that of being fatalistic, that is there was no alternative. She did not have the knowledge (cultural capital) or the forcefulness to confront the University with the situation as it unfolded. Clare is currently undertaking her Doctor of Philosophy in a peer group environment.

Clare's interest in participating in the research appears to altruistic as she is aware of the research topic from her previous university. This is captured in the following excerpt from our interview;

Clare: I might be able to find some more people

Clare: So you're doing a PhD on peoples leaving their PhDs, that right?

Question: That's right

Clare: [Laughter] I love it. I have heard of one or two of these before. I remember there was one at Murdoch going when I was at Murdoch the first time, why I did not complete my PhD or, she did finish in the end.

Question: Yes, yes. Well I'm in the same boat I went out and came back. No it's just something that um was a dream to me and there was not a lot of information out there on it especially um looking at it through a sociological viewpoint thing like that, so um it was interesting; I think so anyway.

Clare: Have you got many respondents?

Question: You're the third interview.

Clare: Oh great. Yeah well I'll see if I can find some more for you; I mean yeah I do know one or two who didn't finish when I um when I went through, so I might if you want?

This exchange at the commencement of our interview was an indication of Clare's personality. As we progressed through the interview it became apparent that Clare was a caring and altruistic person who had an interest in student affairs relative to university education.

3.4.3 Gianni

My first vision of Gianni when he accepted my Skype call was a smiling face looking back at me on the computer screen with a mug of coffee in his right hand. He was at home seated in front of the computer in what I assumed was a residential unit as the bed was in the same room. He appeared relaxed; an assumption soon borne out as we progressed through greetings and transitioned into the interview dialogue.

Gianni contends that his provocation to commence a Doctor of Philosophy was natural and intrinsic. He articulates his provocation as:

Oh um, look it runs in my family. Basically we're a bunch of academics basically. My sister is an Associate Professor and she's been researching for most of her life, and my grandmother was a researcher and medical researcher, it ran in my family. My father's always read, so we just have all that...yeah we've always done this and um, it seems I've been around people who have written a lot and it's also led to relationships and friends and of course family and that sort of thing. In the sense it was natural, a natural progression from these to develop work and develop my interest and develop my ...and visual arts and philosophy. So I in there totally [phew pause] they are areas which won't get me employment so I've gotta love it.

When questioned about his withdrawal from doctoral search he provided this explanation:

Basically I had an accident that—so basically I required surgery from that, so it was pretty major surgery and um you may not be able to see [points to a visibly large surgical scar on left hand side of face from temple to throat] but I have a big slit down the throat from the accident. It was pretty major you know. I was on a farm in New Zealand when it happened and um basically I lost a fair bit of time. The reason for withdrawing, it was only a temporary withdrawal of seven months.

When asked about his feelings on his strategic withdrawal from his Doctor of Philosophy he indicates that withdrawing was a relief as the stress at losing time, caused by his accident and subsequent hospitalisation, to complete was becoming intolerable. Thus his withdrawal was a strategy to maintain the balance of his three year candidature to successfully complete his doctorate within the required timeframe. In this respect his withdrawal was different to the other participants who withdrew due to unsatisfactory supervision caused by a lack of supervision, non-completion within the required timeframe caused by supervisor abandonment and a fear of failure caused by personal anxiety. This causes Gianni to criticise the time duration allowed by Australian universities to complete doctoral studies. He explains his concerns as:

I compare it to a lot of countries where it's four to five years minimum. Yeah, the thing that would be interesting you if you're actually looking at this is you know, just to investigate the way that it's run and I think that Australia is a victim of its own issues. In other words lack of university funding and in it the lack of money means that's caused [so] that schools and Faculties want to get their Masters in as soon as possible and I think that there's sort of well I don't know what level of agreement they have made. There are responsible and I think that there's sort of I don't know, I don't know what little agreement they made or level of agreement for 3.5 years which I think is um giving them - if you want to do a decent doctorate, is kind of a bit of a tough call at times I think for a lot of people...

He associates his criticism of time and funding for research degrees to being problematic for academic support throughout the research degree candidature. He is quite vocal in his criticism which he articulates as:

Um, then I think that there's a certain level, there's things that I'm passionate about, that what you're actually talking about or writing about, and particularly I think there's got to be, I think there's things that will come out of where you've got to and a lot of time and a lot of um commitment of difficult material. To actually stay with it you have to actually wind your way into it. Then I think I found that to some degree, I think one of the difficulties is sometimes the earlier part of the research which is quite enjoyable and a pleasure to read and giving your time to that. But then you get into actually doing to um reducing it down into something which is approaching the question of the thesis and then from that point then narrowing it down into chapters I think then it's a lot difficult point. I find sometimes that sometimes that there; real pleasure will be um well really you become quite an energised why because there is a lot of pressure around getting, getting these...points to something or arguments and ah it's quite queer or quite tough in a way of um we don't necessarily all have that personal background in our academic loading, I have philosophically but only through attrition through other people

through associating with what I've got to learn it um there isn't necessarily how we normally think so we it's an acquired skill or some acquired habits and the first real levels in this example the real level um control around this as well as a different thing around it ah there's the target part of the thing. Because I don't get the support would be mean like to get—ah I have a friend doing his PhD and he gets a lot more support than I get. I mean I know the thing but there's one thing this country should work on it's getting that academic support to you.

Yeah, I tell you it's quite abysmal and given that it's such a short period of three years - I think between the two, maybe it's the combination of...it creates a lot of stress for a lot of students, yep.

I'm frustrated with the lack of support—the process is the process, I was aware of that in the beginning so I don't think I can blame the process. I've been frustrated in the support for the process.

Although the doctoral process causes a number of issues for Gianni, he apportions these issues to the funding provided for universities, or rather the lack of financial resources to provide for better supervision. In reference to his doctoral supervisor he explains:

I mean he personally is not the issue. The issue is on the institution giving him too much work so there's the whole thing about him being overworked—you know it's not necessarily, you can't blame him, you can blame the situation they find themselves in institutionally. And the way that universities are being squeezed—and turning academics into people who could perhaps there's some way to way to—more on the other issues—there's way too much paperwork. Basically, I also think he's giving some of his students too much—I don't think he can do much better than what he's doing.

This institutional criticism is extended to the research review process for doctoral research students. Gianni does question the relevance of this process.

And the procedures don't really allow for, um you know—an extensive review of ideas or discussions around processes and that kind of thing. You have a postgraduate review and I remember going into the last one last year and before in the October, you'll just sit down and they'll say "So how do you think it went?" Well, you know, it's "well this is happening, etc etc." and they'll either ask you whether you've changed your theory or research what—just be careful that you not going off too much you feel like they've got twenty minutes or twenty five minutes and there's a limit to what you can actually cover in that so there's not much time given to those reviews, it's quite formulaic and really dealing with individual issues or things like that. What I like is when you work solely with your supervisor and if you have an issue really with the supervisor, an ongoing one not just the annual review, who do you speak to? If you can really trust them I think that that's an issue because you want to get on with your supervisor well—how does it affect your relationship with—so I think that's quite tough that one; I think a lot of people must find that, so I kind of feel that institutions being what there are often their colleagues are reviewing you and they might be doing their annual review and maybe you'd like someone who's a little bit removed from that, so you can guarantee a little bit of anonymity, neutrality, fairness, and it doesn't seem to operate like that.

Despite the number and variety of issues that Gianni articulates, he is intent on completing his Doctor of Philosophy in 2014.

I am genuinely unaware as to why Gianni agreed to be a participant to this research. From our emails there appeared to be a reticence from Gianni to continue to the interview stage. I suspect that he was unsure whether his dropout experience would contribute to the research project given that his dropout was strategic and his intention was to recommence. This possibly explains my thoughts that this was the more difficult of the interviews completed.

3.4.5 My Story 3.3

My family are blue-collar workers and their level of education ranges from high school to vocational training in the formal sense, and self-taught or on-the-job informally. One of my sisters, I have four, and myself, were the only people in our immediate family to attempt tertiary education. My sister has an incomplete nursing certificate while my academic qualifications include vocational education and training certificates, an Associate Diploma and a Diploma. I hold the requisite higher education qualifications to attempt a doctoral degree including an undergraduate degree, graduate certificate and diplomas, and a Master's degree. I have a distant cousin, whom I have met twice who holds a doctoral degree in biology.

The provocation to attain higher levels of academic knowledge is, I believe, my intrinsic desire to learn and my employment in an environment that was the province of professional people with degree level qualifications. That is, I was to possibly born an inquisitive child and socialised within a learning supportive family environment as suggested by Grusec (2011). Grusec suggests that children are not born with beliefs and therefore dispositions but are born with emotions such as inquisitiveness. During my early childhood development these emotional predilections had become dispositions by socialisation due it would seem, to particular family beliefs. The desire to attain higher education qualifications was developed in my workplaces.

This ambition to learn was mediated by the need to support my family and earn an income which resulted in my attaining my higher education ambition as a non-traditional student. I had enrolled into and dropped out of three undergraduate degree programs prior to completing a degree in business. Watson (2008), has suggested that dropouts such as these were not uncommon as;

> *it could be argued that many of the obstacles faced by students admitted to university on the basis of a TAFE award are outside the power of the university to influence. For example, TAFE award holders are more likely to be older, to be working full-time and to have family responsibilities. In general, first year attrition rates are higher among students who are over 25 years of age and students who are in full-time paid work and studying part-time… (Watson, 2008, pp. 43-44)*

My conscious reason for withdrawing from these programs was that they were the wrong enrolments for me. I finally found my niche with a business degree in business development that provided additional incentive for my interest in research – business and marketing research.

I have not previously dropped out from doctoral enrolments until mid-course with this doctoral program. The decision to withdraw was difficult and painful. Previously my decisions to withdraw from educational programs were based on

more objective reasoning such as life constraints and the suitability of the educational paths I had chosen. I had reached a stage in the doctoral program where I could not see a clear pathway to completion. My access to research participants had been subjected to interference and there were cognitive issues with the research concept and frame possibly accentuated by workplace emotive issues. I had, in addition to these issues made an incorrect assumption that a research proposal was ancillary to and therefore not part of the doctoral thesis process. My preference was to withdraw rather than continue with the psychological torment and professorial interventions.

What followed was a twelve month enrolment break which provided the opportunity to re-examine these issues without the cognitive subjectivity that had characterised my withdrawal. During this hiatus period I was able to redefine the participant issue by examining my own withdrawal and refocus my research proposal.

Throughout my enrolment period, there have been five supervisors. Three of these supervisors had been withdrawn, one was reassigned by the university to other institute duties, and the second withdrew to comply with family adoption procedures and the third to accept a higher level role at another university. However, I have never believed that I had been 'abandoned' or 'orphaned' by the temporary withdrawal and change of supervisors. Access to supervisors can at times be an issue which I believe to directly attributable to the overall workload of my supervisors, one of whom is an adjunct from a regional university. However, my access issues may also be the consequence of a part-time enrolment and not entirely the lack of governmental funding provided to institutes of higher education.

My intention is to complete my doctoral qualification, and although I am of sufficient years to retire, to seek employment within the research sphere either within Australia or internationally.

3.5 In Summary

The research methodology selected is qualitative and relies on autoethnographic and ethnographic methods to collect the phenomenological ethnographical data required to provide an in-depth exploration of the research questions posed in Chapter 1. To understand the participants reflections of the events and emotions preceding their withdrawal from doctoral study, a two phase data collection method is used. The first is a questionnaire to construct an understanding of their dispositional development towards higher education in general and doctoral education in particular. The aim of this data was to determine the influences on the participants individual habitus prior to enrollment that may have encouraged a favorable disposition towards doctoral study.

The second phase of the data collection involved a personal interview using web-based media which was recorded in audio and video. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed conversational style to provide as much data as possible on the participants experiences of doctoral education, both emotional and practical. The video data provided a record of non-verbal communicative data to enhance my understanding of participant's verbally reflective experiences. The interviews were transcribed, analysed for relevant data content, then using NVivo software as a recording medium, the interview data was interpretatively coded. The NVivo data was the basis for an overarching thematic interpretation and the applied thematic analysis for the research findings.

The methodology does have research limitations. The small sample size restricts the data available and hence the generalisability of the analysis and conclusions. Ethnographic data based on past events is restricted by the memory of the participant and may be selective with respect to the completeness of the experience. The personal beliefs and understandings will also contribute to a bias of the data so that parts of the experience are not remembered with the clarity of others. The research data is however, the recollected lived experiences of the participants including any nuances or discrepancies.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.1 Outline

The research findings are an analysis of the collected empirical data and the literature data. The structure of the analysis is constrained by the research framework of the sociological decision-making model of Bourdieu (1984a, p. 101). That is, the analysis of the data is from a perspective of disposition, habitus, capital and field and the influences on the decision process of these factors. The analysis includes the data collected on the supervisor and student relationship and the effect on the student's dispositions and capital of these influences. The analysis also considers the emotive effects on the withdrawing student.

4.2 Influences on Dispositions

4.2.1 Practice

'Practice' is the terminology used by Bourdieu (1977b, 1990b) to describe the outcome of the decision making process. This involves the observable enacted conclusion to the decision making, whereby these decisions may take one of three outcomes; to ignore, no-action necessary, or action relative to the nature of the disposition. Dropout, where the student does not return to study, has traditionally been considered as failure. Not all dropout decisions should be regarded as failure however (McCormack, 2005). Where the student does dropout and recommences, the goal of completion is often still met, albeit delayed. While categorised initially as dropout the completion of the doctorate is eventually realised.

Dropout occurs where the habitus is stimulated to counter the student's disposition to learn (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007). This was experienced by Elizabeth when she withdrew from her doctoral research program; despite her interest in pursuing various research topics, her experiences of doctoral research became a barrier to recommencing her doctorate. As she states;

> *I decided early on that it wasn't for me, but I was quite strategic and selfish, I… [withdrew] after 12 months…*

Elizabeth's statement concerning her withdrawal decision was made over of period of time which indicates that not all decisions are habitual and reflexive as theorised by Bourdieu (1977b). My own experience of the decision to dropout was similarly developed over time and not an immediate reaction to a situation. And, when queried about recommencing her studies;

> *it would need to be, I think it would need to be with my choice of supervisor and, and my choice of institution.*

The reason for enacting dropout decisions may be strategic resulting from many causes including financial, social, familial issues or to reflect on seemingly unresolvable research issues and to develop tactics and strategies to counter the perceived issue. This type of dropout decision was utilised by Gianni (and I) to strategically gain time to complete the doctorate. The underlying reason for the dropout by Gianni was after having lost a considerable amount of time due to an on-farm accident; he withdrew as a strategy to recoup the time lost during his medical recuperation which would enable him to complete his doctorate within the prescribed timeframe. This strategy also applies to my situation of dropping out as my frustration and anger at my own inability to develop a research proposal within an

acceptable timeframe was decreasing the time allowed under the Australian Postgraduate Awards to complete my doctorate. The unproductive application of time was the determinate in my decision to drop out.

Such decisions are considered by Bourdieu and Wacquant (2007) to be deterministic as these decisions are not made due to a change in dispositions but due to external situations which result in the habitus controlling the disposition to learn or other dispositions to support a student's dropout. According to Bourdieu (1977b) the habitus will not allow a practice to be implemented if such practice is considered not to be potentially successful or beneficial. Yet as indicated by the personal experiences of three of the participants, the educational aspiration - the disposition to learn - is not to be entirely abandoned by this type of withdrawal from study as each has recommenced their doctoral aspirations.

4.1.1.1 My Story 4.1

I withdrew from my doctoral studies because of my inability to successfully complete the research proposal required of all doctoral research students. The act of officially withdrawing after two intervention meetings between me, my research supervisor and the co-ordinator produced feelings of frustration, anger and loss of self-confidence at not being capable to develop and write a research proposal after having completed the relevant coursework units. This anger at my own perceived inadequacies spurred my continued pursuit of solutions to these issues (I do not like to fail). My anguish at this perceived failure was exaggerated with the need to apply for readmission to the doctoral program within twelve months from the withdrawal date as I was the recipient of Research Training Scheme (RTS) funding from the Australian Government. The alternative was a three year Research Training Scheme imposed sanction before being eligible for readmission. Within that twelve month period I was able to resolve the research issues that had frustrated my previous attempts to develop a research proposal.

During the period I was also able to refocus my professional life which had been the focus of much internal turmoil, and my personal life. The need to refocus professionally was necessary to restore my aspirations towards qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method research which had been to underlying research methodologies during my time in marketing research and mineral exploration projects. I am also confounded by the change in my personal life and attitudes since resigning from my last workplace. The release from strictly enforced hierarchies and perceived organisational politics has provided the impetus to recharge my mojo thus providing a personal environment of cognitive freedom which has resulted in this autoethnography.

Clare's dropout from her doctoral research program was never formalised from her perspective. Similar to Elizabeth she had commenced a doctorate as part of a funded research grant. After a period of ten years during which her supervisor resigned after accepting a position at another university, her candidature lapsed. This was followed by a three year non-enrolment sanction applied by the Australian Postgraduate Awards scheme. As she had intended to complete her undergraduate degree and then a Doctor of Philosophy, which she had commenced in 1997, her ambitions of becoming a university lecturer were deferred causing her disappointment with the institutional approaches to doctoral education. She is currently enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy program where, she notes she is part of

a doctoral candidature group who are supportive of each other and are supported by their supervisor.

4.2.2 Field

The fields occupied by this study's participants include the doctoral degree spaces allocated to the Doctor of Philosophy programs of Elizabeth, Clare and Gianni, as well as my own Doctor of Education degree. These fields share commonalities relative to the preparation of a research proposal, the defence of the proposal before a panel of academics, participant recruitment, data collection and analysis and thesis production. With the exception of Elizabeth and Gianni, the other participants have a dual polarity within the field with an intrinsic belief in education and an occupational outcome as an aspiration. Elizabeth retains her autonomous polarity but has abandoned her heteronomous polarity due to unfavourable supervisory practices. Gianni appears to have a stable polarisation towards the autonomous pole as he does not articulate an occupational outcome but does indicate that his motive for his doctoral studies is a natural progression based on family influences.

As with dispositions, participants are able to occupy a dual polarity within the field. This duality of opinion about education is reflected in situations where participants hold or have held both autonomous and heteronomous opinions simultaneously. That is, they have an intrinsic or autonomous belief in education and an extrinsic or heteronomous opinion in the use of that education to achieve an occupational outcome. This can be linked to their respective articulated intrinsic dispositions to learn and their stated ambitions with respect to desired occupational roles which may be extrinsic dispositions.

4.2.3 Capital

From a sociological perspective, capital is similar to that used in other disciplines; an accumulation of resources (Bourdieu, 1977b). These include cultural, social, economic and symbolic capital. An abundance of capital either singularly or in combinations of the differing types may be the catalyst for the success or failure or even non-commitment to a situation be it either a threat or an opportunity to the successful completion of an aspiration.

Although Bourdieu (1990b) suggests that capital can provide personal power to the owner of the capital, this power is in the form of influence rather than an absolute or controlling power over other people. This is observable in the manner in which people who hold considerable accumulations of one or more of the four types of Bourdieusian capital are deferred to by others. Thus we defer to a scholar who holds high cultural capital in the form of a doctorate within an academic field or environment; police who hold high symbolic capital within public order and leaders of community organisations who hold accumulations of social capital within a volunteer environment. The observable power exercised by such persons is usually to influence others from a position of knowledge and experience of the particular field and situation. This form of power can be attributed to them by the public through recognition of their contribution and experience to their relevant fields of endeavour.

The effect of capital are evidenced with the comments of Elizabeth who after withdrawing from her Doctor of Philosophy degree (and while employed within the same university as a Research Assistant) was sought after by other doctoral students.

> *When I moved across to the um, the other part of the ARC project I was actually approached by people um, PhD students who knew my background in methodology and I was [an] informal mentor to probably half a dozen students um, say in the last five or six years.*

Elizabeth was able to apply her knowledge and experiences of research methodologies to influence the research studies of other students. While she may not have had absolute power, she was attributed with an influential style of power due to her own research experiences as a staff member rather than as a student or faculty member. Similarly Clare's interactions with university students linked to her doctoral candidacy may be attributed to the social capital accumulated within that role. Gianni is a part-time lecturer within the university sector; his social capital is based on his knowledge within his field while my own teaching experiences are within the vocational education and training sector. Thus social capital accumulated through one's cultural capital can alleviate or negate negative experiences that effect dispositions and can be converted to other forms of personal influence.

4.2.3.1 Economic Capital

The capacity to fund a doctoral degree includes the economic resources required to meet academic and living expenses throughout the duration of a student's candidature. Both Elizabeth and Gianni regard the issue of finance as important to their doctoral success. Elizabeth would possibly enrol into a doctoral program again:

> *I would be interested in researching but I do feel with the university if they'd been straight forward with me and said something like OK we're going to pay you this really piddly [small] little salary for three years…*

To Elizabeth, the requirement for economic support or self-funding is a barrier to her re-enrolment. Elizabeth's academic expenses were paid for as part of an overall research funding grant so that her dominant expenses were those incurred with everyday living. To her, the stipend attached to the research funding was considered to be insufficient to maintain a level of living to which she aspired.

Gianni's economic issue is with the cost of living in one of Australia's largest cities which he suggests is linked to the quality of education and which he describes as;

> *if you want to do a decent doctorate, is kind of a bit of a tough call at times I think for a lot of people—particularly if you have to work in major cities, which are extraordinarily expensive, so I feel a lot of pressure that way around that…*

He associates the cost of living to the quality of his doctoral degree and to the larger metropolitan universities especially in his chosen discipline of performative art. This does support the notion of a hierarchy within higher education where some universities are considered as being more prestigious than others. Costs associated with living in the capital cities are perceived to be greater than the costs of living in regional centres, information which is usually stated by various universities in their promotional materials.

Clare and I were self-funded for our living expenses but without the assistance of academic funding neither of us would have the economic capital and therefore the opportunity to undertake a doctoral degree. We were working full-time and studying outside of working hours. So while we were able to meet our living expenses and our academic fees were part of scholarships, we were time-poor with regard to undertaking doctoral study. Thus our accumulation of economic capital was the conversion of social capital in the form of time (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007) in that we forwent socialisation activities to earn and conserve economic resources to undertake our doctoral programs. However, our loss of social and economic capital, sustained because of our studies, should be perceived through the perspective of longer term economic capital increases.

Therefore the need for economic capital or the acquisition of ongoing funds to sustain a student may be considered as being a barrier to the choice of a university education or degree and the choice of university to attend. Each person's perception of the amount of economic capital required to sustain daily life may be variable, but it remains that Higher Degree Research study is expensive when considered in terms of longer term living expenses. Many Higher Degree Research students are commencing families and at stages in their lives where major expenses (such as housing) are borne solely by them. The effects of economic capital on the students' disposition to study are significant.

4.2.3.2 Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is suggested by Bourdieu (1977b, p. 197) as a "form of legitimate accumulation, through which the dominant groups or classes secure a capital of "credit" which seems to owe nothing to the logic of exploitation". That is, other forms of capital, cultural, social or economic are converted to symbolic capital. Thus the purchase of a luxury item may be used to display wealth, or the prestige of being known as an 'expert' based on the cultural capital use of the abbreviated title of 'Dr' to display knowledge or intellectual capacity. Just as symbolic capital may be accumulated by the conversion of other forms of capital, symbolic capital may be converted to the other forms of capital.

The attribution of being an 'expert' may be used as a symbolic display of knowledge to enhance one's position in society and more specifically academia. Displays of symbolic capital may also connate forms of power. Both Elizabeth and Clare understand the value of an accumulation of symbolic capital converted from cultural capital, as gained from completing a Doctor of Philosophy.

Elizabeth explains this with;

> *a few years earlier I had missed out on a job in Melbourne purely because I didn't have a PhD, and it came down to two final candidates. I was told later by one of the supervisory panel that I had, that I was by far the better candidate but the Director of the institute wanted someone with a PhD...*

Clare expresses her need for this form of symbolic capital by;

> *I still thoroughly, still believe that the one main purpose of the, really the sole purpose of getting your PhD is to get a job in academia…*

Gianni is a little more circumspect in his desire for a "Dr' title for as he says in relation to his chosen research disciplines,

they are areas which won't get me employment so I've gotta love it,

Thus the symbolism of a doctorate may apply only within his family who, as Gianni identified value education (and qualifications).

However, symbolic power and capital has been attributed to the participants by the various student groups with which each participant is, or has been involved. Elizabeth is sought by other research students who defer to her occupational knowledge and experiences with research methodologies. Clare was involved with teaching undergraduate students, as is Gianni currently. My teaching experience is with vocational education and training. Each of us has at some time been deferred-to by students for the knowledge and or academic or occupational experiences that we possess as cultural capital. This according to Hallet (2007) is a form of symbolic capital attributed to us by students who regard our academic positions or occupational experience as symbolic of our teaching credentials.

There is also a symbolism attached to the universities that manifests itself in the form of educational quality. The Group of Eight universities which are located within the capital cities (Kiley, 2011b) are often associated with a perception of a 'better' or higher quality of learning as alluded to by Gianni. This perception of quality is also due to the degrees offered, and the status of the faculty staff that have the greater notoriety within specific fields of learning. Some of these perceptions are based on the proximity to vocational skills development such as medicine, law, business and other fields of endeavour. These student perceptions are the basis of larger student enrolments which adds to the perception of a higher quality of education.

4.2.3.2.1 My Story 4.2

For me the symbolism of a doctorate is intrinsic while also emanating from extrinsic factors. I have a disposition towards learning and higher education from my childhood and a need to achieve. To me the symbolism of a doctorate fulfils a personal requirement to attain the highest level of education and to prove to some former work colleagues that I am capable of analytical and conceptual thought. That is, I am not only a vocational worker but can complete cognitive tasks. The title of 'Dr' provides recognition that is my identity of an ability to research, analyse and objectively report the findings for specific issues within the world. This symbolic capital will be converted from my cultural capital of knowledge on the successful completion of the required research program. I do not subscribe to the perception of a higher quality of education by attending a Group of Eight university. While it is correct that the majority of vocational learning experiences may occur within the capital cities, I believe that the quality of learning in some disciplines such as education is equal to the metropolitan universities due to the expansive educational network within Australia.

4.2.3.3 Cultural Capital

Individuals accumulate knowledge, experiences and related artefacts throughout their entire lives. This is a form of personalised capital that may result from the conversion of other capitals to the attainment of formal or informal knowledge and skills and recollections of experiences. Cultural capital may be inherited from familial, social and educational groups and includes such attributes in our lives as beliefs and understandings and cognitions and abilities. This form of capital is personalised in that it is lost once the person dies.

An opinion has been postulated by Bourdieu (1986) that cultural capital may exist in three forms: As the *embodied state* such as long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; the *objectified state* which comprises personal cultural goods including art, books, dictionaries, instruments and machines; and the *institutionalised state* represented by paper-based evidence of educational qualifications and other recognition awards. A doctoral student's accumulated cultural capital may comprise of a combination of any or all of the forms of cultural capital simultaneously. These would include the knowledge and experiences (embodied state) accumulated from attaining the prerequisite qualifications to gain admission to a doctoral program, the learning materials and artefacts (objectified state) used in attaining these prerequisite qualifications, and the testamurs issued by the examining institution (institutionalised state) to confirm the successful completion of the qualification.

4.2.3.3.1 Embodied State

Embodied cultural capital is the conversion of external wealth (financial capital) according to Bourdieu (1986). Financial capital is used to access education which enables students to incorporate knowledge and experiences. The process of learning from formal education and experience or informal learning (experiential knowledge) is the cognitive assimilation practice of accumulating embodied cultural capital. Cultural capital in its embodied state is transferable between individuals without the loss of this knowledge by the transferrer. Therefore it may be exchanged for social capital or used to accumulate financial capital by praxis such as the practical application of the knowledge whilst retaining the original capital.

Within the field of postgraduate doctoral research degrees, the focus is on the educational aspects of cultural capital, namely the cultural resources transferred to the student from preceding generations and social groups involving a "knowledge of dominant ideas, values, norms and behaviours" (Black & Rechter, 2013). That is, the embodied state of cultural capital. According to Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2012) embodied cultural capital is the accumulation of a lifelong socialisation process with family, social and work groups which possibly occurs subconsciously and is therefore thought of as being a covert method of capital transmission.

In addition to *inherited* cultural capital, doctoral students accumulate personal experiential knowledge and skills in an *overt* manner from prerequisite study and vocational groups with which they may share an involvement prior to and during their doctoral research programs. Such overt knowledge and understandings are accumulated from formal studies in educational institutions and vocational learning within the workplace. The assimilation of this knowledge, formal or informal, overt or covert may involve the adoption of new dispositions or the adaption of existing depositions (beliefs and understandings).

While all participants had a disposition to learning to complete a doctorate, Gianni possibly inherited more knowledge of the doctoral research process than the others. He cites as part of his provocation for undertaking his doctoral study that:

> *Oh um, look it runs in my family. Basically we're a bunch of academics basically. My sister is an Associate Professor and she's been researching for most of her life, and my grandmother was a researcher and medical researcher, it ran in my family. My father's always read, so we just have all*

that—yeah we've always done this and um, it seems I've been around people who have written a lot and it's also led to relationships and friends and of course family and that sort of thing…

Question: So you would have a fair understanding of what was required long before you started this?

Gianni: Oh yeah.

Gianni's entry into doctoral research was not a whim or vocationally or occupationally motivated for professional or social capital provocations, but a disposition to learn and natural progression from his earlier university studies. His knowledge of the educational system was possibly expansive and inherited from his family.

Clare's and Elizabeth have accumulated knowledge or embodied cultural capital of doctoral education is less 'inherited' than Gianni's. While their motivation was predominantly vocational, their cultural knowledge of doctorates was learned from their association with their universities. Both were employed within the university system in a research or administrative role with access to faculty and staff and presumably formal and informal information of doctorates. Elizabeth indicates that in her immediate family her sister has completed an undergraduate degree while Clare's daughter has attended university.

4.2.3.3.1.1 My Story 4.3

My personal knowledge or accumulated cultural capital of doctoral research degrees was minimal prior to enrolment. I had read the information on the university web site and had associated with university graduates, two of whom had completed PhD degrees. This was my entire knowledge bank of doctoral studies. Even the completion of an undergraduate degree and a Master's degree did not provide me with the cultural capital in the form of academic knowledge and sociological concepts to transition seamlessly into my chosen doctoral studies. The theories of Tinto around student attrition and the decision making model of Bourdieu were unknown prior to enrolment. Within my immediate family my daughter had completed a university qualification prior to my attempting a doctoral qualification. Thus my embodied cultural capital of this area of higher education was based on these associations with other individuals. With reflection, I believe that the doctoral pathway would have been more approachable with greater knowledge of the protocols and processes for completing a doctorate in conjunction with the detailed knowledge that can only be gathered from people who are completing or have completed the journey before me. The completion of an undergraduate degree, postgraduate diploma and a Master's degree as an external student do not prepare you for the isolation and self-reliance, or the knowledge of student attrition required to undertake a doctoral research degree. At the time of my decision to undertake a doctoral degree I was not aware of the numerous blogs which provided a considerable amount of background knowledge and advice for doctoral students on the life adjustments and other personal requirements necessary to complete a doctorate. On reflection had I accessed these online sites my personal anguish at dropping out of doctoral study may have been more acceptable to me.

The dominant reason for us undertaking our doctoral journey is possibly our inherent disposition to learn and the desire to achieve at one of the highest levels. While Gianni's disposition seems to have been reinforced throughout his life, the dispositions of Clare, Elizabeth and I have been reinforced by non-family vocational

or occupational situations and the self-motivation to learn for differing reasons. While I had a personal educational disposition to learn, Clare and Elizabeth's dispositions were occupational.

4.2.3.3.2 Objectified State

Cultural capital in the *objectified state* exists as tangible assets or material objects related to the field of doctoral degree studies such as books, research literature, computers and other objects utilised in the research. Such objects are transmissible with possession passing from the transferor to the transferee. This state of cultural capital may be acquired by the conversion of financial capital, that is a purchase or by utilising social capital to borrow such objects without taking legal ownership. Objectified cultural capital therefore has a monetary and a social value to the holder of the objects (Bourdieu, 1986).

4.2.3.3.2.1 My Story 4.4

> *My accumulation of objectified cultural capital or artefacts of my academic life include a collection of reference books purchased from personal financial capital. These artefacts were necessary to provide the resources to accumulate the required embodied cultural capital that is the knowledge and experience to undertake the doctoral journey from undergraduate to postgraduate studies. In addition, to enable communication between myself and my supervisor there is a computer with communication software, printers and telephones all of which are necessary objects to undertake study as an external student. For such objects to be considered as artefacts they need to be non-consumable such as books and equipment or consumable as in paper and ink with the non-consumables to be in use over a period of time possibly measured in years. These objects extend my social capital by their presence as they provide a symbolic representation (symbolic capital) of my learning (cultural capital) and have ongoing financial capital. The economic value of these non-consumable objects decreases over time due to their developing obsolescence especially books and computer hardware and software. This phenomenon of obsolescence may also decrease the symbolic capital of these educational artefacts.*

4.2.3.3.3 Institutionalised State

This type of cultural capital indicates the academic performance of the recipient of the testamur. The testamur confers on the student the successful completion of an academic qualification. This bestows on the holder of the qualification embodied and objectified cultural capital in the learning (knowledge and skills). The academic qualification elevates the student's social capital which is attributed to, and accumulated by the holder of the qualification. On completion of the qualification and the receipt of an evidentiary academic degree, diploma or certificates including individual subject results the person's economic capital may be enhanced with the possible transition from a lower to a higher employment role (Bourdieu, 1986).

Although institutionalised cultural capital may be tangible and an observable object issued by the university, the accumulations of embodied cultural capital and social capital associated with the qualification may be intangible. Thus the institutionalised cultural capital of the participants would include doctoral prerequisite degree testamurs. Institutionally issued and authenticated qualifications are not only a prerequisite to further academic aspirations but legislatively required

to legally participate in certain professions for example, health practitioners and vocationally trained tradespeople).

Thus it is necessary to accumulate institutionalised cultural capital artefacts for admission to some types of employment and further study. These artefacts are also required by some vocational education and training organisations for the purposes of assessing applications for 'recognition of prior learning' of specific units and qualifications especially when attempting to gain a tradespersons licence to practice. This process also is available to professionals attempting additional degree qualifications where there are overlapping educational units within the same philosophical or discipline area. Thus symbolic cultural capital has monetary and knowledge value in addition to social capital.

None of the participants to this research study have attained a doctoral degree, but do possess the prerequisite higher education degrees necessary to enrol into a doctoral research program. These prior degrees allowed each participant to teach formally within higher education and to informally tutor and advise other students at the appropriate lower levels of higher education and vocational education and training. Clare and Gianni have lectured in the higher education sector while my teaching experience is in the Vocational Education and Training of the tertiary education sector and Elizabeth has informally tutored Doctor of Philosophy students.

4.2.3.4 Social Capital

Social capital, according to Bourdieu and Wacquant (2007) "is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 119). This is further explained by Semo (2011, p. 2) who suggests that "social capital refers to the attributes and qualities of family, social and community networks that facilitate cooperation between individuals and groups. It is underpinned by the interactions between family members, friends, neighbours, communities and institutions such as schools, clubs and workplaces".

The importance of social networks in the accumulation of social capital is determined by the "quality of these networks and the extent to which individuals are engaged with them" and which "are believed to have an impact on the educational and social development [of these individuals]" (Semo, 2011, p. 2). There is also the suggestion in the literature that these community networks may generate sufficient social capital to alleviate the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage by the reduction of social exclusion. Lower socio-economic groups are often isolated by the effects of a lack of educational resources, a lack of access to medical and dental health care resources, and social development such as cultural activities including film and stage plays. The actual effects of social capital are difficult to interpret due to its intangibility caused by the lack of observability of some of the factors that comprise this type of capital (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011; Semo, 2011).

Bourdieu (1986), suggests that an investment into these social networks is undertaken by people (agents) within a field with the direct ambition of producing usable capital. That is convertible social capital which may is used to gain the profits from membership to that social group. Such profits are suggested as being material or symbolic in their effect and which may be attributed with a level of standing in the community depending on the prestige and rarity of the social group.

Thus membership to a group of doctoral graduates such as university lecturers implies a higher standing in the community than a vocational education and training teacher or trainer, although both are employed within adult tertiary education. This may be the result of public perception and the perceived difficulty and years of study required to achieve a doctorate. It does not imply that there are status differences in the social value of vocational employment and professional employment. Enrolment into and subsequent attainment of candidature preceding the completion of a doctoral degree symbolises the investment made to gaining membership to a doctoral graduate group.

Within an educational environment this suggests that the notion of social capital is accumulated from social processes or networks developed within institutional social spaces such as faculty, administrative workplaces or other groupings of individuals who share common epistemologies. The cognitive nature of social capital may be demonstrated by the social salutation of 'Doctor' which connotes a respected standing within the community and based on the perception of cognitive difficulty and perseverance necessary to attain that title. Other personal salutations may convey the social position of the individual relative to their gender, age, marital and academic status. However, not all social capital is as readily observable as demonstrated by the experiences of both Elizabeth and Clare, which is accumulated from their education field occupations.

According to Elizabeth she was sought out by research students aware of her knowledge to tutor them in their research methodologies; a phenomenon that occurred over a five to six year period. Although Elizabeth had withdrawn from her Doctor of Philosophy studies after twelve months, she had sufficient notoriety or social capital within the research postgraduate student body to be sought out for her knowledge of research methodologies (embodied cultural capital) which she gained as a research assistant staff member within the university. This conversion of capital, in Elizabeth's experiences cultural capital, is not uncommon within society or particular groupings of people.

The different forms of capital accumulated including financial, symbolic and cultural may result in a particular social standing for the holder of the capital by the communities in which they work or live (Bourdieu, 1985; Portes, 1998). For the Doctor of Philosophy candidates who were aware of Elizabeth's social position in research methodologies, they were able to convert this social capital to cultural capital or knowledge of research methodologies. Similarly, if the students were seeking a member of the faculty for this information, they would presumably seek out a faculty member who held the symbolic capital of 'Doctor' or 'Professor' which denotes a level of knowledge within the academy.

Although social capital according to Portes (1998) exists in the forms of family support and extra familial networks, there is a third form; social control. This third form produces a field of stratification in that people affected by this form of capital may be denied employment. It may also be a barrier to business by denying access to certain business networks and thus access to knowledge and resources. Social control may also prevent the promotion of employees to higher levels with an organisation with its possible resultant loss of that employee. Elizabeth's inability to attain a vocational role to which she aspired was not due to a lack a social capital but cultural capital; she did not have a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

4.2.3.4.1 My Story 4.5

My personal experiences of social capital include the conversion of cultural capital to social capital due to my level of tertiary education and my years of industry experience, which is a requirement of vocational education and training teaching. Upon joining an institute of Technical and Further Education I was elevated to the level of Teacher, bypassing the Tutor level. This also created stratification between me and others within the Technical and Further Education institute. Others who held Queensland College of Teachers' accreditation but were without the required industry experience were employed as Tutors. In turn, my lack of accreditation prevented me from attaining the higher salary levels available to those who were accredited and who had the required industry experience.

However, I had attained a level of social capital or standing within my teaching area that was sought after by others with lesser experiences to review their teaching and assessment resources and general knowledge of Technical and Further Education protocols and procedures. My industry expertise was also in demand by others who were without such experiential knowledge and or skills. Requests for assistance to establish or expand business operations of some of the students were reasonably commonplace. This was attributed to my years of accumulated business experience in all aspects of business development and management. Additionally and in order to maintain my required industry currency, my experience was used to assist non-student small business owners and operators to develop their businesses. Both of these activities assisted in the increase of my social capital within and external to the Technical and Further Education institute based on my accumulated cultural capital within the business communities locally, regionally and internationally.

The analysis of the participant experiences in accumulating social capital is analogous with the theoretical propositions of Flemmen (2013) who suggested that social capital exists in two forms: The first is a Social Space Approach (SSA) and the second is the Field-Analytical Approach (FAA). As research participants, our social capital accumulated within the higher education postgraduate groups is low from the Social Space Approach as we have not attained a doctoral degree and therefore do not socialise within the doctoral social space. From a tertiary education field, the accumulated social capital is higher owing to our knowledge and expertise gained in our vocational roles and our membership to various professional or trade associations. The capital accumulated from our respective vocational roles, the Field-Analytical Approach, is converted to social capital within the higher education field but at differing levels of standing and suggests a mechanism for social stratification within society and doctoral social groups in contrast to the higher levels of social standing within our respective vocational and occupational roles.

4.2.3.5 Habitus

The habitus is central to my decision making. As shown in Chapter 2, the habitus undertakes the cognitive processing of all information relative to the field. Although the habitus cannot be 'observed' by others, Davey (2009) suggests that the habitus may be visible when it is associated with the field or situation in which the habitus is operating. Thus the habitus of the participants may be observed as they contact the field of doctoral research study as an attempt "to understand the informal, unspoken rules" (Davey, 2009, p. 277) of the doctoral degree environment. All of the research participants have indicated that we came to doctoral study with a belief

in the benefits of completing a doctorate and a disposition to learning (Grusec, 2011) developed from familial and or professional interactional and supportive environments. These benefits were in the form of educational or occupational dispositions which are assumed to be the motivational aspects of the habitus.

This disposition to learning, in conjunction with both an educational or occupational disposition and the habitus may be observed in the following narratives of Elizabeth, Clare and Gianni.

4.2.3.5.1 Elizabeth

Elizabeth describes her father's occupation as vocational as he was a sports journalist and specifically a horse racing journalist which she describes as follows:

> *A racing writer is really a racing journalist but they don't call themselves a horse racing journalists, they are [a] racing writer—I know his study was interrupted by World War I—and he worked for Australian United Press, he worked for the Truth newspaper; he had his own business. I know he had done courses in shorthand and typing and these kinds of things but he may not have had any post-school qualifications…*

Elizabeth's parents were not university educated. Her father, although seemingly successful as a journalist was vocationally trained within the workplace while her mother was a full-time home manager. She does consider that her motivation to undertake university studies was intrinsic and not the result of familial inherited dispositions as her family cultural background is vocational not professional in terms of occupational classification. She does not elaborate on the support she received within the family for undertaking higher education although she does state that family members do have university qualifications.

> *I am the youngest of four children; both my sisters have Bachelor Degrees, on my Mother's and Father's side of the family, my oldest cousins, both have PhDs. I didn't think about that until, well, this morning when I was thinking about family influences. I can't say though, that that was a great influence. I really think it was my own interest in studying and learning. But I think the motivation was intrinsic in that I enjoy studying, I enjoy learning, I enjoy research gathering information together and making sense of it. That is what I do in my working life…*

University education is well known within the family which may have been an unrecognised influence on Elizabeth's decision to undertake a Bachelor's degree and continue onto Honours and postgraduate study.

However, she does indicate that her motivations for undertaking doctoral study were intrinsic; that is she has a disposition to learning. She also had aspirations towards a specific occupational outcome; an occupational disposition. She expected she would have an enhanced opportunity to attain her sought-after employment role should it become available on the completion of a doctorate which she anticipated would provide the cultural, social and symbolic capital for the role. Although some family members do have doctoral qualifications, namely her older cousins, she claims that this did not influence her decision to undertake a doctorate. Her decision appears to be influenced more by her occupational disposition and determined by her perception of her potential employability. This interpretation was enhanced when after being overlooked for an occupational role to which she particularly aspired.

A few years earlier I had missed out on a job in Melbourne purely because I didn't have a PhD, and it came down to two final candidates. I was told later by one of the supervisory panel that I had, that I was by far the better candidate but the Director of the institute wanted someone with a PhD. So I thought if a PhD is going to get me the jobs that I want, I'd better get one…

This suggests that Elizabeth had an occupational disposition which was supported by her habitus based on a heteronomous field perspective. The greater influence within the habitus by an occupational disposition relevant to a disposition to learn is a research conclusion of Lee and Pang (2014) citing their own research and similar research outcomes by others.

The predominant influence on Elizabeth's decision to undertake doctoral studies is possibly the aspiration of a better employment status that would allow her to be competitive in a human resource selection process. That is, using the student profile classifications of Davey (2012) she would be classed as 'aspiring and vocationally-specific' in her educational aspirations. This she attempted to achieve by undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy qualification which she expected would increase her cultural capital and possibly her social capital within an academic environment or 'field'. Having previously completed an undergraduate degree with honours by research, she may have considered the possibility of a successful outcome from the doctoral studies. This suggests that in her habitus she was convinced that by attaining a Doctor of Philosophy degree this would provide the impetus to attain a higher level of occupation to which she aspired.

Although Elizabeth had withdrawn from her doctoral studies of her own volition, she had not re-enrolled into a doctoral qualification program at the date of the interview. Her cultural capital accumulated as knowledge from her unsatisfactory experiences with her supervisors appears to have influenced the habitus to ignore her occupational disposition towards doctoral research so that she does not intend to re-enrol, at least not at her current university. She articulates this in our interview with:

I wouldn't, you know there's a lot of um, things I would be interested in researching but I do feel with the university if they'd been straight forward with me and said something like OK we're going to pay you this really piddley little salary for three years, you'll be on your own, you'll get no supervision, no intellectual support through the university but we need you to write an 80,000 word thesis at the end, I would have said "yes I can do that". But I just didn't want to buy into, it seemed to me, to be the game they were playing um, and I just didn't want to buy into that.

I have interpreted as a deterministic decision undertaken by Elizabeth to counter her disposition to learning by her extrinsic educational and occupational dispositions towards completing doctoral studies. The influence on this decision may have been enhanced by her occupational aspirations towards employment in contrast to an educational aspiration towards her Doctor of Philosophy and is possibly reflected in her reticence to return to doctoral research studies. Thus, while Elizabeth's dispositions towards learning can be observed through her articulations and behaviours as being positive towards doctoral studies and she has an intrinsic disposition to learning, the experiences with her doctoral research supervisors which

she has accumulated as cultural capital, prevents her from seeking re-admission to a doctoral program.

This decision by Elizabeth to drop out of doctoral study demonstrates the power of embodied cultural capital to influence the habitus. The favourable inclinations of both dispositions and aspirations which are embodied within the habitus have been negated by an externality in Elizabeth's unsatisfactory experiences of doctoral research supervision, which is maintained as embodied cultural capital. This appears to support the conclusion by Davey (2009) that habitus and capital should be analysed as a single unit in assessing possible decision outcomes within specific situations or fields. This also supports the notion of Bourdieu and Wacquant (2007) that the power of embodied capital can and will have a contrary effect on the habitus resulting in deterministic decisions.

4.2.3.5.2 Clare

Clare's habitus appears to have been influenced by her undergraduate perceptions of academic life.

> *I'm still working in a university and, being [an] academic still appeals to me as a career choice—you know entering postgraduate programs at that time I was 37 I had a 10 year old or 11 or 12 year old um, and looked around at the people that was teaching in there and I thought 'no' this is where I want to be. I actually thought that all of the academics that were teaching me had much better jobs than I could find anywhere else. You know the hours are pretty flexible they do interesting stuff you engage with students. So I thought, well although I won't have extensive work experience I'll have a PhD and a bit of work experience and I'll be ready to step off into the second part into a fairly well paid job…*

Clare also has completed an undergraduate degree with honours which provided the academic disposition to successfully completing a Doctor of Philosophy. Her motivation to undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy is possibly a stronger personal decision than Elizabeth's which is shown in her narrative of the embodied reasoning of attaining an academic role. She has also seemingly enhanced her desire to learn suggesting a disposition to learning as the motivation to complete her doctoral degree. Clare's aspirations are a combination of educational and occupational dispositions to undertake and complete a Doctor of Philosophy degree. Although the educational disposition is interpreted as being the major motivator as it would provide the basis for her aspirations to teach and research, her motivation to teach is provided in her narrative of completing her own undergraduate degree.

> *Students are really great to work with so I, I mean this was something good that I can do with my time, this is something that ah and I really liked my undergraduate degree, I really liked doing my honours project this is something that I can do that by the time I finish should position me at about the right place for someone that's 40…*

Clare's enrolment into a doctoral program lapsed with the absence of new supervisors after being abandoned by her original supervisor. She has recommenced her doctoral studies in a peer group environment. Her dispositions to complete her Doctor of Philosophy degree can be read in her articulation of this experience.

There's three of us who are um, all oldies um, we're all over 50 and we all work in fairly [well] with two other people in my research group that I deal with. One of the seniors um, Operating Officer of um, one of our State Government agencies is here and one is Senior Financial Officer at Telstra so their very high level positions and I mean we're in the research group together…

Unlike Elizabeth, Clare has not allowed determinism from a sub-standard supervisory experience to divert her from her chosen path. Her preference for the new study environment is provided in her narrative of her group experience.

We work on papers together and then just we [are] just [a] really productive team because they have the ideas and I have the um like they guess—out of the three of us I'm the one with the more practical research skills like writing and getting things from the library; you know referencing stuff but they have the courage to, they have the workplace knowledge and the courage to just make the argument. So they know what the argument is that they want to write about um and I have the more practical skills to put that into a paper. So we've been published quite a few times and yeah.....

Question: I get the impression you feel as though you are intellectually stimulated by the group as well.

Clare: Oh yes, yeah um [pause] yeah, I think that's one of the main reasons I want to finish my PhD as well too. I know I can, I just need to do it and I really like that, I mean they're such big projects for people the PhDs um, so there's a lot of project management and um a lot of exciting things to think about…

Clare's dispositions appear to be educational and occupational with an expectation of possibly attaining a lecturing role within a university upon completion of her doctoral degree. Her disposition towards doctoral studies appears to remain strong as does her motivation with her re-enrolment into a doctoral program. Her embodied cultural capital has not been diminished by her experiences with her previous supervisors. By her own admissions she is happier within the supportive peer group research format and with her current supervisor. Thus despite the negativity that may be associated with the supervisor student relationship her habitus remains focused on success and is seemingly unaffected by her previous academic experiences.

Clare's habitus towards doctoral study is interpreted as being unchanged and positive with an articulated disposition to learning and her occupational dispositions. Her dispositions towards doctoral education are part of her provocation to complete her original educational and occupational aspirations. The effects of her unsatisfactory supervisory experiences appear not to have affected her decision-making with respect to doctoral research. She has recommenced her doctoral journey with a different supervisor whom she admires and within a study environment which she considers supportive. Her embodied aspirations were not negated by her previous supervisory experiences and the current supervisory experiences have possibly negated the effects of the original experiences. As such her habitus has followed her disposition to learning and other educational and occupational dispositions towards doctoral studies in that she believes a favourable or successful outcome is attainable.

4.2.3.5.3 Gianni

Gianni suggests that his provocation to undertake doctoral studies was determined by the interests and vocational occupations of his family and friends who were academics and researchers. He articulates this motivation with:

> *Look it runs in my family. Basically we're a bunch of academics basically. My sister is an Associate Professor and she's been researching for most of her life, and my grandmother was a researcher and medical researcher, it ran in my family. My father's always read, so we just have all that—yeah we've always done this and u, it seems I've been around people who have written a lot and it's also led to relationships and friends and of course family and that sort of thing; in the sense it was natural, a natural progression from these [experiences] to develop work and develop my interest and develop my—and visual arts and philosophy. So I in there totally [phew pause] they are areas which won't get me employment so I've gotta love it.*

Gianni's motivation for undertaking doctoral study appears to come from an inherited disposition from his family. He describes this as being in a "sense it was natural, a natural progression" from this socialisation and "relationships and friends and of course family". This has possibly developed his intrinsic disposition to learn from a supportive group of family and friends as suggested by Grusec (2011). Of all of the participants including myself, Gianni's pathway into doctoral studies appears to follow the notions of Bourdieu (1977b) including social reproduction, and class and group disposition inheritance. His cultural capital for doctoral studies is possibly embodied as is his social capital from being socialised from childhood within an academic family.

His disposition to learning and his habitus are positive which in conjunction with an academic disposition and his appreciation of the education field with a part-time academic occupation, are providing the ongoing provocation to complete his Doctor of Philosophy. He appears to have an educational aspiration as he states that the discipline in which he is attempting to complete his Doctor of Philosophy does not offer an abundance of employment opportunities. However, he does say "I've gotta love it" to explain his undertaking a doctoral research degree. His familial background in doctoral studies, higher education in general and research in particular suggest that although he is critical of the amount of access time that he has to his supervisor, this family support counters any negativity caused by the issue of supervisor access.

He articulates his experience of doctoral studies as follows:

> *I think that there's a certain level, there's things that I'm passionate about, that what you're actually talking about or writing about and particularly I think there's got to be, I think there's things that will come out of where you've got to and a lot of time and a lot of um, um, commitment of difficult material, to actually stay with it you have to actually wind your way into it then I think I found that to some degree, I think one of the difficulties is sometimes the earlier part of the research which is quite enjoyable and a pleasure to read and giving your time to that but then you get into actually doing to um reducing it down into something which is approaching the question of the thesis. And then from that point then narrowing it down into chapters I think then it's a lot difficult point. I find sometimes that sometimes that there—real*

pleasure will be um, well really you become quite an energised, why because there is a lot of pressure around getting, getting these points to something or arguments and ah, it's quite queer or quite tough in a way of um, we don't necessarily all have that personal background in our academic loading. I have philosophically but only through attrition, through other people through associating with what I've got to learn it um, there isn't necessarily how we normally think so we it's an acquired skill or some acquired habits and the first real levels in this example the real level um, um, um, control around this as well as a different thing around it ah, there's the target part of the thing.

Gianni's embodied cultural capital which he inherited and accumulated from his family and friends appears to provide a stabilising effect on the issues he encounters within the doctoral research process. Although his reasons for withdrawing from his research are medical and a life changing event, he articulates a determination to complete his degree. His comments concerning supervisor support while frustrating his attempts to resolve academic issues with his doctorate do not suggest any negativity to his embodied cultural capital.

Gianni's frustration with the supervisor student relationship is directed at the postgraduate academic system which provides for a three year timeframe to complete a doctorate and the funding provided to the universities for postgraduate research degrees. This he discusses in the interview with;

I compare it to a lot of countries where it's four to five years minimum. Yeah, the thing that would be interesting you if you're actually looking at this, is you know, just to investigate the way that it's run and I think that Australia is a victim of its own issues, in other words lack of university funding and in it the lack of money means that's caused that schools and Faculties want to get their Masters in as soon as possible and I think that there's sort of—well I don't know what level of agreement they have made. They are responsible and I think that there's sort of I don't know, I don't know what little agreement they made or level of agreement for 3.5 years which I think is um giving them—if you want to do a decent doctorate, is kind of a bit of a tough call at times I think for a lot of people...

He is also critical of the information available from institutional sources which as he explains, appears to demonstrate a lack of incentives to undertake doctoral training which he contrasts to other universities. Institutional information concerning the processes, procedures and guidelines applicable to completing a doctorate is necessary cultural capital that may be utilised in the student's decision making to dropout, persist or re-commence doctoral studies (Kiley, 2011a; McCormack, 2005). He articulates his frustration at the lack of such information as;

I do attend Uni and it's not bad but realistically [pause] um [pause] yeah, the institution in itself doesn't provide a lot. There's little incentive to chase training in the beginning around the thesis and question and literature review and that kind of thing, there's a little bit of that going on but not a lot realistically and when it comes down to fairly ad hoc the institution itself doesn't provide a lot. I mean you go on line, you look for information about that, you know you expect if you go there if you go to some universities globally, there's a lot of these other around procedures and processes but you don't see that here, I don't see that here in the university that I attend here, and

I think that it's one of the major institutions in this country. All the same, I think it's just that on-line support could be more developed and could be more developed in terms of making supervisors more accountable, you know because they're getting paid for it, it's not as though they are doing it for nothing.

He doesn't do online, yeah (laughter), I don't know why, it's a bit insane because then I could sort of update things very quickly. Um, you know I could have that level of support on a lot of things there. You know really given I mean he personally is not the issue, the issue is on the institution giving him too much work so there's the whole thing about him being overworked; you know it's not necessarily, you can't blame him, you can blame the situation they find themselves in institutionally. And the way that universities are being squeezed—and turning academics into people who could perhaps there's some way to, way to...more on the other issues, there's way too much paperwork. Basically, I also think he's giving some of his students too much—I don't think he can do much better than what he's doing.

Gianni does seem to be aware of the procedures of the postgraduate research degrees. His criticism is biased towards what he perceives as the inadequacy of this system to provide a quality and possibly equitable process in comparison to research degrees in other countries. As he suggests the Australian postgraduate research degrees situation does seem to have a negative effect on the supervisor student relationship which is not reflective of the supervisor. His notions are that the lack of funding provided to the universities is insufficient to provide for his perceptions of a quality supervisory process.

4.2.3.5.4 My Story 4.6

I am the first in my immediate family to attempt a university qualification. My admission to university, unlike Elizabeth, Clare and Gianni was achieved from the Vocational Education and Training sector not from secondary schooling. Thus there is no direct familial background of cultural capital but an intrinsic motivation to learn and an educational aspiration to achieve academically. In an indirect perspective, my maternal grandfather often spoke of the opportunities of completing a university qualification.

This was reinforced in later years by peer aspirations to achieve a Bachelor level degree. My educational aspiration to undertake a Master's degree and then attempt to complete a doctoral degree was determined by my employment in the tertiary education sector of vocational education and training. This was reinforced by an intrinsic motivation or disposition. My enjoyment for my role as a vocational educator determined my decision to undertake studies in the adult education field.

The transition from vocational education to higher education was confounded by the lack of higher education cultural capital (Long et al., 2006). I lacked a knowledge of the processes and procedures of higher education especially academic writing and referencing which is not regarded with the same level of importance in the vocational education and training sector. However with the support and assistance from lecturers and supervisors I have achieved candidature, undertaken research interviews and partially completed my doctoral thesis.

My habitus has a favourable disposition to learn or intrinsic motivation towards learning to achieve my educational aspiration of completing a research doctoral degree which I expect to occur upon completion of this thesis. While my occupational aspiration is focused on future research activities my current focus is

my educational aspiration and disposition to learn (Grusec, 2011; Homel & Ryan, 2014). I enjoy learning to the point that I consider the need for further knowledge being somewhat addictive.

I doubt that my withdrawal from my doctoral studies would have been permanent and that I would have attempted to complete this learning pathway in the future. I am possibly a 'non-completer' as suggested by McCormack (2005) rather than a dropout student which is supported by the number of courses that I had withdrawn from in the past. However, I have always returned to further study.

4.3 Student Relationships with Supervisors

The supervisor student relationship has a significant influence on doctoral student dropout than any other due in part to the supervisor generally being the 'face' of the institution. This relationship is an institutionally supported, monitored and controlled function of research focused degrees (Kiley, 2011a). It is through this relationship that doctoral students are integrated into the academic and social aspects of their studies.

Kiley (2011a) has identified six issues relating to the supervision of doctoral students being "the provision of adequate feedback, the frequency of meetings, making an early start on writing, clarifying expectations, positive candidate/supervisor relationships, keeping to the same topic and the supervisor" (p. 589). There is a suggestion by Wisker and Robinson (2013) that issues involving life changes, inappropriate research projects, and the loss of their supervisor as additional possible reasons for students' non-completion of doctoral degrees. In terms of the supervisor student relationship Wisker and Robinson (2013) suggest that

> supervisor loss and absence can take at least two forms: the supervisor literally leaving the role or institution, and neglect. In this respect, Gurr (2001) defines 'benign neglect' as a problem of mismatch in student and supervisor interactions, while Grant (2004, 2005, 2008) and Manathunga and Gooze´e (2007) use postcolonial theories to explore issues of hierarchy and hidden power interactions in which student and supervisor relationships are less than ideal, less those of collegial equals than of master-slave…(p. 301).

The outcome of the supervisor leaving the role, for any reason, creates an 'orphan' effect for the student while benign neglect is referenced as 'abandoned' by McAlpine and Paulson (2010).

4.3.1 Benign Neglect and Abandonment

Elizabeth is scathing in her narrative of her experiences of her supervisors. She completed 12 months of her doctoral studies then dropped out which she attributes to her unsatisfactory experiences of doctoral supervision which from her narrative may be described as *'benign neglect'* or *abandonment* by her supervisors. This she articulated in our discussions;

> *Um, why I dropped out I would say was mostly because of difficulties with the supervision processes and support from the university.*
>
> *Question: Could you elaborate on that more?*
>
> *Elizabeth: Yes, the difficulties with the supervision process. I had a supervisory panel of three people, one of them my main supervisor was who had, ah, um, got the money through the ARC for the research which two PhD*

scholarships were attached to. I had one of those scholarships. There was the second supervisor was relocated from the university, was studying at another university interstate and the third supervisor I really think his name was on the ARC application and as part of my supervisory panel just because he was a person well known… I thought is it a problem to mature aged students that, on my CV I have a lot of research experience, project management experience and my supervisor actually said, we called a meeting of my three supervisors, I was in the room I was sitting there when he actually said " Oh I don't think she needs supervision".

On her own embodied cultural capital relative to doctoral research she explains:

I was a bit naïve, I just presumed that, you know, that supervisors were experienced and interested, and you know, were happy to share their knowledge and that wasn't the situation I faced.

Elizabeth also believes that the university was cognisant of the unsatisfactory supervisory practices that she experienced. Her response to the question "Do you feel that the University let you down in that regard?" was;

I do, I do. The University itself, mainly not so much, the School that I was enrolled in um, yes, because they knew that this particular Supervisor had had another female PhD student who withdrew. They also knew that another older female had been working with him, and she had resigned because she couldn't work with him, so I do feel that they knew that he had some problems interacting and collaborating with other people.

Although Elizabeth has dropped out of her studies she has been encouraged to recommence by another possible supervisor. She reflects on this with;

the day after I withdrew from my PhD the school I was enrolled in offered me work as a Research Associate, still with the same ARC funded project but on the other part not the part that my PhD scholarship was attached to, but the other part. I was working to a Supervisor who would be a fantastic PhD supervisor and in conversation we've had since, when we're talking about things, he often says hmmm, that'd be a good PhD topic [laughter] I've got to slap him down and say no, no, no never [laughter]. I wouldn't, you know there's a lot of um things I would be interested in researching…

Question: Your expectations weren't really met were they?

Elizabeth: They weren't. I'd done the first part of my undergraduate degree when I was living overseas so I was very much off campus, and then when I was back in Australia I was still off campus, my Graduate Certificate was done off campus so I was really looking forward to being an on campus student in an intellectual community. I was Vice President of the postgraduate students association so I actually had quite a bit to do with the university Chancellors. We got the first postgraduate symposium off the ground which was a great opportunity for postgraduate students because then their work [was exposed] to an academic audience. But there just wasn't the interest in promoting a postgraduate community, there just wasn't, there wasn't the interest in developing this as a kind of stepping stone to put people into academic life. Um, well [the] University is dual sector it has vocational as well and academia

and it doesn't have a long tradition of research and intellectual um, development. You know, it is a small university most students are off campus.

I don't think it's so much their qualifications I think it's the early career researchers and beginning supervisors, they're not provided with guidance guidelines from the university. They're not brought to account if for example on our first report back to the Research Office, my supervisor said we had monthly meetings but in January and March for a May report is not quite a "monthly meetings" and that was not followed up.

Question: I guess the other thing that comes to mind do um, I know there has been a large turnover of people, so what I was wondering now from what you said, do you have senior or highly experienced staff at the university in the academic sector?

Elizabeth: They are um, for example I was at the school for social policy research which has been rebadged the Northern Institute so there are people there with PhDs, there are people who have supervisory experience, some of it I know is very dodgy but there was some very dodgy relationships there, but a lot of those people are adjunct, they are not based here, they are based in South Australia, in Victoria, in New South Wales, in Queensland so there's not the core um, I mean my project was in an ARC project which was looking at the cause and consequences of population turnover in the—and this is one of those there's not the kind of on the ground critical mass of academics to get things moving. In some areas such as indigenous education, health areas "yes" um, but where I was "no" um, and of course as I said I didn't have the experience to ask the right questions about the environment that I was answering to, I just expected that oh it's a university so there will be this great opportunity to engage in you know conversations with people but no that wasn't happening.

4.3.2 Doctoral Orphans

Clare's supervisor departed the university during her candidature effectively resulting in her being a '*doctoral orphan*'. As she explains;

"Yeah look um, I've... I was enrolled for the full 10 years and um, it took me; I never actually formally resigned if you know what I mean".

Clare was withdrawn from her candidature when the time limit of 10 years had lapsed and formally re-enrolled into her second candidature by the university administration. During this period of non-activity with her research she was, as she articulates;

I wasn't on a scholarship and um, I was doing a lot of um, work in the faculty in the school so I became the school workhorse. So I was doing a lot a casual teaching, there was that um, and secondly like I had um, yes I was doing far too much um, casual work. I was doing more, there was that problem…

Clare describes her relationship with her original supervisor as she discusses her expectations of this relationship. She suggests that her relationship with her supervisor was actually supervision by 'abandonment' where she was essentially not provided with support by her supervisor.

Probably the most important problem for me was my relationship with my supervisor and um while I really admired him as a person and his ethics his research. Ah, when I did my PhD they used to talk about going on with this journey with your supervisor, they say there are these three positions um, where your supervisor ah, motivates you and there can be supervision where your supervisor learns with you and there can be supervision by abandonment which means, it's a really an old model of supervision where it's a bit like well now you're enrolled you go off and do your PhD and um, come back to me when it's done. So he was supervising by the abandonment model.

By her own admission Clare states that she required support and guidance with her research which was not forthcoming from her supervisor.

Um, and I had actually needed a lot more intellectual guidance than that, so if I had and most of my experience of being a PhD, a lot of my experience of PhD has been tempered by peddling for votes because my supervisor was so bad I got heavily involved in student politics in order to try and change the system and, and that took up a lot of time and um what that lead to was me understanding a lot more about HDR [Higher Degree Research] process so that's what interested me with your research too. I think if I had written a PhD in my PhD should have, could have been about the policy and politics of higher education by research study. So if they, yeah, it was my relationship with my supervisor that kind of determined the, was the basis for we just didn't have a personal relationship, I didn't um, it wasn't learning like I could feel I could walk into his office "I've been reading this or I've written this, what do you think" it was more like "go away write a chapter and bring it back to me" and I think in the very early stages with a PhD at least everybody needs more than that… yeah, um and I have, I have witnessed you know other people who have got through their PhDs quicker and with less angst than I have, it has been um knowing what you are that you are in agreement about what you are working on, how you're working on it and what input from your supervisor is going to be. And I just didn't have that with my supervisor.

My last supervisor; he was described as a-social um, and one other thing about him my last supervisor I had before is that a couple of years into my PhD he left and went to work in Hong Kong so I actually didn't have a supervisor…yes, and they assigned me a supervisor seat. Firstly I didn't even know he had gone and so I didn't know who my new supervisor was and it was all a bit sad really [giggle].

When questioned about her intentions to return to doctoral studies Clare responded explaining that there was actually a penalty for non-completion of her PhD.

Oh yeah, I am actually enrolled again. I ah, got through the 10 years that um, you are allotted then I think you need 2 or 3 years for it to be un-excluded from your record so you can go back and re-enrol without having to pay HECS or Fee Help or whatever…

In contrast to her original candidature and supervisory experience she has an admiration for her new supervisor which she discusses.

Well firstly, well actually I worked with my current supervisor at a different university um, I worked with him as his research associate so I had an academic position with him for 3 years one of his paid for money from one of his research grants. We had a great working relationship I did some brilliant project with him um, and ah, so he's much more approachable um, I'm a bit older now and a bit more confident too so I'm much more able to deal with him you know, I'm not so frightened of the professors if you know what I mean. Um [pause] he, he's just a different personality to my last supervisor [pause] yes, with [my supervsior] I just and ah have a much better personal relationship with him and ah I know how to work with him you know we have a much better working relationship.

She reflects on her current supervisor and the doctoral research environment with a pride seemingly borne from association with the research community of which she is a member.

Oh yeah he is really great unfortunately he is very sick he is, got Parkinson's disease and I, and the other thing is I work with [the supervisor] in a um, research group, there's three of us who are um all oldies um we're all over 50 and we all work in fairly...with two other people in my research group that I deal with. One is the Senior Operating Officer of um one of our State Government agencies here and one is Senior Financial Officer at… so their very high level positions and I mean we're in the research group together so we go to [my supervisor's] house and we work on papers together and then just we just really productive team because they have the ideas and I have the um, like they guess out of the three of us I'm the one with the more practical research skills like writing and getting things from the library you know referencing stuff but they have the courage to they have the workplace knowledge and the courage to just make the argument. So they know what the argument is that they want to write about um and I have the more practical skills to put that into a paper. So we've been published quite a few times and yeah...

Clare appears to articulate an intellectual stimulation and pleasure from associating with her current research community;

Oh yes, yeah um [pause] yeah, I think that's one of the main reasons I want to finish my PhD as well too. I know I can I just need to do it and I really like that I mean their such big projects for people the PhDs um so there's a lot of project management and um a lot of exciting things to think about.

Clare's story of supervisor abandonment and at being orphaned with the departure of her original supervisor without her knowledge is regarded by writers including Kiley (2011a), McCormack (2005) and Wisker and Robinson (2013) as unsatisfactory supervision practices. Combined with the experiences of Elizabeth who was unsupported in her research and whose personal feelings towards her supervisor caused her to drop out of doctoral study suggest a poor standard of supervision by the academic assigned to supervise the research but also draws attention to the monitoring practices of the institute of their supervisors. Elizabeth mentions this in her discussion;

Yes, look it, I don't think it's so much their qualifications I think it's the early career researchers and beginning supervisors, they're not provided with

guidance guidelines from the university. They're not brought to account if for example on our first report back to the Research Office, my supervisor said we had monthly meetings but in January and March for a May report is not quite a "monthly meetings" and that was not followed up.

4.3.3 Supervisor Access

The literature on doctoral supervision identifies *access* to one's supervisor as an important aspect of the supervisor student relationship (Kiley, 2011a). It is within this aspect of the relationship that Gianni suggests that he has issues.

> *Because I don't get the support would be mean like to get ah, I have a friend doing his PhD and he gets a lot more support than I get. I mean I know the thing but there's one thing this country should work on it's getting that academic support to you. Yeah, I tell you it's quite abysmal and given that it's such a short period of three years—I think between the two, maybe it's the combination of ...it creates a lot of stress for a lot of students, yep.*

The three year duration of which Gianni is critical is explained by Innovative Research Universities (2008, p. 8) with "the Australian Research Training Scheme is currently based on an assumed candidacy period of four years. Somewhat anomalous to this, the duration of an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) is only three years, with a possible extension of up to six months". This funded duration from commencement to completion of the doctorate is considered to be "too short to allow for a reasonable completion time" (Innovative Research Universities, 2008, p. 8) as the timing occurs at the crucial stage of writing the thesis.

Reflecting on the doctoral research process Gianni responds to the question "do you find yourself frustrated at the process?" with the following narrative.

> *I'm frustrated with the lack of support—the process is the process—I was aware of that in the beginning so I don't think I can blame the process. I've been frustrated in the support for the process.*
>
> *Question: OK and when you're talking support for the process, would you level that at your supervisor?*
>
> *Gianni: [Interjects] Yes*
>
> *Question: And what about the institution itself, what about the university?*
> *Gianni: Both, both, I do attend Uni and it's not bad but realistically [pause] um, [pause] yeah, the institution in itself doesn't provide a lot. There's little incentive to chase training in the beginning around the thesis and question and literature review and that kind of thing, there's a little bit of that going on but not a lot realistically and when it comes down to fairly ad hoc, the institution itself doesn't provide a lot. I mean you go online, you look for information about that; you know you expect if you go there if you go to some universities globally—there's a lot of these other-around procedures and processes but you don't see that here; I don't see that here in the university that I attend here, and I think that it's one of the major institutions in this country. All the same, I think it's just that online support could be more developed and could be more developed in terms of making supervisors more accountable, you know, because they're getting paid for it, it's not as though they are doing it for nothing.*

Question: Do you feel that possibly if you were doing this, let's say full time instead of if you were full time at the university trying to do this, you would get more support or...

Gianni: Well I am working part time but I'm doing it full time myself, it is full time, so what do you mean by full time in the sense this or the other sense?

Question: In the sense that some Doctorates are done part time and they get twice the time to complete

Gianni: No I'm doing it full time, so, it's still an issue

Question: So you were talking online, you were a bit concerned there whether you actually saw your supervisor at the institution or purely online?

Gianni: He doesn't do online, yeah (laughter), I don't know why, it's a bit insane because then I could sort of update things very quickly. Um, you know I could have that level of support on a lot of things there. You know really given I mean he personally is not the issue, the issue is on the institution giving him too much work so there's the whole thing about him being overworked; you know it's not necessarily, you can't blame him, you can blame the situation they find themselves in institutionally. And the way that universities are being squeezed—and turning academics into people who could perhaps there's some way to, way to...more on the other issues, there's way too much paperwork. Basically, I also think he's giving some of his students too much—I don't think he can do much better than what he's doing.

Question: Do you have a set time, or do you wander in when you feel the need?

Gianni: I don't, I mean, I work at home. I'm really curious about what you do because I'm crossing over between philosophy and visual arts and the media, I've also got a production of film component I make with it, it's a small component but it's part of it so they give me a work space for that. So basically I work as much as in my office at home. So when I go in, I need to discipline myself to, you know, it's not as if you go where student's candidates going through a nine to five job, going to the office as it were, I don't do that. I'm at home now.

Question: So how often would you speak to your supervisor or have access to him?

Gianni: No more than twice a week, so every two weeks maximum.

Question: So that's over the phone or you see him face to face?

Gianni: I go in there. I'm lucky if it's two weeks, usually about a month.

Question: He's just overworked?

Gianni: Yeah, realistically yeah.

Gianni's assessment of his supervision processes appears to be philosophical and tempered with his embodied cultural capital of the doctoral research process and procedures. He is critical of this process predominantly from the perspective of the institution who he suggests required his supervisor to undertake a work load beyond his capabilities. His knowledge of the doctoral processes has been learned from his family in a social reproduction manner so that he assumes a philosophical approach to the supervision issues that he identifies. His concerns are not with his supervisor

but with the institution where he is completing his Doctor of Philosophy. This he describes as frustrating.

His thoughts on the postgraduate development process and doctoral supervision are provided with his comments;

> *You have a postgraduate review and I remember going into the last one last year and before in the October, you'll just sit down and they'll say "So how do you think it went?" Well, you know, it's "well this is happening, etc etc" and they'll either ask you whether you've changed your theory or research, what, just be careful that you not going off too much you feel like they've got twenty minutes or twenty five minutes, and there's a limit to what you can actually cover in that so there's not much time given to those reviews. It's quite formulaic and really dealing with individual issues or things like that. What I like is when you work solely with your supervisor and if you have an issue really with the supervisor, an ongoing one not just the annual review, who do you speak to? If you can really trust them I think that that's an issue because you want to get on with your supervisor well. How does it affect your relationship with, so I think that's quite tough that one. I think a lot of people must find that, so I kind of feel that external institutions being what they are, often colleagues are reviewing you and they might be doing their annual review and maybe you'd like someone who's a little bit removed from that, so you can guarantee a little bit of anonymity, neutrality, fairness, and it doesn't seem to operate like that. I'm saying that if I have an issue with a supervisor you know um then at the end of the year there's a review, you know the annual review or if, for example you want to find a way to actually have an issue with a supervisor needing to talk about him or her, often it will be that the person may be a work colleague of his or her. And so the neutrality is not there and you are not that free to say how you feel or—so, there's an issue and I think we need to have a situation where there's neutrality and I've heard this is from a couple of students also, well you know how do they deal with that? How do they deal with those issues, their needs are not being met by their supervisor. So when you think, these people [students] will take time off from and suspend their PhD on these sorts of issues, you may work inefficiently because you're not getting the support from the supervisor at the time you want it. Then the workload increases because you have to redo things and then you restructure them because your structure is inappropriate and you may have to rework it because you don't get the support. To get it right you might working so much…*

The lack of supervisor support as Gianni suggests may cause students to dropout due to a lack of academic integrity and an unnecessarily increased workload causing rewrites of sections of the thesis which creates a timing crisis for the student. This he suggests is integral with the overall approach to postgraduate research degrees in Australia. The student inefficiencies of such a system do have an effect on the doctoral research experiences of the student which may result in student dropout with deterministic decision making by the student as suggested by Bourdieu and Wacquant (2007).

With regard to supervisor meetings Kiley (2011a) suggests that the fortnightly frequency of Gianni's meetings with his supervisor is average for Australian

universities. This is supported in the interviews by Elizabeth who states that other students have access to their supervisors;

> *in Perth I went to the postgraduate day and one of the sessions I attended was 'how to manage you supervisor' and I listened to the, there was myself and another mature aged student all the rest were they were people in their 20's. They were having and even the man presenting the session, he had 8 PhD students that he was supervising, he gave them an hour a week and his part-time students had an hour a fortnight virtually all the other students in the room had an hour a week and this man and I were sitting there shaking our heads. I said "I'm lucky if I can get an hour a month" and he said the same thing and I thought is it a problem to mature aged students that, on my CV I have a lot of research experience, project management experience and my supervisor actually said, we called a meeting of my three supervisors, I was in the room I was sitting there when he actually said " Oh I don't think she needs supervision"*

The access frequencies cited by Elizabeth in the narrative as 'monthly' appear to be somewhat extreme relative to other students who are provided with an hour a week of the supervisors' attention and assistance. Gianni suggests that the issue of access to supervisors is caused by institutions that increase the workload of academics to an unsustainable level. As Kiley (2011a) suggests, lesser levels of supervisor access and support possibly introduce an increased level of risk of student dropout due to a perception of possibly being abandoned by their supervisor which could result in feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. This also reduces the effectiveness of any student monitoring process to enable intervention strategies to be applied if necessary.

4.3.4 My Story 4.7

My experiences of the supervisor student relationship have provided me with a level of support and assistance. To date I have had five supervisors; one was seconded to other duties within the university, one took extended leave due to the adoption of a second child, the third supervisor resigned to take up lecturing position with another university, the fourth is my current principal supervisor and the fifth is an adjunct supervisor who is also one of my current supervisors. I have never felt that I had been abandoned or orphaned and the change of supervisors was always communicated in advance.

As an external part-time student I do not expect to have weekly or even fortnightly access to my supervisors. Access is usually monthly via a personal meeting, Skype meeting or telephone conversation. While monthly access is appreciated, I do get the impression that this is due more to my supervisors' workload than a predetermined strategy by the university. Meetings and conversations are usually one hour in duration and I have the full attention of my supervisor during these access times. Additional access is provided by email as required.

As the doctorate is the third degree I have attempted as an external part-time student the frequency of the access is better than that experienced when undertaking my Bachelor and Master degrees. Thus the concept of working alone for much of the academic programs is not new and the knowledge and experiences gained from external study have possibly assisted my persistence in recommencing doctoral

study. My cultural capital relative to doctoral studies may have been low but high with respect to external learning and the issues pertaining to that mode of learning.

I do not believe that the supervisor student relationship or any of the factors attributed to that relationship caused me to dropout of doctoral studies. The dropout was entirely of my own volition and due to my own time deprivation and abilities that prevented the development of an acceptable research proposal. That is, my dropout was deterministic in that my habitus was controlled by my lack of embodied cultural capital indicating that a successful outcome was not possible at that time. The doctorate is required to be one's own work based on learning and experiences gained during the prerequisite stages of the degree. While there is a component of coursework in completing a professional doctorate, the research component must be completed by the student not the supervisor.

In analysing my perspectives of the relationship, I have undertaken a philosophical approach similar to the approach undertaken by Gianni, the main difference being Gianni's greater accumulation of cultural capital inherited from familial sources. The entire process of completing a research doctorate is to use the knowledge and skills learned prior to commencing and during the coursework phases and apply these to an actual or conceptual problem relative to one's place in the world.

4.4 In Summary

The Research Findings indicate that a number of conclusions may be drawn from the collected data relative to the habitual decision making process of Bourdieu (1977b) and the longer timeframe for dropout decisions in contrast to habitual decisions. There is an influence on decisions by dispositions and capital with respect to field which are developed from familial, social, educational (benign neglect and supervisor access) and occupational environments. Also the student may be subjected to educational and emotional consequences as a result of these influences. An interpretation of the research findings is undertaken in Chapter 5 which integrates the empirical findings and the literature data.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Outline

The research conclusions are formulated by the research questions of "what are the influences that frame the dispositions of the doctoral student to dropout from a professional doctoral research program?" and "how is the process of 'dropping-out' experienced by the doctoral student?" delineated in Chapter 1, Research Questions. These questions in turn are constrained by the conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological decision-making model (Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 101). The conclusions are an interpretation of the influence of the sociological decision-making factors on the dropout decisions of doctoral students and the effect pragmatically and emotively on the students. Suggestions for further research are developed and presented as are my personal thoughts on completing this research.

5.2 Influences on Dropout

A student's decision to drop out of doctoral research study does not appear to be reflexive or an automated reflex reaction to some external or internal stimulus as suggested by Bourdieu (1977b), but rather a conscious and considered decision made over a period of time. This is reflective of the timeframe necessary for Elizabeth and I to withdraw. Our respective decisions to withdraw were considered over a period of months rather than immediate as theorised by Bourdieu (1977b). This effectively extends the timeframe during which non-habitual decisions are made and implemented. During this decision-making period there is opportunity for the university to successfully intervene in the student's decision process to counsel the student to develop coping strategies for the student to persist with their doctoral studies. A successful intervention enhances the cultural capital of the student and the institution.

This extended timeframe to finalise and implement the decision to withdraw or dropout from studies is made by the participants after consideration of a number of factors including occupational and educational dispositions, a disposition to learning and embodied cultural capital such as knowledge and experiences of doctoral studies. From my own experience of the frustration and anger that can emanate from self-perceptions of inadequacy or non-achievement there was a need to reassess my motives to continue doctoral research studies; such personal feelings were reported by McCormack (2005). This need for reassessment can be caused by our lack of capital such as cultural and economic capital in conjunction with supervisory practices such as supervisor's benign neglect, lack of access or abandonment. Such *unfavorable influences,* as experienced by Elizabeth and Clare*, can have an effect on the motives and dispositions that can result in a cognitive reassessment outcome* to discontinue their enrolment into a doctoral research degree.

The decision to dropout can reflect *an abandonment or modification of the student's educational or occupational dispositions* as demonstrated by Elizabeth. Elizabeth's educational dispositions may be mutable such that the motivation to attain an occupation may be stronger than the learning disposition to attain a doctorate. Thus the high attrition in doctoral education cited by Cantwell et al. (2012) and McCormack (2005) may be linked to the self-perceived or extrinsic need of working students to attain a level of social and economic capital within a specific occupational role. The student may then have a notion of returning to higher education in the future. This indicates that *an occupational disposition is a stronger*

motivation than an autonomous learning disposition as concluded by Lee and Pang (2014) *and therefore the stronger influence on the educational persistence* of some students. To many the need for employment is essential whereas increasing one's level of accumulated cultural capital with a doctoral degree may be perceived as a non-necessity of life.

The distinction in the effect of dispositional differences is the emphasis placed on the primary disposition, the 'why' and the expectation, 'the how'. Aspirations can affect our dispositions to achieve an ambition including an academic qualification. Dispositions to complete a doctoral qualification may be educational or occupational, intrinsic or extrinsic. Educational dispositions are where the student aspires to complete a qualification in the expectation that the qualification will provide employment within the chosen occupational field, as did Elizabeth and Clare (Gemici et al., 2014; Homel & Ryan, 2014). They are considered to have an occupational disposition as the primary disposition for undertaking doctoral studies. That is, the aspiration to a specific occupational role sought by Elizabeth and Clare, would offer greater social and economic capital based on the expectation that a doctorate would be beneficial to the student in the attainment of such a role. In this scenario the occupational disposition becomes the primary disposition and the academic qualification becomes the expectation. Thus the motivation is not educational but occupational in a situation where changed employment is necessary, for example. This change in emphasis on the disposition from autonomous intrinsic to non-autonomous suggests that dropout is more likely if students have a non-autonomous disposition. *Where students do have an educational disposition but no stated expectations of a substantive occupation on completion of their doctoral degree, they may dropout from study or defer their study and recommence at a later date*, a strategy used by Gianni and myself. Such deferment is considered by McCormack (2005) as not being unusual.

The embodied cultural capital of the student, or the lack of, may override the disposition to learn. The embodiment of our knowledge and experiential learning about doctoral research degrees and the processes, procedures and interactions with others is our cultural capital. This is our embodied cultural capital in the field of doctoral research degrees which according to Bourdieu (1977b), Davey (2009) and Gopaul (2011) has the capacity to control the natural tendencies of the dispositions and in particular the disposition to learn within the habitus. This is capable of resulting in a dropout decision depending on the dissatisfaction level of the experience accumulated in the embodied cultural capital. That is, the decision as enacted by Elizabeth is deterministic (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007) as her cultural capital reverses the preference of the disposition to learning and the extrinsic disposition to learn for occupational outcomes.

The conclusion by Davey (2009) *that habitus cannot be isolated from capital* in the decision-making model by Bourdieu (1984a), applies to students transitioning from one educational level to another. *It is not effective once the student has experienced the higher level of study.* A research higher degree student's accumulation of cultural capital relative to Bourdieu's (1977b) concept of 'field' is possibly minimal at the transition phase from a Bachelor's research or Master's degree to a Doctoral research degree. Prior to enrolment the student relies on the experiences of others to develop their beliefs and disposition towards doctoral studies, which is vicarious cultural capital. With post-enrolment experience and

knowledge of doctoral research the student does develop their own cultural capital. This may reinforce inherited dispositional attitudes or change these attitudes to align with the new information by assimilation and adaption into the student's reality and therefore accumulated capital of doctoral study.

The effect of a student's cultural capital misalignment on the expectations can be negative in comparison to the pre-enrolment cultural capital. Clare, Elizabeth and I were not cognizant of the realities of doctoral study prior to enrolment which was suggestive of our misalignment with doctoral study. Prior to enrolment into a doctoral degree the accumulated cultural capital gathered before and at the transition stage was sufficient to convince us of the probabilities of success at the doctoral level. However, this accumulated capital of doctoral education is vicarious and relies on the reflections of the experiences and knowledge of others. Thus our expectations were not aligned with the realities of the actual doctoral degree requirements.

Another of the cultural capital misalignments which do occur is that doctoral students commence their degrees with the expectation that they will be supported by their research supervisors as narrated by Clare and Elizabeth. This includes having access to their supervisor and not being subjected to substandard supervisory practices of benign neglect and abandonment. For Gianni and I, this access is usually achieved with scheduled meetings with the supervisor to discuss developing issues within the research process including the development of a successful research proposal and the ensuing admittance to candidature for the doctoral degree. Such experiences as being abandoned on the premise of not requiring supervision and a lack of supervisory resources, such as academics not suitably experienced to be appointed to the role of research supervisor constitute negative experiences to the student who *accumulates this experiential knowledge as an unsatisfactory and therefore negative experience*. These issues are the responsibility of the university and must be addressed by the university.

The outcome of benign neglect and abandonment may be the withdrawal of the affected doctoral student. The supervisor student relationship is considered by McAlpine and Paulson (2010) and Kiley (2011a) of ensuring the success or failure of a doctoral research study. Some of the issues encountered by Clare and Elizabeth such as supervisor benign neglect do have an effect on the student's cultural capital and doctoral persistence. Elizabeth's supervisor did not provide support to her instead insisting that the she undertake the research unsupported. A second issue with poor supervisory practices is that of the doctoral 'orphan' experienced by Clare, where the supervisor departs from the supervising institute resulting in the student not receiving research support. Such supervisory practices are a barrier to student cohort and faculty integration as theorised by Tinto (1993), especially for external students. Although some of these disaffected students recommence their doctorates, they may do so at a different university or faculty. Such dropout can result in the deferment of the student's dispositions to undertake doctoral study as experienced by Elizabeth. These unsatisfactory experiences are accumulated within the embodied cultural capital of each student.

An ongoing theme through the participant interview data was the lack of access to the research participant's supervisor. While this phenomenon may be a consequence of benign neglect, there are other aspects of the supervisor that may

result in a situation of inadequate access and therefore support by the supervisor. However, as Gianni narrates, the lack of supervisor access is not necessarily due to the personality or the skills of the supervisor, but caused by the supervisory workload; an institutional issue. From the interviews and the literature, some supervisors may be excellent researchers but not proficient research supervisors. One of the explanations provided in the data suggests that this lack of access may be attributed to the university due to the number of students who require supervision and the number of proficient supervisors available. This has been linked to the funding model of the Australian Government for postgraduate research students. As the universities are being requested to 'do more with less' (Kiley, 2011b) the number of trained and experienced supervisory staff available to service growing cohorts of Higher Degree Research students results in a supervisory workload that cannot be attained by these supervisors. The lack of supervisor access has a similar emotional effect on the student of frustration and anger at not being able to have their research issues discussed and solutions developed in a dialogue with their supervisor (McAlpine & Paulson, 2010). This was the issue discussed by Elizabeth and Clare in their interviews.

These *negative feelings and beliefs resulting from doctoral dropout can have an effect on the dispositions of the student* and may also be accumulated in the student's cultural capital. While aspirational motivations could be deferred or diminished until a future time, the effect on a student's disposition to learning could be to reverse the positive beliefs occurring at the time of enrolment to negative beliefs of doctoral education later into the enrolment period. Dispositions are similar to the habitus in that they are dynamic and changeable with changes in beliefs based on new and experiential knowledge. As the habitus has the attribute of determining success, any alteration in the disposition would be reflected in the 'practice' permitted by the habitus; or in other words, it may manifest in the form of the student having 'changed their mind'. However, dispositions can change due to the influences of learning and experiences such that dispositions to learning and the motivation to achieve a doctoral education may be deferred or abandoned. However the retention of a disposition to learning does appear to be applicable to dropout students as there are students who do not recommence their doctoral studies such as Elizabeth, who retains her aspiration to complete a doctorate and who can articulate the influence of colleagues and discuss possible topics for research. My personal experiences were similar; I retained my intrinsic disposition to complete my doctorate although I had withdrawn my enrolment.

Cultural capital, which is retained cognitively and externally to the habitus, will override the natural tendency of the disposition towards learning with the effect that the student decides to drop out of doctoral studies as discussed by Bourdieu and Wacquant (2007). The effect on the habitus permitted 'practice' is similar; the process is regarded as deterministic as the negative feelings about doctoral studies are accumulated within the student's cultural capital. It is possible that the disposition remains unchanged by these unsatisfactory experiences. That is, the determination or decision is made based on external information or experiences. This may be a permanent withdrawal from postgraduate research or the student may be a 'non-completer' (McCormack, 2005) and return to study in the future. This is the situation that Gianni and I contemplated during our decision process to withdraw, then return to complete our doctorates.

There is no predictability of impending dropout at the individual student level from the student profiling method developed by Davey (2009), *based on the cultural, social and economic capitals of the student's family and the student's non-familial socialisation.* This student profiling tool provides a method of identifying groups of students who may be at risk of dropout due to their familial and social background such as the Lower Socio-Economic Status groups within Australia. This is supported by the research of Ishitani (2008), Tinto (1993) and Gabb et al. (2006) who suggest that the cultural and social capital of the parents may be reflected in the resilience or dropout of individual students where economic capital is not an issue. While all of the research participants deny having been influenced by familial members to undertake a doctoral qualification, such familial influences existed for all participants except Clare who attributes her provocation to her undergraduate lecturers.

Thus the use of student profiles as proposed by Davey (2012) is considered to be problematic as profiles are broad based statements meant to aggregate people with similar socio-cultural-economic backgrounds and preferences. Research undertaken by a number of researchers including Gabb et al. (2006) in Australia, Reay (1998) and Yorke and Thomas (2003) in England do not support the use of student cultural-socio-economic profiles although these researchers have developed factors that may be attributed to student attrition. However these profiles and factor lists are considered not to be explicit and definitively absolute and are therefore, while indicative, not generalisable for individual students.

Within the data collected from this study's non-traditional student participants there is the suggestion that cultural capital may be the better predictor of individual doctoral persistence. That is, those students who transition into doctoral candidacy with an autonomous intrinsic disposition enhanced from cultural capital are more resilient than those whose disposition is developed from socio-economic capital. While Gianni and I have stated intrinsic dispositions, Elizabeth and Clare commenced their doctorates to attain socio-cultural status for employment aspirations. While Elizabeth's aspirations are primarily socio-economic, Clare stated that her provocations were socio-cultural based on a perceived lifestyle. Thus our accumulated capital from personal knowledge and experience are more influential on our habitus than familial and socially inherited capital. Therefore, *individual student profiles based on personally accumulated socio-cultural capital and socio-economic aspirations may be better predictors of doctoral student dropout than aggregated group profiles* as presented by Davey (2009).

5.3 Student Affectivity to Dropout

The emotive effects on students such as Elizabeth, Gianni and I, who withdrew at our own request, have similar effects on the emotions of the students who are institutionally withdrawn. These *effects have similarities to experiencing loss with emotions of anger, denial, shame and attributions of blame.* Student instigated dropout can be due to *a lack of a foreseeable successful completion of their degree emanating from their feelings of inadequacy and lack of self-belief* in their own abilities. Such feelings may be the result of academic isolation of the student by a research supervisor, or possibly from an inability to cope with the rigors of the research degree which reaffirms the conclusions of McCormack (2005). The recommencement from dropping out of doctoral study may be attributed to a strong belief or disposition in learning and an educational disposition or a regaining of

student identity and occupational disposition. Regaining our self-belief possibly strengthens our disposition to learning. This rejuvenated learning disposition and the renewal of occupational and educational dispositions to achieve are suggested as being necessary to overcome the loss of motivations.

5.4 Some Final Thoughts: Enhancing the Doctoral Journey

The conclusions presented in this chapter are developed from data collected from the participants during a conversationally styled interview which recorded qualitative data concerning the emotive effects on the participants of withdrawing from their chosen qualification. To counter student dropout requires the implementation of a collaborative relationship between the student and the institution as concluded by Kiley (2009). The emotive issues identified in the research are as complex as the personalities of the individual participants. Because of this complexity any interpretation of the doctoral student dropout data as presented in this thesis is made possible with a dual methodology of phenomenology and autonomous and observational ethnography. These methods have enabled the participants' personal reflections to be collected from the participants, analysed and interpreted to gain an insight into the emotive and practical aspects of the participants' doctoral research programs. While phenomenography has provided the detailed personal feelings of the participants, ethnography allows for my personal biases to be included into the interpretive outcomes.

There are a number of issues emanating from this qualitative research relative to the causes of postgraduate research degree attrition that indicate the requirement for further research.

1. To explore and understand the relationships between educational and occupational dispositions as provocations and student expectations for undertaking a doctorate and a learning disposition that is, an intrinsic disposition to learning. Educational and other occupational dispositions and expectations provide extrinsic motives to learn in that they result in a separable outcome to a disposition to learning. Occupational dispositions have a definable time-span in contrast to the suggested lifelong influence of a disposition to learn. If extrinsic motivations are time constrained in their nature and are a possible cause of postgraduate research student dropout, then what interventions would be effective in reducing the incidence of dropout or dropping out? There is a lack of research into cultural capital, dispositions, habitus and dropout which is required to inform the literature.
2. There is student focus within this research study on the student supervisor relationship and its effect on student capital and therefore completions. The student interviews suggest that there is a requirement for better selection processes of research supervisors and the workload of supervisors. Such practices as benign neglect or abandonment and hence isolation of research candidates have been shown in this project to have an intensely personal effect on the dropout of students. Although there is a body of peer reviewed knowledge concerning the training of research supervisors, substandard supervision practices do continue to exist within Australian universities. This may focus on the recent contemporary public media discussion on the separation of teaching and research based academics.

3. Further investigation into the supervisory pedagogical practices within postgraduate research degrees. The research data in this thesis suggest that the dyadic supervisory processes limit the formation of positive disposition for students. The literature suggests that a collaborative approach to doctoral supervision would perhaps enhance the experiences of these students and thereby reduce doctoral dropout.

5.4.1 My Story 5.1

My doctoral journey has allowed me to explore and understand my own decision-making in relation to dropping out from doctoral study. I have developed an appreciation of the complexity of doctoral research and the self-confidence that the undertaking of such a degree invokes on those who complete this qualification. My identity has been re-established and I have enhanced my awareness of self and others. This has engendered an appreciation and understanding of my worldview towards my own behaviours and those of others. I now understand and appreciate why I made the decision to drop out of doctoral study and the dispositions to recommence and complete my doctoral thesis, and submit this thesis for examination.

5.5 In Summary

The research questions inquire into the student dropout decisions at the personal or dispositional level and the influences that effect these decisions. To understand the influences on our dropout decisions there was a need to explore our own emotions and other factors relative to our learning dispositions, both intrinsically and extrinsically. We also needed to explore how we respond to our knowledge both learned and experiential and the effect and affect these epistemologies have on our ontologies and our decision making.

From the conclusions, there are three original notions that emanate from the analysis and interpretation of the collected data:

1. A student's decision to drop out of a doctoral research program is a conscious and considered decision made over a period of time which means that Bourdieu's sociological decision-making model can be extended to include non-habitual decisions.
2. Individual student profiles based on personally accumulated socio-cultural capital and socio-economic aspirations may be better predictors of doctoral student dispositions to dropout. Intrinsic dispositions developed from socio-economic aspirations are not as durable as those developed from socio-cultural aspirations.
3. Habitus can be isolated from vicarious capital after the student has transitioned to a higher level qualification during which personal capital has been developed which contradicts the vicarious capital.

A number of other conclusions reaffirm previous research within the published literature associated with the research questions.

Our dispositions are a reflection of self. They are learned in a socialisation process involving family, friends and community. They are who we are. However, as shown by this research project, our dispositions are not permanent but subject to extenuating circumstances which Pierre Bourdieu theorises to be the constraints and

opportunities imposed upon us by society beliefs and acceptances that is, social reproduction. Other influences, either emotional or physical, within our cultural, social, symbolic or economic capital can cause a disruption to these natural and occupational dispositions causing deterministic decisions. Dropout decisions are not habitual or sudden and are developed over time as enduring decisions that may be reversed as our Bourdieusian accumulated capital alters.

There is no one response to the research questions but rather a combination of contrasting influences located within and external to the Self. Students need to be self-reflective and explore the effects of external influences on their respective dispositions and develop coping responses, where necessary, to these influences. A lack of a coping response is the cause of student dropout regardless of whether the issue is emotional or physical. There is resilience within the human psyche that may extend from a sense of self-preservation to achieve our aspirations and to develop coping responses to adverse situations which permits us to continue. Although doctoral study is a solitary experience within the social sciences and humanities fields, there is the need for emotional support of family and peer group in addition to other forms of support such as economic and social.

Glossary

Associate Diploma	:	A two year full time vocational qualification offered by Colleges of Technical and Further Education and now superseded.
Autoethnography	:	A method of ethnography that records lived experiences of the self.
"Blue-collar"	:	The term given to artisans and tradespeople who rely on their manual skills.
Confirmation of Candidature	:	The outcome of the defense of a research proposal given before a panel of three academics to ascertain the suitability of the candidate to complete a research proposal.
Cultural Capital	:	Accumulated knowledge and artifacts relating to intrinsic experiences
- Embodied	:	Knowledge and experiential emotions
- Institutionalized	:	Institutional evidence of qualification
- Objective	:	Artifacts used in accumulating capital
Dispositions	:	The tendency to act
- Educational	:	An action that recognizes the benefits of education for extrinsic outcomes
- Extrinsic	:	A behavior that is driven by external rewards such as money, fame, grades, and praise. This type of motivation arises from outside the individual.
- Intrinsic	:	The tendency to act for personal satisfaction self-initiated achievement
- Occupational	:	An action for a vocational outcome
- to learning	:	A personal satisfaction derived through self-initiated learning i.e. the enjoyment gained from learning
Influence	:	A form of power based on prestige to persuade others
Socio-Economic Status	:	The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines socioeconomic status in terms of people's access to material and social resources as well as their ability to participate in society. http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4250.0.55.001Main+Features32009 Accessed 17/10/2014
'mojo'	:	Self-confidence and self-assuredness as in a basis for belief in one's self in a situation manifested by an ability to rebound from a debilitating trauma and

		negative attitude. http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=mojo . Accessed 17/10/2014
Non-completers	:	The term used by McAlpine and Paulson (2010) to describe students who withdraw or dropout of study
'Non-traditional' student	:	Students who generally, have not completed Year 12 and who gain admission to universities as "mature age students; VET pathways students; students from low socio-economic backgrounds; Indigenous students; rural students; students who are the first in family to attend university; off campus students; part-time students; and flexible entry students" (Devlin, 2010, p. 2).
'Non-traditional' research	:	Industry-Based Research where critical issues derive from real situations from industry, which may require a non-traditional research methodology. http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Our%20Organisation%2F;ID=wd8gdh98hypc1;STATUS=A?QRY=phd Accessed 17/10/2014
Power	:	Possessing the intellectual and or authoritative qualities necessary to achieve a specified outcome
Sociology	:	The study and analysis of human society
Social Capital	:	The sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007, p. 119)
Testamur	:	A document that testifies that the recipient has successfully completed a particular course of study
Undergraduate degree	:	A first level academic degree issued by a university e.g. Bachelor of …

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Appendices

Appendix A: Confirmation of Candidature

University of Southern Queensland

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH GRADUATE STUDIES
PHONE (07) 4631 1438 | FAX (07) 4631 1995
EMAIL orhd@usq.edu.au

CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE STATEMENT

Student ID:	0050001547
Student Name:	Robert Templeton
Program of Study:	Doctor of Education
Thesis Title:	An autoethnographic study of the influences of a student's dispositions to drop out of doctoral study: A Bourdieusian perspective
Faculty:	Faculty of Education
Candidature Status:	Confirmed
Date Commenced Program:	1 March 2008
Date Confirmation Approved:	29 July 2013
Academic Load:	Part-Time
USQ Expected Completion Date:	1 September 2017

This statement is to confirm the above named student has been admitted as a confirmed candidate to their program of study at the University of Southern Queensland.

Lester Norris

Mr Lester Norris
Student Manager, Office of Research Graduate Studies

Appendix B: Ethics Approval

University of Southern Queensland

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER DEGREES
Ethics Committee Support Officer
PHONE (07) 4631 2690 | FAX (07) 4631 1995
EMAIL ethics@usq.edu.au

5 July 2013

Mr Robert Charles Templeton
6 Davey Road
GYMPIE QLD 4570

Dear Robert

The Chair of the USQ Fast Track Human Research Ethics Committee (FTHREC) recently reviewed your responses to the FTHREC's conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the below project. Your proposal now meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethics approval has been granted.

Approval No.	**H13REA163**
Project Title	An autoethnographic study of the influences on a student's dispositions to dropout of docotral study: A Bourdieusian perspective
Approval date	5 July 2013
Expiry date	31 December 2014
FTHREC Decision	**Approved**

The standard conditions of this approval are:

(a) conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
(b) advise (email: ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
(c) make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
(d) provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
(e) provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
(f) advise in writing if the project has been discontinued.

For (c) to (e) forms are available on the USQ ethics website: http://www.usq.edu.au/research/ethicsbio/human

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National Statement (2007)* may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

You may now commence your project. I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Annmaree Jackson
Ethics Committee Support Officer

Copies to: r.templeton@aanet.com.au
andrew.hickey@usq.edu.au

Appendix C: Request for Participants

Project Title: An autoethnographic study of the influences on a student's dispositions to dropout of doctoral study: A Bourdieusian perspective

Outline of the research project

Causes of program dropout among research students are suggested as including various situational, dispositional and institutional factors (Cantwell et al., 2012). This proposed research will attempt to explore the dispositional aspects of research student's dropout of which student expectations and self-esteem, level of family support and prior educational participation will be explored as possible factors (Wonacott, 2002).

This project proposes an exploration of the dispositional aspects of professional[5] doctoral research dropout within a theoretical orientation framed by Pierre Bourdieu's (1975) sociological notions of *dispositions, habitus and capital*. An autoethnographic methodology using the researcher's own lived experience, combined with accounts of a group of participants who have, or have considered dropping out of doctoral study will be captured via ethnographic interviews to explore the development or abandonment of dispositions towards doctoral research.

The proposed study seeks to explore how a student's choices to persist or dropout are influenced by dispositions to doctoral study. Sociological philosophies suggest that dispositions to doctoral research are inherited from a doctoral reference group or developed from learned knowledge, experiences and beliefs relative to doctoral research education (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007; Davey, 2009). That is, if a student is involved with a doctoral research group, at either a faculty or social level, the nuances of doctoral research may be assimilated from this group. As such, this project will explore how disposition framed by the student's cultural and social capital influences success in doctoral study.

Abstract

Dropout research has historically been focussed on various 'risk factors' attributed to students and tertiary institutions. These factors focus on the effects of student income, race or ethnicity, academic achievement, and behaviours and attitudes on student progression and success (Brown & Roderiguez, 2009). This research proposal details a project that seeks to contribute to the understanding of student dropout or *attrition* by drawing on an application of Tinto's (Tinto, 1975) theories on student dropout, as applied to *disposition* as a possible cause of attrition. This research project will focus on postgraduate level student dispositions, habitus and the cultural and social capital of a group of participants and that of the author/researcher in professional doctoral research programs. An autoethnographic methodology has been selected to collect personal experience data of doctoral program dropout whilst an interpretative analytical method framed (Chang, 2008) around the concept of dispositions, habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977b) will be applied to 'make sense' of the collected data. With *dispositions* understood as inherited and oriented around personal and collective beliefs as borne-out in the cultural capital of the student, this proposed research supposes that student dropout can be ameliorated by influencing students beliefs and understandings - their *disposition* - towards further study.

[5] Professional doctorates are typically combinations of course work and an autonomous research thesis where the coursework is completed prior to commencing the research (Cotterall, 2011).

Appendix D: Form of Consent

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Consent Form

HREC Approval Number: **H13REA163**

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Doctoral Student Withdrawal Disposition Research

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Robert Templeton, who is a doctoral student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland. Mr. Templeton is conducting this study for his doctoral dissertation. Dr. Andrew Hickey is his faculty sponsor for this project.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have withdrawn for a doctoral research program.

- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to understand the influences on student dispositions to withdraw from doctoral research including pedagogies and supervisor influences. I hope to use what is learnt from the study to ameliorate student attrition from professional doctorate research programs.

- **PROCEDURES**

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

1. You will be requested to complete an online interview of 30 to 45 minutes to provide background data concerning your disposition to doctoral research; your reasons for withdrawing from the course; your experiences with the universities provision of information about the course and the support provided by your research supervisor.
2. The interview will be undertaken using Skype software.
3. This interview will be recorded for transcription and analysis.
4. We will ask your permission to undertake the interview.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

We expect that any risks, discomforts, or inconveniences will be minor and we believe that they are not likely to happen. If discomforts become a problem, you may discontinue your participation. Faculty and administrators from the University of Southern Queensland will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent your comments from having any negative repercussions.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

It is not likely that you will benefit directly from participation in this study, but the research should help us learn how to improve the completion rate of professional doctorates.

- **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for participation in this study. There is also no cost to you for participation.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a code number to let Mr. Templeton know who you are. We will not use your name in any of the information we get from this study or in any of the research reports. Within five years of the completion of the study, I will destroy the list that shows which code number goes with your name.

Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside the study. Mr. Templeton will, however, use the information collected in his dissertation and other publications. We also may use any information that we get from this study in any way we think is best for publication or education. Any information we use for publication will not identify you individually.

The videotapes that we make will not be viewed by anyone outside the study unless we have you sign a separate permission form allowing us to use them. The tapes will be destroyed five years after the end of the study.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if your physician tells us that continued participation may injure your health.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

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

Mr. Robert Templeton
Student No.: W0001547
Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba Qld 4350
07 5482 5960
w0001547@umail.usq.edu.au

Dr. Andrew Hickey
Senior Lecturer (Cultural Studies and Social Theory)
Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba Qld 4350
07 4631 2337
andrew.hickey@usq.edu.au

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

The Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed my request to conduct this project. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Southern Queensland by phone on 07 4631 2690 or email at ethics@usq.edu.au. Further details are provided on the internet at http://www.usq.edu.au/research/ethics/human .

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Printed Name of Subject

_____ _____
Signature of Subject Date

_____ _____
Signature of Witness Date

_____ _____
Robert Templeton Date

Appendix E: Questionnaire

Doctoral Student Withdrawal Disposition Research

This form is interactive

Preliminary Questions

1. How old were you when you commenced your doctoral degree?
   - ☐ 21 – 24 years
   - ☐ 25 – 29 years
   - ☐ 30 – 39 years
   - ☐ 40 – 49 years
   - ☐ Over 50 years
2. Are You?
   - ☐ Female
   - ☐ Male
3. Do you consider you belong to any of the following groups?
   - ☐ Australian
   - ☐ Non-Australian, please specify your country ……
4. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Prefer not to answer
5. What is the main occupation of your father?

   ……
6. What is the main occupation of your mother?

   ……
7. Has anyone in your immediate family studied at university? Indicate all that apply.
   - ☐ Husband/Wife/Partner
   - ☐ Parent
   - ☐ Son/Daughter
   - ☐ Sister/Brother
   - ☐ None of the above
   - ☐ Other: ……
8. What is the highest level of education attained by your parents?
   - ☐ Trade Certificate
   - ☐ Vocational Certificate
   - ☐ Vocational Diploma
   - ☐ University Diploma

- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Postgraduate Certificate
- ☐ Postgraduate Diploma
- ☐ Master degree
- ☐ PhD / Professional doctorate

9. What is the highest level of education attained by your siblings?
   - ☐ Trade Certificate
   - ☐ Vocational Certificate
   - ☐ Vocational Diploma
   - ☐ University Diploma
   - ☐ Bachelor degree
   - ☐ Postgraduate Certificate
   - ☐ Postgraduate Diploma
   - ☐ Master degree
   - ☐ PhD / Professional doctorate

10. What was your status prior to commencing doctoral study?
    - ☐ Full time employment
    - ☐ Part time employment
    - ☐ Self employed
    - ☐ Student
    - ☐ Unemployed
    - ☐ Stay at home parent
    - ☐ Carer
    - ☐ Other: ……

Participant:

Date:

Appendix F: Discussion Questions Guide

Research Interview Discussion Questions

1. What and/or who were your motivations to attempt a doctoral qualification?

2. What was your disposition and knowledge of doctoral research degrees prior to commencing your doctorate?

3. Explain your reasons for withdrawing from doctoral study?

4. Did your research supervisor/s influence your decision to withdraw? If 'yes', explain how this influence affected your doctoral progress.

Appendix G: Coded Transcript (NVivo)

Coding Summary By Source

EdD Thesis Interviews

25/06/2014 2:33 PM

Classification	Aggregate	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

PDF

Internals\\Elizabeth

Node

Nodes\\Capital

	No	0.0057	1			
				1	RT	24/06/2014 9:56 PM

When I moved across to the Um the other part of the ARC project I was actually approached by people Um PhD students who knew my background in methodology and I was informal mentor to probably half a dozen students Um say in the last five or six years

Nodes\\Capital\Social capital

	No	0.0057	1			
				1	RT	24/06/2014

When I moved across to the Um the other part of the ARC project I was actually approached by people Um PhD students who knew my background in methodology and I was informal mentor to probably half a dozen students Um say in the last five or six years.

Nodes\\Capital\Symbolic capital

	No	0.0067	1			
				1	RT	24/06/2014

a few years earlier I had missed out on a job in Melbourne purely because I didn't have a PhD, and it came down to two final candidates. I was told later by one of the supervisory panel that I had, that I was by far the better candidate but the Director of the institute wanted someone with a PhD.

Nodes\\Habitus\E2

	No	0.0454	5			
				1	RT	24/06/2014

writer; a racing writer is really a racing journalist but they don't call themselves a horse racing journalists, they are racing writers ... R: Yeah so .. E: I know his study was interrupted by World War II ... R: Yeah E: and he worked for Australian United Press, he worked for the Truth newspaper; he had his own business.

I know he had done courses in shorthand and typing and these kind of things but he may not have

Classification	Aggregate	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

2 RT 24/06/2014

a few years earlier I had missed out on a job in Melbourne purely because I didn't have a PhD, and it came down to two final candidates. I was told later by one of the supervisory panel that I had, that I was by far the better candidate but the Director of the institute wanted someone with a PhD. So I thought if a PhD is going to get me the jobs that I want, I'd

3 RT 24/06/2014

I am the youngest of four children, both my sisters have Bachelor Degrees, on my Mother's and Father's side of the family, my oldest cousins, both have PhDs. I didn't think about that until, well, this morning when I was thinking about family influences. I can't say though, that that was a great influence. I really think it was my own interest in studying and learning

4 RT 24/06/2014

But I think the motivation was intrinsic in that I enjoy studying, I enjoy learning, I enjoy research gathering information together and making sense of it. That is what I do in my working life.

5 RT 24/06/2014 10:17 PM

I wouldn't, you know there's a lot of umm things I would be interested in researPhDsching but I do feel with the university if they'd been straight forward with me and said something like OK we're going to pay you this really piddley little salary for three years, you'll be on your own, you'll get no supervision, no intellectual support through the university but we need you to write an 80,000 word thesis at the end, I would have said "yes I can do that". But I just didn't want to buy into, it seemed to me, to be the game they were playing Um and I just didn't want to buy into that

Nodes\\Profiles\Elizabeth

No 0.0 8

788

1 RT 24/06/2014

I had no real personal or professional respect for my main supervisor I worked out very quickly that I; as I came up a few months before my scholarship started to actually help this person to write up some research he'd been doing and I knew about a month, less than two months into my PhD that it wasn't for me. Working with this person was not going to give me the experience that I wanted. I didn't think I was going to learn anything from him, he had, ah; let's say some sort of... That I really had no personal or professional respect for him but unfortunately the scholarship was tied to the funding which he had acquired, so there was no way of taking the scholarship elsewhere

2 RT 24/06/2014 5:19 PM

I had worked up in Territory in the early 2000's and 2001 with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and I had been trying to get work back in the Territory and this was late 2005 I was completing the Graduate Certificate in Australian Indigenous Knowledge's through Charles Darwin University while I was living in Melbourne and this opportunity came very suddenly for a PhD at Charles Darwin Uni, so it was the attraction to move back to the Territory. Also, a few years earlier I had missed out on a job in Melbourne purely because I didn't have a PhD, and it came down to two final candidates. I was told later by one of the supervisory panel that I had, that I was by far the better candidate but the Director of the institute wanted someone with a PhD. So I thought if a PhD is going to get me the jobs that I want, I'd better get one, and um you know, I wanted to return to the Territory,

3 RT 24/06/2014 5:34 PM

I was living overseas so I was very much off campus and then when I was back in Australia I was still off campus, my Graduate Certificate was done off campus so I was really looking forward to being an on campus student in an intellectual community, I was Vice President of the postgraduate students association so I actually had quite a bit to do with the university Chancellors. We got the first postgraduate symposium off the ground in 2006 which was a great opportunity for postgraduate students because then their work to an academic audience. But there just wasn't the interest in promoting a postgraduate community, there just wasn't, there wasn't the interest in developing this as a kind of stepping stone to put people into academic life.

4 RT 24/06/2014

in that 12 months I think the university got quite a lot of value from me in I gave a seminar on a theory I was using as part of the school social policy. With that seminar series I helped to organise and gave a presentation at the postgraduate symposium. I also gave a paper at the TASA conference in Perth.

Classification	Aggregate	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				5	RT	24/06/2014

I think it would need to be with my choice of supervisor and ...

				6	RT	24/06/2014

and my choice of institution yes. Um the topic I was looking at the working title is 'Passing on memories' and it was women and social networks and it was looking at how women connect into a place through the types of networks that they, I need to stop for a second. [long pause] I'm actually having my blood pressure monitored for 24 hours so when the thing goes off I need to stay still

				7	RT	24/06/2014

Um, sorry what was I saying about social memory and, yeah that topic is very interesting

				8	RT	24/06/2014

That would be a good topic, it would be a very useful topic for policy issues to the Northern Territory Government, but Um I'd be very hesitant to do, I actually Um I have advised people not to enrol in PhDs at CDU and I'd certainly be very careful about choosing my supervisor.

Nodes\\Student relationship\Benign neglect

No	0.	1280	9

				1	RT	24/06/2014

why I dropped out I would say was mostly because of difficulties with the supervision processes and support from the university. R: Could you elaborate on that more? E: Yes, the difficulties with the supervision process.

I had a supervisory panel of 3 people, one of them my main supervisor was who had Ah um got the money through the ARC for the research which two PhD scholarships were attached to. I had one of those scholarships. There was the second supervisor was relocated from the university was studying at to another university interstate ... R: Ah Um E: and the third supervisor I really think his name was on the ARC application and as part of my supervisory panel just because he was a person well known in the Territory. Oh, my phones ringing but I'll just let it go to voicemail. R: OK, alright keep going then, E: and as I had no real personal or professional respect for my main supervisor I worked out very quickly that I; as I came up a few months before my scholarship started to actually help this person to write up some research he'd been doing and I knew about a month, less than two months into my PhD that it wasn't for me. Working with this person was not going to give me the experience that I wanted. I didn't think I was going to learn anything from him, he had, ah; let's say some sort of... That I really had no personal or professional respect for him but unfortunately the scholarship was tied to the funding which he had acquired, so there was no way of taking

				2	RT	24/06/2014

I was a bit naive - I just presumed that, you know, that Supervisors were experienced and interested, and you know, were happy to share their knowledge and that wasn't the situation I faced

				3	RT	24/06/2014

I do - I do. The University itself, mainly not so much, the School that I was enrolled in- um - yes - because they knew that this particular Supervisor had had another female PhD student who withdrew. They also knew that another older female had been working with him, and she had resigned because she couldn't work with him, so I do feel that they knew that he had some problems interacting and collaborating with

				4	RT	24/06/2014

But then the day after I withdrew from my PhD the school I was enrolled in offered me work as a Research Associate still with the same ARC funded project but on the other part not the part that my PhD scholarship was attached to, but the other part. I was working to a

Classification	Aggregate	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				5	RT	24/06/2014 10:37 PM

Supervisor who would be a fantastic PhD supervisor and in conversation we've had since when we're talking about things he often says hmmm that'd be a good PhD topic. R: [laughter] E: I've got to slap him down and say no, no, no never. R: [laughter] E: I wouldn't, you know there's a lot of umm things I would be interested in researching but I do feel with the university if they'd been straight forward with me and said something like OK we're going to pay you this really piddley little salary for three years, you'll be on your own, you'll get no supervision, no intellectual support through the university but we need you to write an 80,000 word thesis at the end, I would have said "yes I can do that". But I just didn't want to buy into, it seemed to me, to be the game they were playing Um and I just didn't want to buy into that.

				6	RT	24/06/2014 10:39 PM

They weren't, I'd done the first part of my undergraduate degree when I was living overseas so I was very much off campus and then when I was back in Australia I was still off campus, my Graduate Certificate was done off campus so I was really looking forward to being an on campus student in an intellectual community, I was Vice President of the postgraduate students association so I actually had quite a bit to do with the university Chancellors. We got the first postgraduate symposium off the ground in 2006 which was a great opportunity for postgraduate students because then their work to an academic audience. But there just wasn't the interest in promoting a postgraduate community, there just wasn't, there wasn't the interest in developing this as a kind of stepping stone to put people into academic life

				7	RT	24/06/2014 10:39 PM

Yes, look it, I don't think it's so much their qualifications I think it's the early career researchers and beginning supervisors, they're not provided with guidance guidelines from the university. They're not brought to account if for example on our first report back to the Research Office, my supervisor said we had monthly meetings but in January and March for a May report is not quite a "monthly meetings" and that was not followed up.

				8	RT	24/06/2014 10:42 PM

They are Um for example I was at the school for social policy research which has been rebadged the Northern Institute so there are people there with PhDs, there are people who have supervisory experience, some of it I know is very dodgy but there was some very dodgy relationships there but a lot of those people are adjunct, they are not based here in Darwin, they are based in South Australia, in Victoria, in New South Wales, in Queensland so there's not the core Um I mean my project was in an ARC project which was looking at the cause and consequences of population turnover in the Northern Territory and this one of those there's not the kind of on the ground critical mass of academics to get things moving.

In some areas such as indigenous education,

health areas "yes" Um but where I was "no" Um and of course as I said I didn't have the experience to ask the right questions about the environment that I was answering to, I just expected that oh it's a university so there will be this great opportunity to engage in you know conversations with ...

				9	RT	24/06/2014 10:42 PM

people but no that wasn't happening

Nodes\\Student relationship\Doctoral orphans

No	0.0	1	100

				1	RT	25/06/2014 2:16 PM

Yes, look it, I don't think it's so much their qualifications I think it's the early career researchers and beginning supervisors, they're not provided with guidance guidelines from the university. They're not brought to account if for example on our first report back to the Research Office, my supervisor said we had monthly meetings but in January and March for a May report is not quite a "monthly meetings" and that was not followed up.

Classification	Aggregate	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Nodes\\Student relationship\Supervisor access						
	No	0.0	1			
		214				
				1	RT	25/06/2014 2:28 PM

But in Perth I went to the postgraduate day and one of the sessions I attended was 'How to manage you supervisor' and I listened to the, there was myself and another mature aged student all the rest were they were people in their 20's. They were having and even the man presenting the session, he had 8 PhD students that he was supervising, he gave them an hour a week and his part- time students had an hour a fortnight virtually all the other students in the room had an hour a week and this man and I were sitting there shaking our heads.

I said "I'm

lucky if I can get an hour a month" and he said the same thing and I thought is it a problem to mature aged students that, on my CV I have a lot of research experience, project management experience and my supervisor actually said, we called a meeting of my three supervisors, I was in the room I was sitting there when he actually said " Oh I don't think she needs supervision".

Appendix H: Coding Structure

25/06/2014 2:44 PM

Node Structure

EdD Thesis Interviews

25/06/2014 2:44 PM

Hierarchical Name	Nickname	Aggregate	User Color	Assigned
Node				
Nodes				
Nodes\\Capital		No		None
Nodes\\Capital\Cultural capital		No		None
Nodes\\Capital\Cultural capital\Embodied		No		None
Nodes\\Capital\Cultural capital\Institutionalised		No		None
Nodes\\Capital\Cultural capital\Objectified		No		None
Nodes\\Capital\Economic capital		No		None
Nodes\\Capital\Social capital		No		None
Nodes\\Capital\Symbolic capital		No		None
Nodes\\Field		No		None
Nodes\\Habitus		No		None
Nodes\\Habitus\C2		No		None
Nodes\\Habitus\E2		No		None
Nodes\\Habitus\G2		No		None
Nodes\\Misc Data		No		None
Nodes\\Misc Data\Professional doctorates		No		None
Nodes\\Practice		No		None
Nodes\\Profiles		No		None
Nodes\\Profiles\Clare		No		None
Nodes\\Profiles\Elizabeth		No		None
Nodes\\Profiles\Gianni		No		None
Nodes\\Student relationship		No		None
Nodes\\Student relationship\Benign neglect		No		None
Nodes\\Student relationship\Doctoral orphans		No		None
Nodes\\Student relationship\Supervisor access		No		None

Appendix I: Interview Transcription

Participant ID: Elizabeth

Interview Name: Elizabeth

Site: Online Skype ~~video~~/audio (line quality insufficient for video)

Date of Interview: 21/08/2013 (15:00 to 15:30)

Interviewer ID: Robert Templeton

Transcribed: Robert Templeton / Ann Wise

Transcription	Thematic Coding
E: Hello R: Hello Elizabeth E: Robert, how are you? R: I'm fine, and yourself? E: Good thank you R: How was your overseas trip? E: Oh, my overseas trip was absolutely wonderful [laughter] R: [laughter] How long have you been back? E: Only um .. I started work 3 weeks ago R: Ah it makes bit a bit hard ... E: I've got the day off work today R: That helps E: Yes R: Can you see me alright there? E: Yes, I an. Do you need a video; are you taping this or recording it? R: You're fading there Elizabeth E: Sorry, I didn't hear that R: Ah I'll try again; you were fading there E: Ah right, OK R: So whether it's something in the line I don't know E: Ok, I'm just thinking will Il leave it on video or should I just put it on sound? R: See how we go with video. Um there's no movement of your video camera coming through so we might as well just go to sound E: Ok, I'll turn the camera off. Are where we are. Ok so my video is turned off, have you still got my sound? R: Yes, sounds better	
E: Great. I was just closing the windows because I' m living opposite a construction site R: Oh nasty E: Yeah, my um lovely view of um big tropical trees is now replaced by a view of a three story block of flats in the process of being built. But I think that it should be fairly quiet.	*Not a good day, construction noise and dust, environmental damage (visual).*
R: When are you moving to, or relocating to a ..... of units. E: Well I was thinking of it. R: It must be about 3 years since we've been up to that way; very nice E: Yeah it's um, there been lots of development and many people would say overdevelopment, but um yeah Darwin is a pretty interesting place to live R: Yeah E: And you're based in Toowoomba R: Ah no, I'm based in Gympie would you believe? E: Gympie Um R: And would you believe it was 2 degrees here this morning which.... E: [laughter]	*Happy with geographical location*

R: didn't impress me one little bit, but anyway	*Academic networking*
E: No, no I'm heading off to Brisbane to attend the Australasian Evaluation Society conference at the end of this month	
R: you're a member of that, so am I	
E: Ah right, and are you also a member of the Australian Sociological Association?	*Both members of TASA*
R: Yes	
E: Yes, right. I'm also a member of the Australian Population Association	
R: no, no, no I'm not a member of that. There the only ones I subscribe to. I do sometimes use the um Cultural Studies Association of Australasia ...	*Andrew is now former president*
E: Um	
R: mainly because my supervisor's the president of it	*Common intellectual ground*
E: Oh right	
R: So um, it's good too. Umm yeah, no it's.... There are lots of things in the AES that I have done in the past, yeah probably still continue to do. But anyway thank you for sending all that information through	***Dispositional development*** *Father's occupation – vocational (journalist) blue collar paternal background*
E: It all arrived safely	
R: Yes it all arrived safely thank you. I just ... a question about your fathers' occupation. Would he have done some sort of apprenticeship or cadetship or something like that?	
E: Look umm I really, I really can't remember, I know that a racing ...	
R: That's alright	
E: writer; a racing writer is really a racing journalist but they don't call themselves a horse racing journalists, they are racing writers ...	*Possible disruption to paternal deposition to learning*
R: Yeah so ..	
E: I know his study was interrupted by World War II ...	
R: Yeah	*Vocational learning (=TAFE?) continuing*
E: and he worked for Australian United Press, he worked for the Truth newspaper; he had his own business. I know he had done courses in shorthand and typing and these kind of things but he may not have had any post-school qualifications	
R: Yeah, and shorthand and typing and those lot of things are vocationally based learning anyway..... No I'm just curious because they do from memory, they used to have apprenticeships internships or whatever they call them, I can't remember.	
E: Yeah, look I ...	***Dropout / Supervisory relationship***
R: No that's fine. Now to you.	
E: Um...	*Dropout directly attributable to commencement/enrolment lack of capital (cultural + financial) as shown further in the interview*
R: Talking about you now, I suppose the most obvious question is why did you drop out?	
E: [laughter] It's an obvious question and it's quite a complex answer. I think the best way to talk about why I dropped out is why I enrolled in the first place.	
R: Yeah, well I was going to come to that next.	
E: Umm, why I dropped out I would say was mostly because of difficulties with the supervision processes and support from the university.	*Lack of quality supervision (personal) and relocation of second supervisor (institute) i.e. dropout = supervision of PhD*
R: Could you elaborate on that more?	
E: Yes, the difficulties with the supervision process. I had a supervisory panel of 3 people, one of them my main supervisor was who had Ah um got the money through the ARC for the research which two PhD scholarships were attached to. I had one of those scholarships. There was the second supervisor was relocated from the university was studying at to another university interstate ...	*Third supervisor ARC grantee? Well known identity in NT with PhD attached to ARC funding*
R: Ah Um	
E: and the third supervisor I really think his name was on the ARC application and as part of my supervisory panel just because he was a person well known in the Territory. Oh, my phones ringing but I'll just let it go to voicemail.	*No personal or professional respect for first supervisor; 2nd supervisor adjunct, distance supervision. Had resolved within 2 months of commencement that she was not going to undergo the doctoral experience as integration into doctoral group and academic socialisation did not occur. Was attempting to return to NT to complete postgraduate study when the opportunity to accept*
R: OK, alright keep going then,	
E: and as I had no real personal or professional respect for my main supervisor I worked out very quickly that I; as I came up a few months before my scholarship started to actually help this person to write up some research he'd been doing and I knew about a month, less than two months into my PhD that it wasn't for me. Working with this person was not going to give me the experience that I wanted. I didn't think I was going to learn anything from him, he had, ah; let's say some sort of... That I really had no personal or professional respect for him but unfortunately the scholarship was tied to the funding which he had acquired, so there was no way of taking the scholarship elsewhere.	

R: OK, have you thought of going back, have you gone back to do it again somewhere else or ...

E: No, Um, the situation was although I realised.... I had been trying, I had worked up in Territory in the early 2000's and 2001 with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and I had been trying to get work back in the Territory and this was late 2005 I was completing the Graduate Certificate in Australian Indigenous Knowledges through Charles Darwin University while I was living in Melbourne and this opportunity came very suddenly for a PhD at Charles Darwin Uni, so it was the attraction to move back to the Territory. Also, a few years earlier I had missed out on a job in Melbourne purely because I didn't have a PhD, and it came down to two final candidates. I was told later by one of the supervisory panel that I had, that I was by far the better candidate but the Director of the institute wanted someone with a PhD. So I thought if a PhD is going to get me the jobs that I want, I'd better get one, and um you know, I wanted to return to the Territory, but you know I would in the future, knowing now the questions to ask about supervision, and the support from the University, I would be in a much- a much better position to really sort of interrogate the people I was going to be working with before I actually started in the study.

R: Yeah, yeah

E: I was a bit naive - I just presumed that, you know, that Supervisors were experienced and interested, and you know, were happy to share their knowledge and that wasn't the situation I faced.

R: Do you feel that the University let you down in that regard or....

E: I do - I do. The University itself, mainly not so much, the School that I was enrolled in- um - yes - because they knew that this particular Supervisor had had another female PhD student who withdrew. They also knew that another older female had been working with him, and she had resigned because she couldn't work with him, so I do feel that they knew that he had some problems interacting and collaborating with other people.

R: OK - yeah makes a big difference I know.

E: It does - it does.

R: Umm - I guess you have sort of answered a lot of that side of it. I guess the other place I wanted to go was your motivation - well you sort of told me sort of some of the background motivation to do the PhD. Was there any sort of home or outside motivation for you to do t higher education in the first place or was it just something you decided to do? You know - what I'm getting at - with Bourdieu, he sort of talks about social reproduction and I'm just sort of trying to relate that. Because your Mother and Father were sort of vocationally based Um - what sort of prompted you to do or who or what prompted you to take on higher education?

E: Yeah, I was actually thinking about that and I thought, well, I am the youngest of four children, both my sisters have Bachelor Degrees, on my Mother's and Father's side of the family, my oldest cousins, both have PhDs. I didn't think about that until, well, this morning when I was thinking about family influences. I can't say though, that that was a great influence. I really think it was my own interest in studying and learning. The research topic that I had chosen for my Graduate Certificate came out of my work with the ABS. The research PhD topic that I had chosen came out of my work with having lived in different places and it was connected to, um.. There's a myth up here that when women get to a certain age they leave the Territory. Well, I know that that's not true. Women of a certain age really love the Territory and it's quite an issue for, um, population turnover and stability of the population to have older women here in fulfilling community positions, positions in Government, and positions in social life. But I think the motivation was intrinsic in that I enjoy studying, I enjoy learning, I enjoy research gathering information together and making sense of it. That is what I do in my working life.

R: Yeah, so you would have sort of picked that up working with the ABS ...

E: Um yes and earlier work with Um the Ministry of Housing a long time ago in Victoria in a research project. I was with the ABS in Canberra and I got leave without pay to do some research for a Victoria Parliamentary Committee, then I went back to the ABS but they put me in an economics area which I hated, and so I went part-time and I kind of lied and said I needed study time to finish my Graduate Certificate. But then the day after I withdrew from my PhD the school I was enrolled in offered me work as a Research Associate still with the same ARC funded project but on the other part not the part that my PhD scholarship was attached to, but the other part. I was working to a Supervisor who would be a fantastic PhD supervisor and in conversation

a PhD scholarship was offered to undertake a PhD attached to an ARC research program.

No respect for supervisor – personal or professional. PhD learning/training expectations not met. Disposition not abandoned but possibly deterministically dropped due to poor supervision experience.

Lack of cultural capital regarding supervision; failth in a system?

Personal reasons for returning to Territory due to current study for Grad Cert Aust Indigenous Knowledge(distance education) Knew of a previous woman who has resigned due to being unable to work with supervisor (supervisor issue an institute problem)

Family has history of higher education; Bachelor and PhD: Possible family influences. She suggest that her desire to undertake HE and PhD were intrinsic (which = disposition). Postgraduate and research topics developed from employment and residential mobility. Has a positive disposition to learning and research and analysis (enjoys these activities).

Enjoyed research role with ABS but not economics role on return to ABS = disposition to research.

Withdrew form PhD and offered research role with same school and same ARC research project, but in a different area with a good research supervisor who chides her about PhD research topics. (Possible integrated research community).

we've had since when we're talking about things he often says hmmm that'd be a good PhD topic.

R: [laughter]

E: I've got to slap him down and say no, no, no never.

R: [laughter]

E: I wouldn't, you know there's a lot of umm things I would be interested in researching but I do feel with the university if they'd been straight forward with me and said something like OK we're going to pay you this really piddley little salary for three years, you'll be on your own, you'll get no supervision, no intellectual support through the university but we need you to write an 80,000 word thesis at the end, I would have said "yes I can do that". But I just didn't want to buy into, it seemed to me, to be the game they were playing Um and I just didn't want to buy into that.

Expresses interest in a number of research topics but baulks at the salary attached (financial capital). However, is not interested in attempting another PhD unsupervised and unsupported although regards that she could complete under these conditions.

R: Your expectations weren't really met were they?

E: They weren't, I'd done the first part of my undergraduate degree when I was living overseas so I was very much off campus and then when I was back in Australia I was still off campus, my Graduate Certificate was done off campus so I was really looking forward to being an on campus student in an intellectual community, I was Vice President of the postgraduate students association so I actually had quite a bit to do with the university Chancellors. We got the first postgraduate symposium off the ground in 2006 which was a great opportunity for postgraduate students because then their work to an academic audience. But there just wasn't the interest in promoting a postgraduate community, there just wasn't, there wasn't the interest in developing this as a kind of stepping stone to put people into academic life.

Familiar with external study, office holder in students association organised first postgraduate symposium. Positive expectations of student life which was not supported by the institution. Suggests this is due to the university being dual sector i.e. HE and VET and does not have a research and intellectual development tradition. Small university with a greater proportion of students studying externally.

R: That's rather strange for a university.

E: Um, well Charles Darwin University is dual sector it has vocational..

R: Ah that's right

E: as well and academia

R: Yep

E: and it doesn't have a long tradition of research and intellectual Um development. You know, it is a small university most students are off campus

Mentored PhD students in research methodology.

R: Yeah, Ah is that improving do you think or

E: Um, I would hope but I don't know, I don't know any current Um doctoral students at the university. When I moved across to the Um the other part of the ARC project I was actually approached by people Um PhD students who knew my background in methodology and I was informal mentor to probably half a dozen students Um say in the last five or six years.

Suggests there is a lack of institutional support for early and mid-career researchers in terms of performance and administrative duties.

R: Um OK, that to me, that sort of poses the question of the level of qualifications of a lot of the professors and lecturers at Charles Darwin.

E: Yes, look it, I don't think it's so much their qualifications I think it's the early career researchers and beginning supervisors, they're not provided with guidance guidelines from the university. They're not brought to account if for example on our first report back to the Research Office, my supervisor said we had monthly meetings but in January and March for a May report is not quite a "monthly meetings" and that was not followed up.

R: OK. I guess the other thing that comes to mind do Um I know there has been a large turnover of people through Darwin sort of moving in and out so what I was wondering now from what you said, do you have sort of senior or highly experienced staff at the university in the academic sector?

Scarcity of experienced academic staff in institution possibly resulting in poor supervision of early and mid-career and students (academic reproduction; see Homo Academicvs). The majority of supervisors appear to adjunct from interstate.
Lack of cultural capital equates to unmet expectations.

E: They are Um for example I was at the school for social policy research which has been rebadged the Northern Institute so there are people there with PhDs, there are people who have supervisory experience, some of it I know is very dodgy but there was some very dodgy relationships there but a lot of those people are adjunct, they are not based here in Darwin, they are based in South Australia, in Victoria, in New South Wales, in Queensland so there's not the core Um I mean my project was in an ARC project which was looking at the cause and consequences of population turnover in the Northern Territory and this one of those there's not the kind of on the ground critical mass of academics to get things moving. In some areas such as indigenous education, health areas "yes" Um but where I was "no" Um and of course as I said I didn't have the experience to ask the right questions about the environment that I was answering to, I just expected that oh it's a university so there will be this great opportunity to engage in you know conversations with ...

R: Yeah

E: people but no that wasn't happening.

R: Pity

E: Yes

R: Do you, would, I guess being experience with that may have given you a sort of negative attitude towards PhDs or

E: Yes [laughter]

R: Well that's not good

E: Yeah, but look what was really interesting, as I said I decided early on that it wasn't for me, but I was quite strategic and selfish, I went through after 12 months. Um in that 12 months I think the university got quite a lot of value from me in I gave a seminar on a theory I was using as part of the school social policy. With that seminar series I helped to organise and gave a presentation at the postgraduate symposium. I also gave a paper at the TASA conference in Perth. But in Perth I went to the postgraduate day and one of the sessions I attended was 'How to manage you supervisor' and I listened to the, there was myself and another mature aged student all the rest were they were people in their 20's. They were having and even the man presenting the session, he had 8 PhD students that he was supervising, he gave them an hour a week and his part-time students had an hour a fortnight virtually all the other students in the room had an hour a week and this man and I were sitting there shaking our heads. I said "I'm lucky if I can get an hour a month" and he said the same thing and I thought is it a problem to mature aged students that, on my CV I have a lot of research experience, project management experience and my supervisor actually said, we called a meeting of my three supervisors, I was in the room I was sitting there when he actually said " Oh I don't think she needs supervision".

R: OK

E: And this what this is other fellow who said he was well experienced in the public service, his topic was related to the work he was doing, he had faced the same situation Um and that was a real eye opener and I thought yeah I'm not going to have the experience I wanted I'm not going to learn from the people around me. So because of that I, I thought 'no'. But I actually learnt a lot when I moved across to the other part of the project. The supervisor, the work supervisor I was dealing with, I'm actually catching up with him when I'm in Brisbane for the AES conference. We caught up in Seattle recently and we talked you know we talked population and we talked demographic issues we talked about these things as well you know we're quite good friends. We have these conversations about Um things that are happening in the world around us. Um but yeah that made me feel a bit jaded against doing a PhD.

R: You've never thought about reconsidering or

E: Um it would need to be, I think it would need to be with my choice of supervisor and ...

R: What about your choice of institution?

E: and my choice of institution yes. Um the topic I was looking at the working title is 'Passing on memories' and it was women and social networks and it was looking at how women connect into a place through the types of networks that they, I need to stop for a second. [long pause] I'm actually having my blood pressure monitored for 24 hours so when the thing goes off I need to stay still.

R: No that's fine

E: Um, sorry what was I saying about social memory and, yeah that topic is very interesting

R: Yeah

E: That would be a good topic, it would be a very useful topic for policy issues to the Northern Territory Government, but Um I'd be very hesitant to do, I actually Um I have advised people not to enrol in PhDs at CDU and I'd certainly be very careful about choosing my supervisor.

R: OK, so do you think this is possibly a problem of regional universities as opposed to the mainstream....

E: Hard to tell whether it was just the particular personality of my main supervisor and the culture of the university at that time. In a regional university, perhaps in a regional university as in New South Wales or Victoria for example a colleague from here who got her PhD, she was working here but her PhD was through Melbourne Uni. She's now at Um Ballarat Uni. But she's at Ballarat Uni and stays in Ballarat maybe two or three days a week, still lives in Melbourne. So from that university they have on campus great people with of things happening, but I think Darwin faces particular issues because of its remoteness.

R: Yeah, OK. No it's interesting because it does come up from time to time

Dropped out after 12 months. Believes the university gained more from her than she gained from the university despite the TASA paper presentation and the postgraduate symposium involvement. Possible feelings of animosity towards university?

Other universities PhD full-time students given 1 hour access per week to supervisor or 0.5 hours if part-time. Expectations not met.
Appears to be supervision by abandonment (see Fay Davidson transcript).

Negative thoughts to doctoral program; feelings of being 'jaded' with PhD. Experiences appear to have caused deterministic negativity cancelling positive disposition towards PhD completion.

Positive disposition intact but dependant on supervisor relationship. Need to rebuild social capital.

Despite stated opposition to PhD completion, dispositional attitude still strong with choice of research topic subject to choice of supervisor i.e. cultural capital needs to be reinforced or supported by social capital.

Possibly institutional habitus at fault as a friend has completed a PhD at a capital city university and is happy with the employment culture at a regional university – institutional cultural capital.

these regional universities. Um, I think you've pretty much told me everything I can think of, which I appreciate. Ah, if I come up with any other questions would it be OK to drop you an email?

E: Definitely, I mean you'll review the tape or the transcript and yeah anything that I've said that you want me to elaborate on I'd be very happy to do that.

R: Thanks for that.

E: I know what it's like, you think later Oh I should've probed a bit more there or

R: That's right, you do get a bit carried away with certain lines of thought.

E: Yeah

R: What say a send you a copy of the transcript when it's done anyway so you can verify it.

E: Yes

R: That would be good.

E: Look I'd be very happy to do that. And when did you start you PhD?

R:Do you really want to know?

E: What in back in 1990 or something?

R: No 2008

E: Right

R: No I've time off for one reason or another, I only got confirmation this year. I'm doing the Doctor of Education that had 18 months of coursework up front before we moved into the actual thesis start. But that's another story.

E: No, it's really an interesting topic I mean I know how difficult it can be to get participants in research and when it came around in the TASA news I thought that looks interesting and then when I read the topic I thought yeah that's really interesting and I think the results will be very very useful. Because one of the things when I was doing the PhD I thought somebody needs to do a PhD on is doing a PhD the best way to develop research skills in people.

R: I tell you what; it's a good question. Um I don't know that I can give you a cut and dried answer off the cuff...

E: Yeah, yeah

R: I seem to think that once you've got a Master's you, because my understanding of a PhD is, or all doctorates anyway, is that you are pretty much on your own.

E: Yeah

R: And yeah you do need that backup I agree especially for methodology and these sorts of things. For me, well I've done most of my study externally anyway. I do appreciate talking to you.

E: It's been interesting and certainly Robert if there's anything that you want me to elaborate on or other questions you'd like me to answer, I'd be very happy to do that.

R: Ok, thank Elizabeth; I'll keep that in mind.

E: Good luck with it all.

R: Ok, thank you.