

RESEARCH TITLE

Translocal habitus: high school students' mediation of their educational success at a focus school

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ABSTRACT

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

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

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

Keywords: trans-locality, trans-local habitus, navigation practices, mediation, educational subjectivity, focus school

The full thesis can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/100065>