

Beyond the Four Walls: A Rhythmanalysis on the Production of Space in Schools Situated in Low Socio-economic Communities

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Abstract

South Africa's education systems generate a social space that continues to marginalise majority-black students who attend historically black schools in low socio-economic communities. The purpose of this study is to explore the production of social space in Makhanda, South Africa, a peri rural socio-spatial system, to understand how social practices, ideologies and imaginations enable marginalisation to persist in time and space post-apartheid. Using spatial theory and rhythmanalysis, the study explored the production of school space: both formalised teaching time and free time across three schools. Ethnographic data was generated through timespace diaries, observations and semi-formal interviews with over 150 participants. To enter the school is to enter an entanglement of rhythms that presuppose a particular kind of learner. While learners outwardly comply with the spatial productions and allow themselves to be bent, it is in the shadows of teaching and learning where learners create thirdspaces of resistance and creativity. In the thirdspaces, the homogeneity, repetition and fragmentation common in formal teaching time are actively resisted by learners and produce a more unified, mobile and vocal learning body. This learning body centred around relationality, emotionality and creativity provides possible pathways to generating more inclusive and socially just educational spaces.

Keywords: Rhythmanalysis, decoloniality, Lefebvre, Break time, spatiality.



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