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WHERE DO I COME FROM AND WHERE AM I GOING? SOCIAL CAPITAL AND YOUNG WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL TRANSITIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Abstract:

One of the goals of the transformation of education in South Africa has been to improve educational attainment. In spite of this, South Africa still exhibits low mean years of schooling (9 years) as a consequence of high dropout rates, with a significant proportion of female students at each age cohort not making the transition from one educational level to the next. This has raised the question of what enables or hinders successful educational transitions. Increasingly, there is recognition that social capital is integral in helping students successfully negotiate these transitions. This social capital inheres in personal experiences and interactions that students have with others over space and time and facilitates social outcomes. Using three waves of the National Income Dynamics Study (South Africa), this study sought to model the influence of social capital on the probability of making the following educational transitions: primary school completion, high school completion and post-secondary education completion. Acknowledging the protective effect of education on young women, this study makes the argument that it is the interrelationship between the key educational transitions which shape educational productivity. A retrospective methodology is adopted to disentangle the effect of events occurring in one trajectory on those in another. In particular, the study applies a sequential logit model to estimate transition probabilities of passing through key educational transitions.

Keywords:

educational attainment, sequential logit, transition probabilities, South Africa