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Abstract

Current literature suggests two kinds of congruence that come into play when students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds enter elite universities: academic fit and social fit. Yet, in most of the studies on habitus transformation, the differences between the two are seldom mentioned. This may imply that the transformation of one aspect guarantees success in the transformation of the other aspect. In this article, we present the data from an ongoing longitudinal study on a group of academically successful rural students at four Chinese elite universities. We will show how they start with a compartmentalized fit between their original habitus and the elite milieu they enter, and how this pattern tends to produce two different types of outcomes: "habitus transformation" and "habitus hysteresis." Importantly, with either of these outcomes, these students do not have to experience "hidden injuries of the class," alienating themselves from families and former peer groups. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)