

Re-negotiating Identities and Reconciling Cultural Ambiguities: Socio-cultural Experiences of Indian Immigrant Students in South African Schools

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ABSTRACT South Africa has become the host country of destination not only to immigrants from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, but also from countries such as India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Much research has focussed on Black Immigrant students¹ experiences in South African schools. Little if any research has addressed experiences of Indian immigrant students². Utilising social constructivism, case study approach and narrative inquiry, this study sets out to explore the socio-cultural experiences of Indian immigrant students in South African schools. It was found that contests of space and place in South African 'schoolscapes'³ were not so much about 'race' as it was about nationalism and territoriality. For South African Indian students, international competition was not an abstract policy; it entered the school through immigrant students. For Indian immigrant students international acceptance implied a re-negotiation of identities and a reconciliation of cultural ambiguities.