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# Bourdieu in Educational Research



***Bourdieu, Family and Schooling***  
***March 2022***

 @AERABourdieuSIG

# Introduction

Throughout Bourdieu's oeuvre his conception of praxeology and theory of human action stressed that dispositions are generated through the internalization of structures, institutions and overlapping fields. For Bourdieu, dispositions are (re)produced in relation and in response to the social, economic and cultural structures with which agents *identify with* and *from which they distance* themselves. In order to reconcile agency and structure, Bourdieu refers to his method as 'constructivist structuralism' or 'structural constructivism', with 'constructivist' pertaining to 'the dynamic reproduction of human activity' in changing contexts and 'structuralist' referring to the relations of those involved.



***“...society appears as the emergent product of the decisions, actions, and cognitions of conscious, alert individuals to whom the world is given as immediately familiar and meaningful.”***

Bourdieu's 'structuralist constructivist' approach includes perceptions of objective reality and objective measures of aggregate behaviour. Contrasting structuralist objectivism, the subjectivist – or constructivist – point of view asserts that our social realities are an ongoing accomplishment of competent social actors. Through this lens:

*“society appears as the emergent product of the decisions, actions, and cognitions of conscious, alert individuals to whom the world is given as immediately familiar and meaningful. Its value lies in recognizing the part that mundane knowledge, subjective meaning, and practical competence play in the continual production of society.”*

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 9)





As Bourdieu sought to introduce new ways of thinking about social class, he argued that society cannot be analyzed simply in terms of economic classes and ideologies. Bourdieu believed that, in order to gain a more accurate representation of social classes, we must understand the educational, social and cultural factors that foster classed subjectivities and reaffirm the symbolic power attached to capital(s).

For educational researchers, Bourdieu is commonly considered a class theorist; however, his work on higher education is equally important. Drawing on a selection of prominent scholars operationalizing Bourdieu, this newsletter addresses the ways in which Bourdieu's theoretical toolkit can help to theorise diverse aspects of families and education.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Presently, *Bourdieu in Educational Research* (#185) is a SIG-in-Formation and intends to qualify as a full SIG in the American Educational Research Association. You can support our community by:

- \*Following us on Twitter @AERABourdieuSIG
- \*Distributing this newsletter through your networks
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If you would like to join our mailing list, please send us an email. Also, if you would like your Bourdieu-inspired scholarship to be featured in our next newsletter, please email us.

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# Bourdieu for Beginners: Overview of Bourdieu's Three Main Tools



## HABITUS

**B**ourdieu defines habitus as “a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past-experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 18). He emphasises a combination of “a system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking” and a system of “long-

-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception and action” (Bourdieu, 2016, p. 43). Habitus is understood as dispositions (systems of propensity, tendency, inclination) working as the mechanism of an individual's behaviour (e.g. perceptions, appreciations, actions) that are gradually ingrained from the societies s/he is involved in through the process of inculcation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

## CAPITAL

**A**ccording to Bourdieu, capital is a “species of power whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). Typically, there are three types of capital, namely *economic*, *cultural* and *social capital*, and, in relation to one another, they can be mutually transformed.



According to Bourdieu (2004, p. 16), economic capital is “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights”. Cultural capital is the accumulated “experience and knowledge” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 23), which “may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications”. Social capital is “the possession of a durable network ... or institutionalized relationships ... or membership in a group ..., a ‘credential’ which entitles [people] to credit” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 21). So, social capital is a symbolic entitlement of being a member of a group which, to a great extent, allows the persons of socially recognized credentials (social status, respect or legitimacy) for appropriation accordingly, and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility or proper name.



## FIELD

**F**ield is a social space where individuals interact with one another and, for Bourdieu, is organized by a system of operations or “the rules of the game” or “regularities” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 18, 99). For Bourdieu field is “a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions ... in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97).

This conception implies that the positions in the field are interrelated by objective reasons in the form of the rules of the games in the field. The positions are determined and distributed by power or authority legitimate in the field. As a social space, field refers more to the actual ‘locus’ or contextual boundaries where society is working (Bourdieu 1989; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu adds that “a field consists of a set of objective historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 16). As fields “are organized around specific types or combinations of capital” (Broberg, 2015, p. 51), so field would essentially include the arena of interactions and the systems it operates by agents’ exercising capital/power for positions in the field. There are forces and struggles in this social field in terms of securing status positions or influence. In the field of higher education, the type of power or authority most legitimate here is not money – economic capital – but predominantly symbolic and cultural capital.

***With this in mind, what does this mean for the study of families and education?***

# SIG Governance

**Garth Stahl** (Chair) is an Associate Professor at University of Queensland and former Research Fellow, Australian Research Council (DECRA). His research interests lie on the nexus of neoliberalism and socio-cultural studies of education, identity, equity/inequality, and social change. Currently, his research projects and publications encompass theoretical and empirical studies of learner identities, gender and youth, sociology of schooling in a neoliberal age, gendered subjectivities, equity and difference, and educational reform. In 2019, he was ranked by The Australian newspaper as one of the top 40 researchers in Australia who were less than 10 years into their career. Dr. Stahl is particularly interested in qualitative research methods, visual research methods and ethnography. His research has been published in a range of international journals, including the *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, the *Journal of Educational Policy* and *Gender and Education*. His books include *Identity, neoliberalism and aspiration: educating white working-class boys* (2015, Routledge), *Ethnography of a neoliberal school: building cultures of success* (2018, Routledge), *Working-class masculinities in Australian higher education: policies, pathways and progress* (2021, Routledge) and *Gendering the First-in-Family Experience: Transitions, Liminality, Performativity* (2022, Routledge) co-authored with Sarah McDonald.



**Guanglun Michael Mu** (Co-chair) is an Associate Professor and Enterprise Fellow at the University of South Australia. He is interested in building resilience in (im)migration contexts, promoting teacher professional development in inclusive education contexts, and negotiating Chineseness in diasporic contexts. He has published strongly in those areas and most of his publications are framed through a Bourdieusian lens. Michael is a solo author, lead author, or lead editor of seven books. His most recent books *Sociologising Child and Youth Resilience with Bourdieu* (Routledge, 2022) and *Journey to Resilience: Kaya's First Day of School* (a children's picture book) were the outcomes from his multi-year large-scale project *Resilience, Culture, and Class: A Sociological Study of Australian Children* funded by the Australian Research Council (2018-2022, DE180100107). He is currently working on a new book *Quantifying Bourdieu in Educational Research* where he employs relational quantitative methodologies (e.g., multiple correspondence analysis, social network analysis, factor analysis, cluster analysis) that strongly align with Bourdieu's relational sociology. Michael is an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education*; an editorial board member of *Journal of Beijing Normal University* (in Chinese); and a member of the Rapid Review Panel of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Beyond academia, Michael is a classical pianist.



# SIG Governance

**Dan Cui** (Secretary-Treasurer) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. Her research interests include sociology of education, particularly from a Bourdieusian approach, immigration, integration and transnationalism, race and ethnicity, social justice and equity studies, and qualitative research methods. She has rich international work and research experiences in Canada, China and the United States. Before coming back to Canada, she was a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California Berkeley. Drawing on Bourdieu, she has theorized and elaborated on the concept of "racialized habitus" in her research with Chinese Canadian youth. Her publications have appeared in *the British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *Journal of Youth Studies*, *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, *the Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, and etc. Her new book, *Identity and Belonging amongst Chinese Canadian Youth: 'Racialized Habits' in School, Family, and Media* is forthcoming with Routledge.



**Charles Lowery** (Program Chair) holds the B.A. in Spanish from the University of Texas at Tyler. He holds the M.Ed. in Educational Administration from Stephen F. Austin State University where he also earned the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. Dr. Lowery teaches courses in the principal preparation program with a focus on the leadership theory, the role of the principal in instruction, school-community relations, and the politics of education. He also teaches courses in conflict management, global and transcultural understandings of education, and connecting theory to practice in the educational leadership doctoral program. His major research interests include moral literacy in leadership and spiritual metaphors of leadership for P20 educational settings. As well, his study focuses on the identity of the scholar-practitioner educational leader as a moral agent of democracy, justice, care, and critique. Underlying much of his scholarly work are themes of practice theory, reflexivity, educational capital, and doxa versus episteme in educational leadership behaviors and practice.



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# AERA Annual Meeting



## Paper Session: Fresh Considerations Regarding Bourdieu's Habitus

### **Applying Bourdieu's Habitus Theory in Mixed-Method Research: A Typological Analysis of Students' Academic Habitus**

**Authors:** Frederick de Moll (University of Luxembourg), Alyssa Lauren Greco (TU Dortmund), Andreas Hadjar (University of Luxembourg)

In educational research, students' habitus is still rarely studied as a key driver of inequality. This paper presents a mixed-method approach to operationalize and examine students' academic habitus in relation to various social background factors. Using qualitative and quantitative data from 7th-graders in Luxembourg, Europe, we develop a typology of students' academic habitus based on their dispositions towards school and learning. Drawing on latent class analysis, we identify three types of habitus: habitus of academic excellence, habitus of mediocrity, and habitus of academic disengagement. Further analyses show that while socioeconomic status surprisingly has no effect on student's habitus, cultural capital and family structure in combination with immigrant background are associated with habitus.

### **Standing in the Way of Habitus Transformation: Chinese Working-Class College Students' Moral Resistance to Networking**

**Author:** Li Zhu (University of California - Berkeley)

Bourdieu's theory on habitus pays scant attention to morality, and current empirical studies on habitus rarely unpack the process of adjusting habitus. This paper investigates a moral dimension of habitus and reveals that morality can hinder the transformation of habitus. This qualitative research interviews ten working-class college students in a prestigious university in China and analyzes the data through a grounded theory approach. The study finds that Chinese working-class students regard the strategy of networking as dishonorable and morally condemnable and that their moral superiority originates from working-class families which morally devalue the usage of social capital while praising meritocracy. This moral superiority helps them maintain self-esteem but also prevents them from adjusting to new fields in prestigious universities.

### **Toward Antiracist Habitus: Using Social Reproduction Theory to Determine Antiracist Ways of Being**

**Author:** Ashton Ryan Cooper (University of West Georgia), Rachelle Winkle-Wagner (University of Wisconsin), Dorian McCoy (University of Tennessee - Knoxville)

Bourdieu's social reproduction theory is widely used in educational research yet is under-utilized when it comes to disrupting White supremacy and advancing antiracism. Utilizing data from a White civil rights activist and Bourdieu's notion of habitus, we begin to build the conceptual foundation for an anti-racist habitus. We argue that in advancing justice for Black and other marginalized people, White individuals must go beyond indemnifying as an "ally" or being non-racist, but must demonstrate a change in practices and dispositions toward rejecting the material benefits of Whiteness and White supremacy.

# AERA Annual Meeting

## Roundtable Session: Using Bourdieusian Tools to Tackle Complex Phenomena

### **A Sticky Problem of Structure and Agency: Differences and Commonalities in Bourdieu's and Willis's Work**

**Author:** Li Zhu (University of California - Berkeley)

The widespread view of considering Willis's works as celebrating agency versus Bourdieu's as structuralism reflects a common misconception of "agency" and "structure". This paper argues that both of the two theorists uncover a dialectical relationship between structure and agency. Although Bourdieu's earlier works focus more on structural limitations than agentic possibilities, his later works capture the interconnected nature of structure and agency. While Willis highlights human agency and creativity, the "lads'" agency in his ethnographic work roots in working-class resistant culture and their agency also has reproductive consequences on their fates. This paper implies that educational researchers should address the dynamic interplays between structure and agency rather than regard them as two enemies combating each other.

### **How Social and Cultural Capital Contributes to Black and Latina/o Engagement With Historically White Fraternal Organizations**

**Author:** Evelyn Ambriz (The University of Texas at Austin)

Historically and predominantly White fraternal organizations (HPWFs) are select clubs, contributing to social reproduction by hoarding capital and excluding people of color (POC). However, membership demographics are shifting. With Bourdieuan concepts of social and cultural capital, this qualitative exploratory study examines what and how capital shapes POC engagement within HPWFs, including how they navigate issues of race. Findings indicate members of color (a) seek and accept membership to access capital and (b) avoid direct challenges to the racial status quo of HPWFs to maintain capital. This study expands understandings of social reproduction and disruption from POC's engagement in select clubs.

### **Self-Formation of Chinese Double-Degree Engineering Students' Work Transition Based on Bourdieu's Theory**

**Author:** Cathy Huang (University of Hong Kong)

Universities in China are carrying out study abroad programs, including degree and non-degree programs with its overseas partner universities. This study conducted in-depth interview with 25 Chinese engineering students who joined double-degree programs in US and currently are at their early career. The study aims to analyze the work transition of these Chinese engineering students using Bourdieu's theory and self-formation theory. The study finds: study abroad opportunities are only for middle-class families; these students own 'habitus' that trained them good English and set studying abroad as their learning goal; they encountered challenges in 'legitimate language' during job search; they used social connections to apply for jobs; they strategically do self-formation as their own agencies to succeed in job search.

# AERA Annual Meeting

## Bourdieu in Educational Research SIG Business Meeting

Sunday, April 24th, 6-7.30pm (Pacific Time / PDT), SIG Virtual Rooms

Hope to see you all there!



## Spotlight: Social Capital Research



# SOCIAL CAPITAL RESEARCH & TRAINING

### Summary

This group is run by Tristan Claridge and would be of interest for anyone fascinated by social capital research, including Masters and PhD students, academic researchers, and those involved in government and non-government research on social capital and related concepts. They hold regular seminars and have an established Facebook group. Recently Social Capital Research & Training hosted an interesting webinar Dr Sabita Ramlal who has just completed her PhD using a Bourdieusian understanding of the role of the education system in reproducing social inequality. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEQL99Ubr10>.

A screenshot of a presentation slide. The title is "BOURDIEUAN THOUGHT IN EDUCATION RESEARCH". Below the title is a small video thumbnail showing a woman speaking. The main content is a list of bullet points under the heading "Habitus – individual, organisational, community".

**Habitus – individual, organisational, community**

- ✓ interaction of the **student's habitus** with the **institutional habitus** operate to determine whether students enter higher education
- ✓ organisational habitus of a school may reflect the **community** in which it is located, impacting school culture, ethos, and student experience (Tranter, 2003)
- ✓ organisational habitus is acquired over years from a school's particular history, **location**, neighbourhood resources and issues, student mix and staffing (Tranter, 2003)
- ✓ While geographic location offers opportunities and advantages to a school with students from middle-income and high-income areas entering a school (Ball, Maguire, Braun, 2012), this also works against students from low-income areas.



# Chin Ee Loh

## Making visible the invisible

**M**y interest in reading is professional, personal and political. In my own extended family, I have seen cousins from different wealth spectrums struggle or excel through the education system. As a student first, then as a teacher, then now as parent and teacher-educator living through Singapore's rapid rise from developing country to developed nation in a span of three generations, I bear witness to the remarkable achievement of Singapore's education system as

well as the widening gaps between students from different social backgrounds in recent years (Loh, 2021). In a culture where meritocracy (Tan, 2019) is prized and individual success is attributed to an individual's innate talent and hard work, it is often easy not to notice that children start from different rungs of the socioeconomic ladder.

Understanding this misrecognition (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), that is, how the unquestioned belief in the good of meritocracy conceals different starting points, was the starting point for me to begin studying the practice of reading, specifically in English, the

core language of education and business in Singapore. In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) explain how habitus is the result of pedagogic work, "a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training" (p. 31), often beginning at home. Drawing inspiration from the pioneering work of Annette Lareau (1989, 2003) in the U.S., I utilised the concept of habitus to unpack the different elements of repeated familial and institutional practices that "sedimented" (Pahl, 2008) ways of reading and thinking about reading into the "self-making" practices (Collins & Blot, 2003) of students. I began to understand that learning to read was not a mere matter of phonics or comprehension but included the

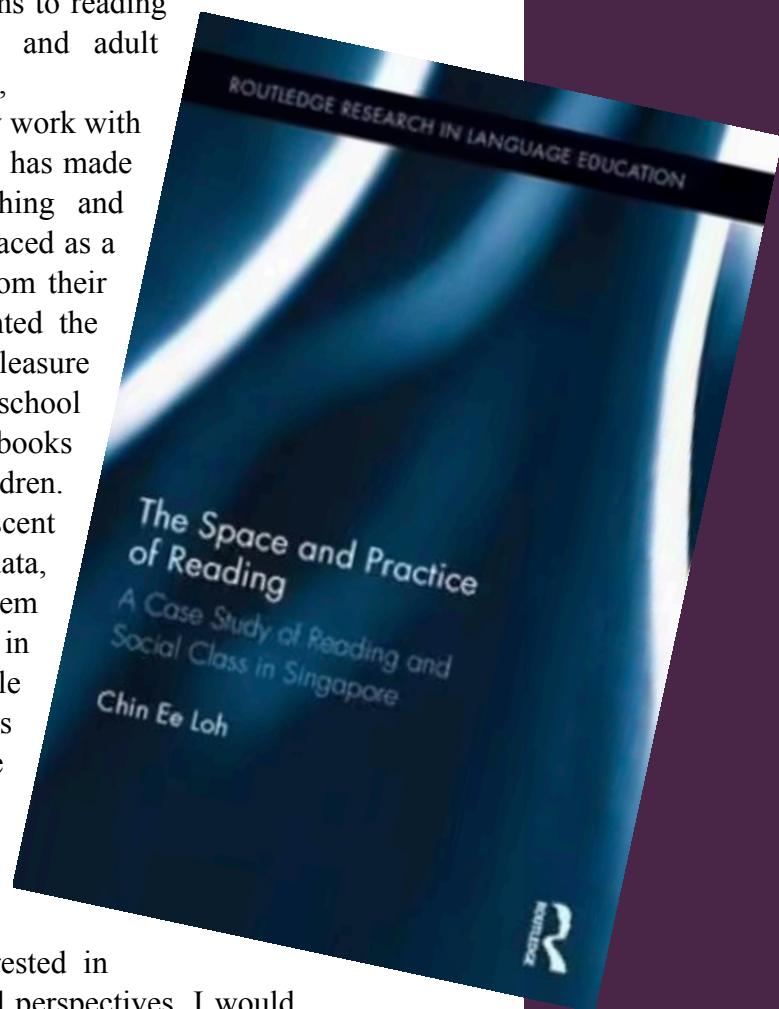
**I began to understand that learning to read was not a mere matter of phonics or comprehension but included the cultivation of particular dispositions towards books and reading that first occur in the home.**

cultivation of particular dispositions towards books and reading that first occur in the home. When it came to what counted for schooled literacies, it was not just any book or a singular way of reading but particular ways of reading and talking about books that mattered (Bourdieu, 1984; Heath, 1986; Khan, 2012).

When teachers identify students as readers, they often do not see what I have termed the *invisible network of resources* – a combination of home, peer and institutional practices – that have shaped a middle-class child’s likelihood of becoming a reader (Loh, 2013). Educated parents with economic means are more likely to be able to afford to support their children’s “intensive immersion” in reading through the purchase of books, visits to the library, providing role models of reading, managing their children’s time and teaching reading, both explicitly and implicitly (Loh & Sun, 2020). These investments result, more likely than not, in their children’s “natural” inclination towards books, or a disposition to see reading as a viable leisure habit and very much part of their identity. These habits of leisure reading have strong correlations to reading proficiency, academic achievement, future digital and adult literacies (Notten & Becker, 2017; Sikora et. al., 2019),

This insight has been particularly useful for my work with policymakers, educators and pre-service teachers as it has made visible areas that have been overlooked in teaching and learning. For example, pleasure or joy in reading surfaced as a key disposition that middle-class children develop from their early interactions with books. This finding highlighted the need for schools to integrate practices of reading for pleasure in the English classroom and to ensure class and school libraries were stocked with high interest and relevant books that would motivate joyful reading among all children. Tracing the everyday reading practices of adolescent students through survey, interview, observational data, and using visual ethnography and geoinformation system (GIS) mapping revealed that the school library in Singapore is an under-utilised space for equitable distribution of and access to reading resources. This revelation has resulted in my commitment to advocate for improved school libraries in Singapore schools, particularly those serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Loh, 2016; Loh et al., in press).

In terms of future directions for those interested in studying families and schools from Bourdieu-inspired perspectives, I would suggest that we need to take a much closer look at the concept of habitus, at both the familial and institutional level (Reay, 1998, 2004). Understanding habitus requires time-consuming observations alongside surveys and interviews in order to truly understand the everyday lived practices of the families and students we study. Currently, I am experimenting with new ways of understanding, using mobile ethnography as a way to examine the reading lives of students from different home backgrounds. Finding new ways to “see” (Eisner, 1998), and translate that to everyday practices that make a difference to ordinary lives is for me, at the core of educational research.



## Author Bio

Chin Ee Loh ([website](#)) is Associate Professor and Deputy Head (Research) in the English Language and Literature Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. She is the author of *The Space and Practice of Reading: A Case Study of Reading and Social Class in Singapore* (Routledge, 2017) and is currently working on her newest book, *Reading by Design: Lessons from Singapore on Closing the Equity Gap* (UCL Press, forthcoming). Her research focuses on literacy and literature education at the intersection of globalisation and social class and she is invested in using innovative methods and interdisciplinary approaches to uncover insights about how better to improve low-income students' access to reading resources and practices.

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# Sarah McDonald

## Bourdieu, Widening Participation and the Role of Mothers

Bourdieuian research focused on the working-class student experience in higher education often seeks to address narratives of dislocation and disorientation. Bourdieu's theory of habitus, as a tool, lends itself to the study of social mobility particularly in terms of the internalised dispositions which may influence individual aspirations. Habitus allows researchers to decipher how

agents come to understand their pathways and how they capitalise on the opportunities available (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In my own research, Bourdieu's theory of habitus offers a way of considering how the structuring of the identities of working-class girls occurs through family narratives and values – a familial habitus – which is foundational for their higher education aspirations and success.

My PhD research examined the experiences of 22 girls who were the first-in-family (FIF) to attend university. Many of the girls in the study spoke about how their mothers had not had the opportunity to go to university due to gendered and classed expectations of a previous generation.

**Highlighting the difference in generations, a third of the girls specifically aspired to higher education because they felt compelled to take advantage of the educational opportunities not available to their mothers.**

Highlighting the difference in generations, a third of the girls specifically aspired to higher education because they felt compelled to take advantage of the educational opportunities not available to their mothers. I focused on the deliberations of these girls in terms of their changing aspirations and of the opportunities and barriers they encountered.

Habitus, as embodiment, is described by Bourdieu (1984) as “a body which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world—a field—and which structures the perception of that world as well as action in the world” (p. 81). Burke (2015) reasons that although habitus and capital have equal roles in directing individual practice, it is important not to overlook how it is the interactions between capital and field that changes the habitus. By focusing on the capital/field dialectic, I was able to explore the configurations and reconfigurations of the

habitus of the girls in my study. I have witnessed how, for some girls, important aspects of their habitus which supported their ability to aspire to university and experience success was cultivated by their families. Patfield et al. (2020) discuss how considering students in the context of family allows for a theoretical understanding of how aspirations are formed within the home, where familial habitus is, in part, made up of family educational narratives and values.

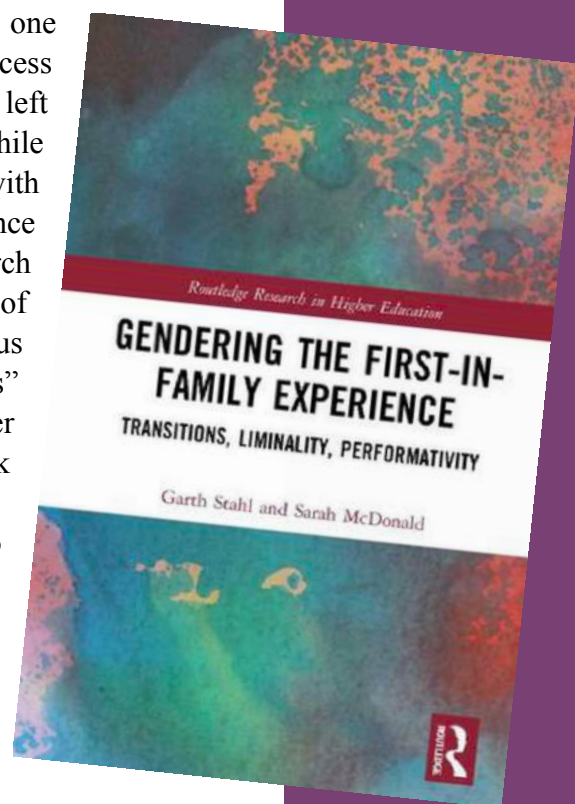
While many girls described how their mothers had aspired to university but had left school early and/or could not afford to study, it is important to note they did not frame these narratives as examples of failure. In the case of one participant, Chloe, she described how her motivation for university success was inscribed by the values and experiences of her single mother, who left school early to work (McDonald, 2021). Chloe worked multiple jobs while studying in a prestigious degree at an elite university, aligning with descriptions of working-class self-sufficiency, stoicism, and resilience (Bathmaker et al. 2016; Reay et al. 2009). Yet, while Bourdieusian research continues to highlight working-class disadvantage, there is also evidence of working-class students who experience educational success and thus “develop an orientation towards thinking outside of the family habitus” (Bathmaker et al. 2016, p. 57). Specifically, Chloe positioned her disposition for success at university as formed by the values of hard-work and resilience demonstrated by her mother.

In my research, I found familial habitus, as a tool, offered a way to understand how the shape of aspirations and success at university for some FIF girls is motivated by the values and (classed/gendered) experiences of their mothers. Furthermore, in considering generational inequities as an aspect of familial habitus which speaks to the collective nature of identity formation (Patfield et al. 2020; Reay, David & Ball, 2005), research on students from non-traditional/underrepresented backgrounds needs to continue to highlight how their aspirations have, in part, been formed through the embodiment of family experience.

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# Suzanne Wilson

## Bourdieu, Family and Education

As a PhD student I was interested in understanding how low-income parents felt when engaging in primary and secondary school and how these feelings impacted on how involved they were with their children's education. In the study I conducted, I spoke to 77 low-income parents of secondary school children in focus groups or interviews to learn more about their experiences and used Bourdieu's habitus as to interpret these accounts (see Wilson, 2020).

The majority of parents perceived their own values to be aligned with the values of the primary school. It was clear they felt socially competent to navigate the primary school and felt they possessed the necessary cultural capital to support their children's learning. This resulted in a positive engagement with education. Conversely, most parents experienced a habitus misalignment with secondary school, and did not feel socially competent to navigate the field, nor possess the cultural capital required to support their children's secondary education. Consequently, parents' engagement with their children's education reduced (Wilson & McGuire, 2022; Wilson & McGuire, 2021; Wilson & Worsley, 2021).

Interpreted through the lens of habitus, I found stark differences in habitus alignment between the school and the family, parents' perception of cultural capital and engagement, which is summarised in the typology below:



	Primary			Secondary		
Objective	Social structure			Social structure		
	<i>SES/ Geographic context</i>			<i>SES/ Geographic context</i>		
	Same SES Local location Homogeneous One electoral ward			Mixed SES Distant location Heterogeneous Several electoral wards		
<b>PRACTICE (ENGAGEMENT)</b>						
Subjective	<b>Habitus</b>					
	<i>Values</i>	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Social Competencies</i>	<i>Values</i>	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Social Competencies</i>
	Aligned with school Nurturing Self-concept promotion	Positive Confident Connected	Competent Trusting Regular contact Informal	Misaligned with school Nurturing Self-concept promotion	Negative Judged Unheard	Incompetent Untrusty worthy Little contact Formal
	<b>Capital: Present</b>			<b>Capital: Absent</b>		

### *Parental Habitus, Capital and Practice at Primary and Secondary School*

I found Bourdieu's habitus provided a useful framework for explaining parental engagement in education. In drawing on Bourdieu, specifically cultural capital and habitus, I was able to see some of the ways in which self-concept was central in framing parents' perceived ability to support children in both fields. In the case of the secondary school, some mothers felt they were

negatively judged by secondary school teachers, based on a given social identity (such as being a single mother). This othering caused an increased sense of lacking cultural capital and contributed to a perceived habitus misalignment. These data were used to inform a brief solution-focused programme to support parents in realising and activating the capital they possess (in whatever form it may be) to support their children to achieve in education (Wilson, 2021).

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## Kim McGuire

### Bourdieu, perceptions of 'family', 'education' and 'self'

My interest in families and education draws from my PhD (McGuire 2005) and is driven by an interest in the theory of social construction theory and how this is influenced by socio economic historical realities. Throughout my research I seek to understand inequality and how to raise aspirations and opportunities. My research has drawn in part from Bourdieu's (1996) article 'On the family as a realized category'. In this piece of scholarship Bourdieu analysed 'family' as a social construct, but also the '...representations that people form of what they refer to as the family' (1996, p. 19). Accepting that interpretation is subjective, for the purpose of our research I was interested in how participants' perceived education, but also 'family' and 'family values', and the potential effect on educational engagement.



In the research I conducted with Suzanne Wilson, we observed the use of family discourse, ‘the language that the family uses about the family...endowed with a will, capable of thought, feeling and action’ (Bourdieu 1996, p. 20). Our data suggested that ‘families’ understand themselves as both subjectively internally constructed, and subjectively externally perceived by others. In a world where cultural capital in relation to education may be perceived as lacking for many working-class families (Ballantine, Hammack, & Stuber, 2017) and affecting their ability to support their children’s education (Lee & Bowen, 2006) we saw the increased importance placed on ‘family’ values as a constructed source of alternative symbolic power relations.

In researching working-class parents, we found some research participants thus maintained their sense of self by their ability to both reject the dominant middle-class discourse of education, whilst simultaneously, and perhaps ironically, conforming to dominant discourse on ‘the family’ as a source of nurture and acceptance (Wilson & McGuire 2021, 2022; McGuire 2005). These values extended to perceiving primary school as a positive place, as representative of ‘family values.’ In contrast, the working-class parents did not see secondary school representing these values. Ultimately, for many parents, this disjuncture led to them increasing their distancing from education, and their maintenance in the social structure, rather than moving beyond it. Such results have been noted in the work of Willis (1977) on working class males. Willis argued that the existence of a valued counter culture ironically ended up reproducing class inequality. Mirza’s (1992) study of perceived racism in schools, and girls’ failure to engage with teachers as a result, similarly led to disadvantage.

**In a world where cultural capital in relation to education may be perceived as lacking for many working-class families (Ballantine, Hammack, & Stuber, 2017) and affecting their ability to support their children’s education (Lee & Bowen, 2006) we saw the increased importance placed on ‘family’ values as a constructed source of alternative symbolic power relations.**

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**Kim McGuire** holds a PhD in History (Lancaster University), and Master’s degrees in Law (UCLan) and in Social History (Lancaster University), BA Hons in History with English (Lancaster University). Her main research interests, on which she has published extensively, include inter-personal conflicts in various political, social, and economic contexts, and their effect upon life chances. These contexts are widely interpreted, and extend, for example, from Education to Criminal Law. Her work involves phenomenology to elicit individuals’ perceptions, but also draws on sociology, social construction, literature, History and Law. Whilst interested in social constructions, (linguistically, legally, emotionally, factually), ultimately her concern is how these are perpetuated, but also how they can be understood, mediated, regulated and resolved.

# Courtney L. Luedke

## Bourdieu, families, and asset-based approaches

Over the years I have come to understand many of the critiques of Bourdieu to be rooted in a misunderstanding of his work, particularly when considering families. Deficit critiques of Bourdieu's work mistakenly label families as either possessing or not possessing capital. These critiques often look at social or cultural capital in isolation without considering the role of the field, the setting or place in which different forms of capital are given value (or not) (1979/1984) such as in schools. Moreover, from this point of view, individuals may view one's habitus

as static rather than malleable. Missing is the agency that students bring with them, often influenced by their families, to educational spaces. Every individual possesses forms of social and cultural capital, and the field – or in this case educational setting – influences to what extent that capital is perceived as valuable or not (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). Educators must seek to find value in and build upon the capital and funds of knowledge students bring with them to educational spaces.

In my recent scholarship (Luedke, 2020), I examined the educational pipeline for Latina/o students and how valuable capital was shared across fields (both within one's family and in higher education). I sought to demystify some of the myths around capital, families, and college access. I explored how Vélez-Ibañez and Greenberg's (1992) funds of knowledge framework, which encompasses knowledge and skills held by families, often exchanged through routine practices (and can be activated to enhance economic opportunity and mobility), can work in concert with Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory. As an asset-based approach, funds of knowledge recognises knowledge that students bring with them to educational settings and highlights an orientation within educational settings to build upon these assets (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2017).

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Rios-Aguilar and Kiyama informed my thinking around families, schooling, and access to higher education. These scholars highlighted the need to better understand how to bridge funds of knowledge with complementary frameworks, such as social reproduction theory (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2017). Empirically bridging Bourdieu's approach to social reproduction with funds of knowledge may advance our understanding of the ways that knowledge and capital are shared within and perhaps even between generations in ways that contribute to educational access and potential upward mobility. I utilize funds of knowledge to examine the transition of the rich knowledge, motivational messages, *dichos*, and *consejos* that students receive from families which contribute to college access and persistence. I explore the utility in bridging this theory with social reproduction theory by examining how students proactively return to their families to distribute and translate their acquired social and cultural capital relative to higher education.

The bi-directional sharing of funds of knowledge and capital may contribute to increasing the number of individuals within a generation (and potentially between generations) who pursue higher education. This has the potential to make gains in disrupting inequality—although, we must consider the scale at which this sharing occurs within the context of a larger system that discounts the values many students acquire from their families and bring to their educational experiences. By bridging Bourdieu's *full* social reproduction theory with funds of knowledge, I hope to build upon recent scholarship that captures a broader, more inclusive, portrayal of how students use their agency to activate their capital(s) and nurture familial funds of knowledge. I look forward to the work of other scholars uncovering asset-based approaches to understanding families, their values, their influences, and the ways in which Bourdieu's approach to social reproduction can be used in conversation with other theories in ways that acknowledge agency and disrupt the reproduction of inequality.

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# Bonnie Pang

## Bourdieu and Health Experiences of Chinese Families

As a Hong Kong Chinese Australian scholar specialising in Chinese diasporas' health and embodied experiences, I have engaged with Bourdieu's work in exploring topics related to Chinese families. My research encompasses a range of participant groups including children from the United Kingdom and Australia, their parents and teachers, and Chinese international students studying at university contexts. I am interested in their transnational experiences, intergenerational conflicts, capital investments as well as how their lifestyles, health, and physical activities are (re)produced within and beyond their home and school fields.

In my earlier work with Chinese Australian young people, I found that some of their lives were significantly shaped by traditional Chinese cultural norms and notions of gender (Pang, Macdonald, Hay, 2015). I have used Bourdieu's concepts to explain the (re)production of these young people's habitus cultivated at home. Traditional Chinese family power relations limited the choices these young people had regarding physical activity which was complicated by the cultural and social fluidity of their lived experiences. The inter-generational flow of habitus and capital of the young people's families tended to privilege a particular set of discourses based on gender, race, social class, and hierarchical practices that resonated with traditional Confucian philosophy. Recently my work extended the Chinese diasporic understanding of health cultures by examining British Chinese children's lived

experiences and how their habitus and cultural investments at home contribute to their health and physical activity practices. The implications for further research to promoting British Chinese children's physical activity are that their ethnicity, social class and gendered practices, intergenerational differences and the possible lack of fathers' involvement ought to be taken into account as critical factors in their capacity to contest, obfuscate and extend traditional cultural norms through physical activity at home (Pang, 2021).

I also found research that has extended Bourdieu's concepts useful in exploring topics on emotions with Chinese families. While Bourdieu himself never explicitly referred to the concept of emotional capital within the concept of social capital, I have drawn on other scholars (e.g., Reay, 2004; Zembylas, 2007) who highlight the ways in which emotions in social relationships influence affective investment and capital accumulation in British Chinese children's health and sport



**The inter-generational flow of habitus and capital of the young people's families tended to privilege a particular set of discourses based on gender, race, social class, and hierarchical practices that resonated with traditional Confucian philosophy.**

participation in relation to family environments. I have further applied Bourdieu's concepts in examining Chinese international students' mental wellbeing. Specifically, I explored how their cultural practices are (re)produced in their fields of influence (including family, university, and work environments) and how these might have facilitated their habitus transformation, accumulating legitimate capital as a result for further investment and conversion in promoting their emotions and mental wellbeing conducive to educational experiences in Australia.

Building on Bourdieu's corporeal sociology, I have also drawn on Shilling's concept of physical capital (1991) and its application in sport and bodily research with Chinese children. In Bourdieusian terms, when 'body hexis' has value in a sport, it can become physical capital. Bodily hexis is the way how we experience and express our bodies, including our postures and movements, in relation to our social, cultural, and physical environment. I explored how Chinese bodies are represented in gendered and racialised ways on social media, and how these messages are embodied by Chinese children in their sport practices alongside familial influences. For Bourdieu, the development of a gendered and racialised habitus in children's sport is the result of an internalisation of external social practices. These social practices could include how their families, and social media position Chinese/women as different from Westerners/men, thereby reproducing a binary structure in society and embodied by Chinese children in sport practices. My research suggests gender and race are key determinants of Chinese children's cultural, physical, and symbolic capital and thus can influence their positions in the fields of sport.

I believe Bourdieu's reflexive sociology can offer more for those interested in studying families. Bourdieu exhorts researchers to work with multiple perspectives and from various competing 'spaces of points of views' in order to avoid the danger of 'presupposition' and 'intellectual bias'. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) noted that reflexivity is promoted when there is a mismatch between an agent's habitus and the field, as was the case regarding the sociocultural influences in various periods and transitions of my academic work and life. Bourdieu's reflexivity has allowed me to turn inward on my embodied dispositions, and the effects of my research habitus, social position, and intellectual biases and limitations in my academic fields of sport, health and education (Pang, 2016). These reflections add depth to my research that aims to unpack the intricate processes through which class, gender, and ethnicity penetrate the lives of Chinese children's and families' and how different forms of capital underpin their choices and investment strategies in their health and sport experiences.

**Dr Bonnie Pang** is Assistant Professor and a Sociologist in Sport, Health, and Education (Department for Health) at University of Bath. Her research focuses on Chinese diaspora's health and physical cultures alongside contemporary issues in diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is an author of three books with Routledge Publisher: *Understanding Diversity, Differences and Social Justice in Physical Education: Enduring Challenges and Possible Direction in a Translocated World* (2021); *Interpreting the Chinese Diaspora: Socialisation, Identity and Resilience According to Pierre Bourdieu* (2019); and *Creative and Inclusive Methods in Sport, Physical Activity and Health* (forthcoming, 2022). She serves as an editorial member of *Sport, Education, and Society*, and an Adjunct Fellow of the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. She was a recipient of the prestigious Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship, and AIESEP Young Scholar award.

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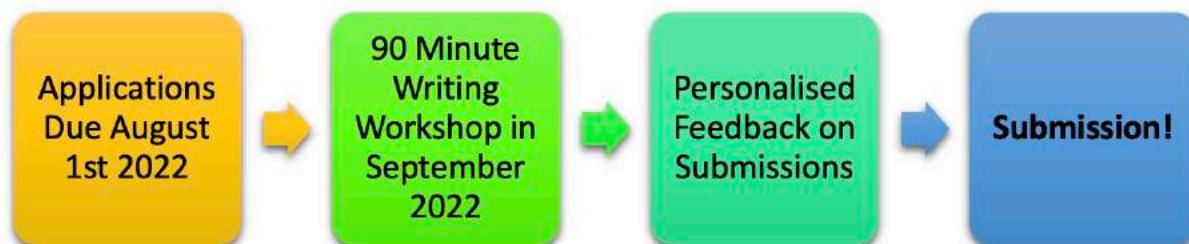
# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Mentorship Program: Supporting SIG Members in Their Publications

We are hosting a mentoring scheme for *Bourdieu in Educational Research* SIG Members who are starting out in academia and looking to contribute to sociology of education. The aim of this scheme is to promote dialogue around Bourdieusian issues with writing and publication. It would also create additional opportunities for collaboration and strengthen networks among researchers early in the careers.

This mentorship program is designed to help PhD students and early career researchers improve their writing skills and publication output through personalized mentorship. First, will be a 90-minute Writing Workshop (over Zoom) held in September which would be led by the SIG conveners and have tips in terms of academic writing, editing, journal recommendations. After the workshop, we would then provide one-to-one feedback on a draft of a journal article.

This opportunity is open to members of the *Bourdieu in Educational Research* SIG for AERA. To apply please submit one paragraph (250 words) detailing your topic of interest, publishing experience and how you think the workshop and one-to-one help will assist you ([aerabourdieu@gmail.com](mailto:aerabourdieu@gmail.com)). It is expected the author should be working on a sole-authored publication during the workshop.





# Mark Innes

## Bourdieu, multi-school organisations and the family

The Literacy Policy Project uses Bourdieu's tools to think about how multi-academy trusts (MATs) enact initiatives to teach children to read and write. Academies are independent state-funded schools in England. MATs are made up of two or more academies joined by a funding agreement approved by the Secretary of State for Education. An interview I conducted with the CEO of one large and expanding MAT operating in disadvantaged areas of England highlighted how the acquisition of new schools into the trust leads to a situation whereby families are initially appealed to, but then dis-engaged with (Innes, 2021). In this one specific case, the MAT CEO needed disadvantaged families to enrol in their schools to fulfil the governments' objectives. But local context was then ignored for a one-size-fits-all curriculum to be enacted.



### **MAT strategy**

The CEO interviewed, referred to here as 'Rebecca', had been in the post for around four years. The reason, in her words, for her appointment was a strong focus on curriculum. The 'brand' of the MAT was the perceived ability to 'turn around' schools deemed failing in 'white working class' areas. The MAT contained a large number of schools, over twenty, and was growing. Financial imperatives meant that curricular in all schools within the MAT were shared. She was clear that the organization was 'not a democracy', associating school 'autonomy' with 'weak leadership'. Common curricular allowed Rebecca to 'teem and ladle' resources across the MAT. Furthermore, Rebecca used key performance indicators to hold headteachers to account for school performance. When problems arose, Executive Directors for different curricular areas were deployed to ensure standardised delivery was adhered to.

Bourdieu was useful in furthering my understanding of the field of MAT because his tools provided a theory of power to conceptualise the 'game' (Bourdieu, 1990) being played. The game here was one of expansion. Building a reputation for an ability to 'turn around' schools in disadvantaged areas meant more opportunities for growth. Cost-effective success meant being able to rapidly implement tried-and-tested curricular in any new school. Rebecca disparaged headteachers who raised contextual factors referring to the needs of 'the cohort'. Everyone in the MAT must believe in the 'illusio' (Bourdieu, 2000) of rapid improvement in results through the agreed curriculum. The CEO clearly had the highest 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) in the MAT. In reflecting on the research, what was particularly striking was the way in which Executive Directors arguably held more 'capital' and were more powerful 'players in the game' than headteachers. The CEO had established a 'doxa' (Bourdieu, 1977) or accepted way of doing things within the MAT. Where headteachers failed to comply with the CEO, Executive Directors would be sent into their schools in a way that could be seen as punitive.

## The MAT and families

The interview turned to where this curricular approach left the MAT in terms of its relationship with the local communities and families of the children in their schools. At this point Rebecca revealed a 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) based on previous experiences, that somewhat stigmatized local families.

Where the MAT actively 'took on' schools deemed to be failing, they often found a situation where school numbers were falling due to negative publicity. Rebranding the school to reflect the perceived successful MAT would often increase enrolment numbers. However, when asked if the MAT worked proactively with parents on areas like literacy, Rebecca declared that this approach would be ineffective. She was aware of strategies to improve family literacy with the aim of producing a 'knock-on effect' with children. However she characterized the parents in her school communities as being 'all on drugs or on their phone or whatever'. Consequently 'every second' spent involved with them is less time spent on their children. According to Rebecca, the children in the MAT, because of the 'tough' communities they grew up in, were deemed to need 'tight interventions' to ensure that they would become the 'wealth generators' of tomorrow.

In summary, this interview demonstrated the way in which MAT policy is, at least in this one case, potentially driving division between schools and families. The need for cost-effective expansion means one-size-for all curricular. This curricular is decided centrally, with no thought for local context or the sensitivities of working with vulnerable populations.

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