

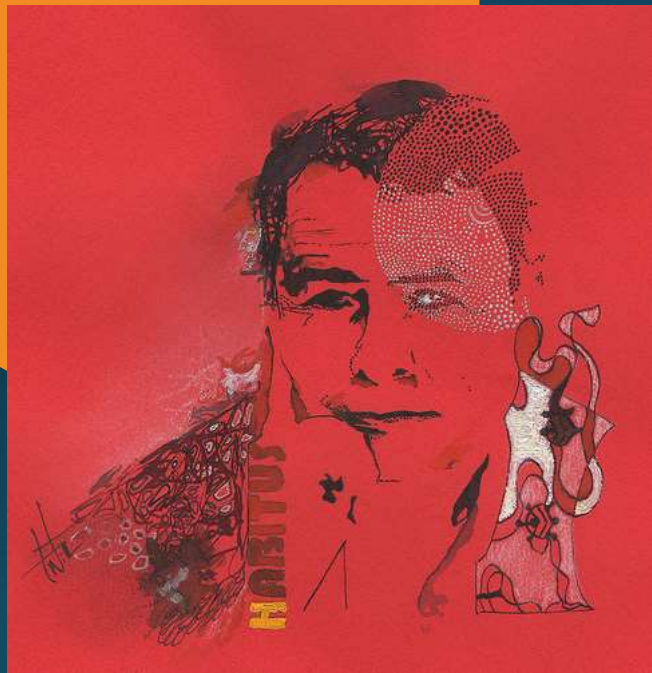


THE END OF INCLUSION?

Thinking beyond 'inclusion' with Bourdieu

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OUTLINE

- Bourdieu's theory of practice
- Empirical example 1: Symbolic value of walking
- Empirical example 2: Using Bourdieu's work to complicate idealized notions of inclusion
- Inclusion 'in practice'

Practices

- Practices are observable, patterned, yet creative, set of behaviors, beliefs, perceptions or preferences that occur in real time.
- Practices exhibit a **logic** that seems natural because of the relationship between persons' daily subjective interactions and the broader social structures in which they are immersed
- According to Bourdieu, all practices reproduce or transform the social order in one way or another.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice



(habitus) (capital) + field = practice



Capital & Disability

- Capital is any resource that is valued in a field and can be accrued and exchanged to improve or maintain one's social position (social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital)
- Two forms of embodied cultural capital – **physical capital** (Bourdieu 1978) and **linguistic capital** (Bourdieu 1977) – had particular relevance in my research with youth who use AAC.

Habitus

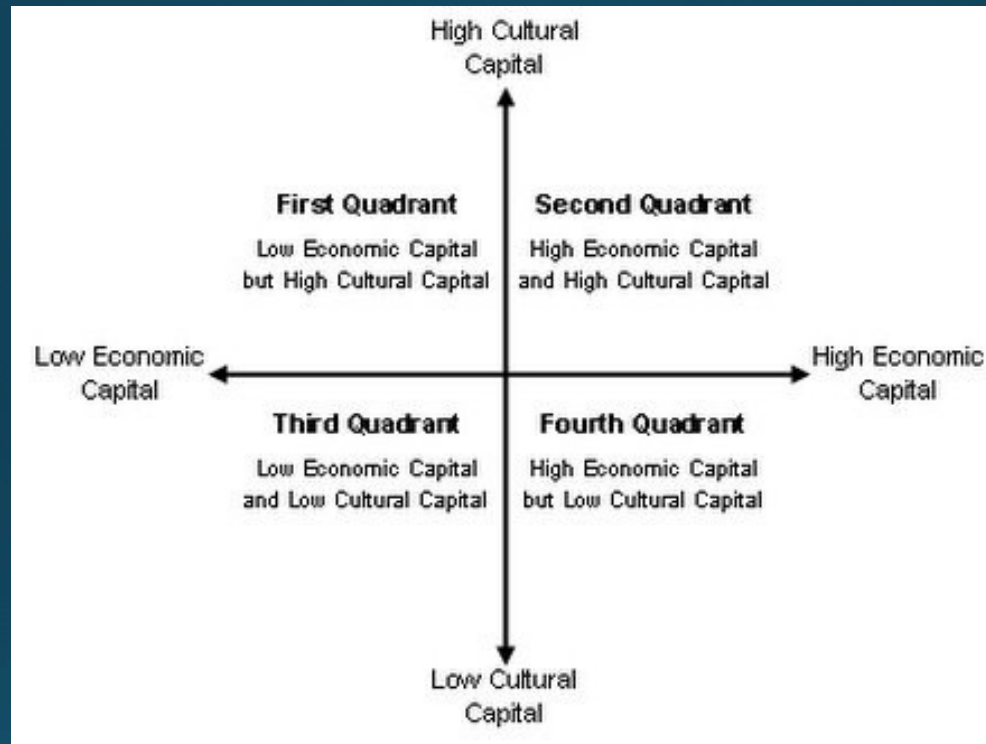
- a set of inculcated dispositions reflecting dominant social structures, persons internalize the meanings and values that order their social worlds, including those that privilege 'normal' bodies and speech
- "each agent has a practical, bodily knowledge of her present and potential position in social space, a 'sense of one's place'.... It is this practical knowledge that orients interventions in the symbolic struggle of everyday life" (Bourdieu 2000: 184).
- Negative valuations of physical impairment, in most fields, contributes to the perpetuation of the marginalized social position of disabled people (Gibson *et al.* 2007).

Habitus

- Embodied norms of communication act to exclude and discriminate against people with communication impairments
- Competence (as physical and linguistic capital) “is bestowed on bodies that perform to the ‘gold-standard’ norms of speech, timing and movement, and withheld from those which do not” (Paterson and Hughes 1999: 607).
- This type of domination, where disabled persons are ‘put in their place’ and accept this positioning as logical or even preferred, is what Bourdieu described as symbolic violence, a “gentle violence, usually imperceptible and invisible even to its victims” (Bourdieu 2001: 1).

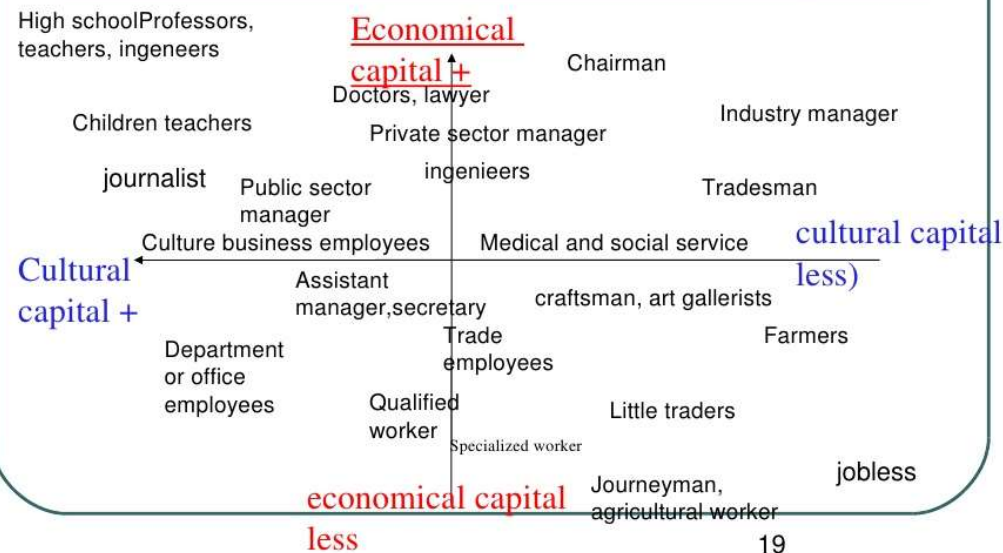
Field

- Society is made up of interlocking *fields* (for example - the field of education, or rehabilitation), each with a patterned system of tacit rules and unquestioned givens (or *doxa*) that define its functioning.
- Agents' positions in a given field vary according to the field-specific resources or *capital* at their disposal. From these positions, agents develop a sense of how the world works, who they are meant to be and **their place in the world**.

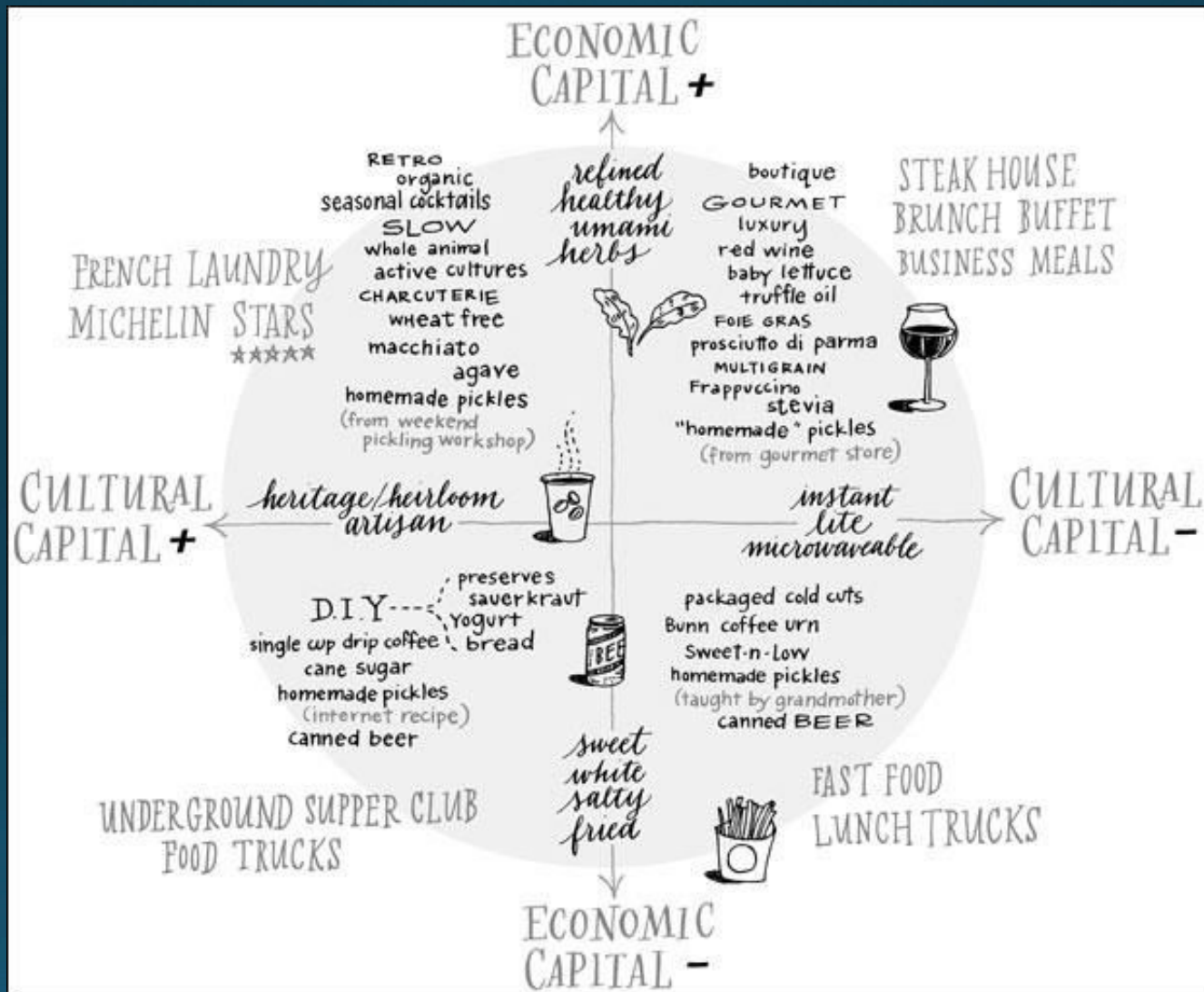


Social space and symbolic power: Socio(logical) practices

Social space (P.BOURDIEU1979)



Social structure of professions



Critiques of Bourdieu's theory of practice

- Too deterministic
- Agency not adequately accounted for

Investigating the Symbolic Value of Walking



- Qualitative interviews with children and parents
- Explored assumptions and beliefs about the value of walking for children, parents and society
- Explored effects on children and families

Gibson, B. E., & Teachman, G. (2012). Critical approaches in physical therapy research: Investigating the symbolic value of walking. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*, 28, 474-484.

Assumptions about the value of walking

- bodies can be analyzed as machines to be fixed
- 'abnormal' bodies create problems
- 'the problem' is located at the level of the individual
- being unable to walk is somehow 'a bad thing'
- walking therapy is a 'good thing' – disconnected from broader power relations that idealize being 'normal'



What we learned & Implications

- Bodies hold symbolic value
- Walking is valued as 'normal' and morally desirable
- Disabled children internalize as *habitus* negative self-identities
- Broader socially ingrained values about walking are reproduced

Create space for children and families to talk about:

- Effects of assuming that bodily impairment/difference is necessarily always a problem
- How values and beliefs change through 'lived experiences'
- How to support development of more positive disability identities
- Effects of stigma, and pressures to always "be positive"

Assumptions about inclusion



- Inclusion is a 'good thing'
- Approximating 'normal' will help youth be more included
- Being 'included' is about having opportunities to participate in activities of 'normal' childhood'
- Inclusion is about being part of mainstream society

Interrogating Inclusion

Critical research with disabled youth who use augmentative and alternative communication

- Inclusion cannot and should not, be reduced to a universal 'good', nor is it neutral
- Inclusion is wholly dependent on the perspectives made possible by a person's social position
- Reducing inclusion to simply being 'in' a physical space, is an impoverished conceptualization



Interrogating inclusion: Critical research with youth who use augmentative and alternative communication

- Visual methods integrated with qualitative interviews with high school-aged youth who use AAC
- Explored how idealized understandings of inclusion have effects for youth, how they internalized these messages, how reformulated meanings of inclusion “on their own terms”



“My chair fills the gap”

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice



(habitus) (capital) + field = practice



'Practical sense' of inclusion

- Bourdieu's theorizing affords a nuanced approach for elucidating the social relations implicated in the enduring social divisions and ongoing struggles between persons and groups to maintain or improve their positions in social spaces.
- From their social positions in various fields, all persons develop a 'practical sense' of how the world works, who they are meant to be and their "socio-logical" place in the world (Bourdieu 1981: 309).
- This sense of one's place shares a close correspondence with study participants' 'practical sense' of inclusion, and the strategies they employed to position themselves as included.

accommodation



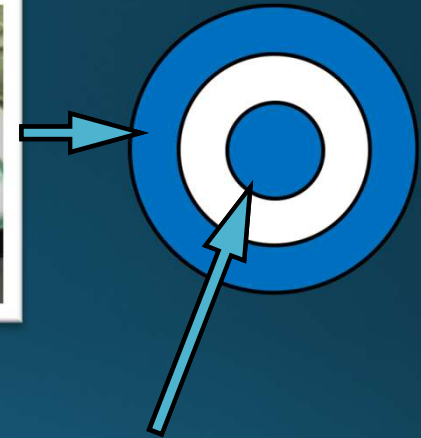
a 'special' sense
of inclusion

Peter's 'practical sense' of inclusion



"a waste of time"

"This is just the way it is"



■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
assimilating the
dominant ideal



"I hated being treated as if I was special."



reformulating
inclusion

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creating social
spaces of possibility



reformulating
inclusion

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creating social
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What we learned & Implications

- Some forms of inclusion actually reproduce exclusionary conditions
- Youth made extraordinary, sometimes harmful, efforts to approximate 'normal'
- Youth and families reformulated 'inclusion' (safety, communion, recognition)
- 'Mainstream' settings were often associated with stigma and fear

- Be open to learning how youth can feel included and excluded at the same time
- Discuss potential costs/harms of ongoing focus on 'normal'
- Collaborate to 'curate' alternative ways of being and doing that feel safe, where youth are valued and experience a sense of community
- Consider ways to minimize stigmatizing or scary experiences (e.g. less focus on independence)

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DISCUSSION