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A Study on the Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and Conducting Social Research with Gypsy / Roma Groups

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Abstract

In social science discourse, the dichotomy between agency and structure tends to dominate debates pertaining to identity construction. When complex social facts are viewed through a simplistic prism of either individual activities or dominant structural impacts is likely to lead to a conclusion, - particularly when the subjects of research are members of communities at risk of vulnerability- which is merely two-dimensional; omitting essential elements and interplays of circumstances, agency and structures which can rapidly shift dependent on both personal and external contexts and stressors. In this article, we discuss ways of utilising Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical model to explore the potential for creating a more nuanced theory of identity construction in the context of case studies focused on Gypsy/Roma(ni) people, whose identities depend both on internal identifications and those of the (dominant) groups with whom they live. We also aim to consider how in two widely contrasting international contexts – that of Roma people in Turkey and Gypsy/Traveller communities in the UK – use of Bourdieuian analysis provides appropriate tools that enable an analysis of daily living and the associated sense of active agency of these populations without minimising or excluding the structural effects which impact them. This approach enables a nuanced relational approach to understanding Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups' identity construction in its entirety, whilst taking account of the specific geographical context in which the populations reside.

Keywords: *Bourdieu; Relational Sociology; Gypsy/Roma(ni) people; inequalities; identity; research.*

Introduction

Increasingly, sociological research has focused on the necessity of moving beyond contrasting narratives of structure and agency when examining the lives of marginalised populations. There has been a shift in recent decades towards examining the complex interactions between the subjective and objective dimensions of individuals' and communities' social realities. Increasingly, it is recognized that actors are located in a complex web of relations within which they interact according to a variety of stressors and opportunities (Burkitt,

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2015). Whilst the turn to 'relational sociology' (Archer, 2010) has referenced the work of influential scholars such as Giddens (1984), Habermas (1972), and Goffman (1974), who have each explored the interaction between the objective and subjective dimensions of social realities, this field of work has more recently been heavily influenced by the Italian theorist Donati (2012). This work often overlooks or discards the critically relevant work of Pierre Bourdieu, who explained the interrelationship and interplay between agents as they seek to comply with (or subvert) structures. The concurrent impact on structures and effect of agents on systems has in its initial form both preceded and influenced later scholars. Accordingly, we have elected to revisit the relevance of Bourdieu's work on structural constructivism (1977; 1989), which has reached out to a very broad international audience as well as contributing significantly to the field of sociology and broader related academic areas such as management theory (Nord, 2005).

Using the most simplistic form of explanation, it can be argued that Bourdieu used the analogy of 'game theory' as a proxy for describing social interactions, arguing that no one individual is able to exclude themselves from the complex network of social life within which they operate. By extension, when applied to one's professional field of study, it is not possible for a social scientist to exclude themselves from the subject that they study as the 'game' involves all of us (irrespective of our social position or access to a variety of capitals). Thus, as a researcher, a participant, or a critical viewer of the academic project, we are all part of the process. Bourdieu's model is located around three key strands: "the three Rs... reflexivity, relationism and research" (Maton, 2003: 53). Utilising structural constructivism to analyse the daily lives and activities of specific groups without diminishing awareness of the structural exclusions that impact them, this article firmly locates Bourdieu at the centre of research into the lives of marginalised minority groups.

In this discussion on identity formation and Roma(n)i/Gypsy populations, we seek to offer insights into the scope offered by Bourdieu's sociological approach to understanding identity construction, with particular reference to the situation of Gypsy/Romani people experiencing discriminatory attitudes in diverse international settings. We argue that the identity 'choices' and 'performance of identity' undertaken by these communities at particular moments in time represent a perfect example of how Gypsies/Roma(ni) people incorporate and make use of 'game theory' through positioning themselves in varying roles at different times. They utilize existing networks and available forms of capital (predominantly social and cultural) to engage with structural forces in a way that maximises agency and responds creatively to both threats and opportunities so far as possible, given the 'field' (or fields) in which they operate and abut state mandated actors and agents engaged in their own 'game.'

It is worth noting that, because of their special historical position,[1] Gypsies/Roma(ni) communities have been subject to externally imposed identifications/ethnonyms (see further Matras, 2014; Taylor, 2014) which locate these diverse communities as being and behaving in a particular manner regardless of culture, ethno-linguistic group, or socio-economic background. Moreover, in recent years with the intra-EU transfer of concepts, National Roma Integration Strategy requirements, and pre-accession requirements for states seeking to join the UK, we have seen an increasing transfer of internationalist policies. These policies, despite lip-service to the contrary (and some beacons of good practice throughout diverse nations), tend to presuppose a single effective model of engagement and an increased coalescing of different communities under the same broad policy labels (of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers) regardless of ethnic, cultural or geographical origins or even whether they nomadise or are sedentarised. It is not possible within this paper to reflect upon the substantial and well-developed critiques of the development, administration, and implementation of 'Roma policy' within the EU, but at this point it should be noted that growing disquiet does exist internationally in relation to how Gypsy/Roma(ni) people are framed in policy narratives in a manner which all too often denies their agency and relational place in transnational networks and national societies (i.e. O'Hanlon, 2016; ERRC, 2014; Guy, 2012).

Accordingly, using a Bourdieuian perspective to explore the interplay of state engagement with typically (or potentially) marginalized groups such as Gypsy/Roma(ni) people would appear to provide a counterbalance to over-generalisation and stereotyping. The contextual model advocated by Bourdieu provides social scientists with the opportunity and theoretical tools to "discover the social behind the individual or specific behind the common" (Çeğin, 2007:511) and, in doing so, to support the development of more nuanced understandings of the positionality and skilful use of 'field' and habitus operationalisation by Gypsy/Roma(ni) people. In consideration of the points mentioned above, this article aims to introduce a theoretical discussion focusing on the suitability of Bourdieu's model while studying any minority group, such as Gypsy / Roma(ni) people.

On The Role and Position of Social Scientists

Bourdieu indicates that one of the biggest challenges of sociology is "to think in a completely astonished and disconcerted way about things you thought you had always understood" (Bourdieu, 1991: 207). A social scientist is thus required to uncover the myths and question the relations beneath the

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[1] One of the main reasons for their special position is that they have never identified themselves with a particular territory. They are 'without a land,' and "thus by definition without a state, not only because they have no history of attachment to a particular territory, but because Gypsy culture does not value attachment to place" (Appelbaum, 2011).

apparently smooth and obvious surface of a phenomenon. "It is an approach to search that attempts to dig beneath surface appearances, asking how social systems work, and how ideology or history conceal the processes that oppress and control people, in order to reveal the nature of oppressive mechanisms" (Harvey, 1990). Because such modes of research require the researcher to critically analyse and question a range of power relations and the ways in which field, habitus, and capital are utilised by diverse players, Bourdieuian theory can create or reveal unsettling and disrupting narratives and as such may be viewed as a rebellion against the existing system (Ünal, 2007: 162-163). Indeed, Bourdieu welcomed such critiques, noting that sociological analysis can assist in making power relations overtly visible and therefore open to change and suggesting that this kind of sociology "may become an instrument of social struggle, capable of offering freedom instead of chains of domination" (Navarro 2006: 19). Accordingly, given its potential to unveil a significant number of discriminatory or racist applications of power which may (depending greatly upon the geographical and political context of the research locale) lead to conflict with authority figures or institutions, it can be claimed that his approach is a suitable way to undertake research with Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups.

Regardless of potential complexities - and despite the fact that social science research may be regarded ambivalently in terms of bringing about unequivocal improvements in the circumstances of disadvantaged groups – using Bourdieuian theoretical approaches and sharing the findings with research participants can at least "give the groups the opportunity to see the underlying effects of social facts on their unfair suffering, and bring some relief from feeling responsible for their situation" (Ünal, 2007: 183). Susan Sontag also draws attention to the importance of revealing the processes and contexts which underpin deeply rooted and persistent inequality or exclusion:

> "To designate a hell is not, of course, to tell us anything about how to extract people from that hell, how to moderate hell's flames. Still, it seems a good in itself to acknowledge, to have enlarged, one's sense of how much suffering caused by human wickedness there is in the world we share with others" (Sontag, 2002 :272).

On Reflexivity

Bourdieu was clear that "socio-analysis simultaneously requires reflexivity, that is, a systematic and rigorous self-critical practice of social science" (Swartz, 1997: 11). Accordingly, although reflexivity has been most commonly associated with phenomenological or postmodern approaches, Bourdieu has reframed the concept by drawing attention to the process "as a means of underwriting rather than undermining scientific knowledge" (Maton, 2003: 57). Because Bourdieu foregrounds a relational approach to understanding social facts, he simultaneously questions the possibility of objective scientific knowledge and requires the position of social scientists to be subjected to similar scrutiny as all other elements of research. Thus, to understand the ways

'others' perceive and interpret social realities, a social scientist must first be critical of their own position (interests, beliefs, thoughts, power, motivations and status). Being sceptical about everything and questioning every single detail - including the researcher's own ways of thinking - are important components in field research undertaken in this way, as it means that field research becomes a site of mutual interaction between researcher and the participants.

Hattatoğlu (2009) invites researchers to give up the 'boastfulness' of science and be 'sensitive' enough to build field research among equals. Because "to be against racism is not enough; especially researchers must find ways to act and live without consolidating it" (Hattatoğlu, 2009: 146). Co-production requires researchers to be very focused on what a participant really says, means, and needs rather than on a pre-conditioned interpretation of the researcher's favoured outcomes and model. Thus, within research undertaken from a Bourdieuan perspective, it is necessary to hear the voice of participants equidistant from the effects of both presumption of full agency (voluntarism) and structuralist standpoints.

If we apply Bourdieuian models to Gypsy/Roma(ni) studies, this approach invites researchers to both reflect more on their own position as researchers and simultaneously to ensure that a more collaborative and less hierarchical approach is embedded into the research process. The imposition of external structures and (often) discriminatory formulaic 'misrecognition' occasioned by external (and on occasion internal) identity and policy constructions which fail to engage with the heterogeneity of the Gypsy/Roma(ni) populations, can be both a politicised tool consciously operationalised as part of a project of Roma-political identity construction (Gheorghe, 1997) or act as a carrier of symbolic violence (see further below). Regardless of both the processes through which such labelling occurs and the purposes for which it is used, it is critically important to be able to analyse the phases through which such actions and perceptions pass, and the impacts of this process on multiple players. We assert that explicitly applying Bourdieuian analytical frameworks that engage with the relational and rapidly changing context in which such developments occur, enables us to frame and isolate counterproductive essentialising constructions whilst exploring the use of multiple techniques and 'game theory' through which subaltern groups are able to assert their agency and belonging to both transnational and ethnicised national minorities according to the field in which they are operating.

Discrimination, Essentialising Discourse, and Symbolic Violence

As is well recognised, Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups have historically and in much policy discourse been associated with the concept of nomadism. Accordingly, despite their deep-rooted historical association with the many countries in which they reside, they can be seen to operate across trans-national and international modes of engagement and are simultaneously frequently forced to comply with being 'othered' in a manner which foregrounds sedentarisation as

the normative model of residence. In this way, generally accepted principles and rules of countries in which the communities live and which supposedly supply a degree of respect and protection for their ethnic characteristics and mode of life are still bound up with and predicated on assumptions of the nomadic lifestyle and temporality within a given nation-state. This forces the community members to engage with structures and perform their 'Gypsyness' in a manner that may or may not actively meet their needs or preferences. Despite a widespread tendency amongst Gypsy/Roma(ni) communities to seek to comply with the legislation of countries in which they reside – often which has imposed sedentarisation against the will of the populations concerned (for example in the UK) - it is not possible to say that compliance with the law equates to the absence of discriminatory attitudes towards Roma(n)i/Gypsy groups.

To this end, there is a clearly identified problem of discrimination against these populations, whether nomadic or sedentarised and regardless of their occupation, social status within their country, origin, residence, or social group. Thus Romaphobia is found throughout the Northern and Western world, typically leading to the adaption and adoption of particular mandated or 'preferred' practices/performances considered by surrounding populations and government agencies as 'typical' of Gypsy/Roma(ni) behaviours. The extent and degree to which these adaptations are utilised (the habitus and fields within which Roma(ni)/Gypsy groups participate, and the range of capitals which they operationalise in particular circumstances) represent both agency and the relational aspect of their participation in and engagement with mainstream society.

One of the significant facts about all Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups is the extent of the *symbolic violence* – one of the most significant Bourdieuan concepts which helps us to understand the subaltern group's role in the circumstances of their discrimination – which impacts their relationships with the state and neighbouring populaces. This type of violence is (per Bourdieu and also Wacquant) "a set of fundamental, pre-reflexive assumptions that social agents engage by the mere fact of taking the world for granted or accepting the world as it is, and of finding it natural because their mind is constructed according to cognitive structures that are issued out of the very structures of the world..." So, "being born in a social world, we accept a whole range of postulates, axioms which go without saying and require no inculcating" (Wacquant, 1992:168).

Thus accounting for and embedding awareness of *symbolic violence* is an important element of field research precisely *because* it provides a more concrete base for understanding various forms of exclusion, especially the hidden or ignored ones, to which they are subjected.

This concept signifies that powerful groups "allow the naturalisation of domination, thus creating passivity and conformity to a given social order" (Navarro, 2006: 19). Indeed, it is recognised that on many occasions, minorities tend to submit to oppression because of this naturalisation and, in some

occasions, may even take on characteristics of 'self-hatred' and 'misrecognition,' seeing themselves as responsible for their community's marginalisation. In extreme cases, this leads to a rejection of their own cultural and ethnic characterisations or a repudiation of 'bad Roma(ni)/Traveller' characteristics that are contrary to how they wish to be seen but may be essentialised in both intra- and inter-ethnic discourse.

For instance, during field research undertaken in a Gypsy/Roma(ni) neighbourhood in Turkey, the researcher witnessed high numbers of Gypsy/Roma(ni) community members articulating self-blame for being uneducated or poor (Gezgin, 2016).[2] In particular, when participants were talking about their very limited educations, they used statements like "I was a fool" or "I was unsuccessful" – clear examples of internalizing symbolic violence.[3]

Greenfields' longitudinal work with Roma(ni)/Gypsy and 'Traveller' communities in the UK has similarly identified findings pertaining to both acceptance of symbolic violence (particularly as part of a process for those Roma(ni)/Gypsy/Travellers who have entered into 'mainstream/professional' roles) and a strong and developing body of 'resistance' through the formulation

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[2] The spatial framework of Gezgin's research is limited to within *Fevzipaşa Mahallesi* (neighborhood) in Çanakkale, Turkey, that is widely known as a Gypsy/Roma neighbourhood. After a six-month field study supported by participant observations, 54 interviews were conducted and identity construction was analysed via the gathered qualitative data. The research considered neighbourhood dynamics, the significance of space, relationships with others, education and job opportunities in general, and all these relations were evaluated through the Bourdieu perspective (specifically the habitus concept), which is accepted as a suitable way to investigate the dynamic and dialectic relationships between the individual, the structure and space. The gathered and analysed data indicate that the neighbourhood still goes on struggling with social exclusion in both social and economic fields. As a result, it seems that the residents try to develop their own survival strategies with respect to their specific living conditions. Thus, it can be claimed that this adaptation has resulted in a micro identity that can be called "Fevzipaşalılık" and in a tendency to draw themselves apart from the rest of the stigmatized Gypsy/Roma group by using this specific micro identity (Gezgin, 2016).

[3] At this point *doxa* -another significant concept of Bourdieu- should be introduced. *Doxa* is a concept that expresses a form of common sense (a kind of interiorized and taken-for-granted norm or belief). *Doxa* is defined as "an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident" (Bourdieu 1984: 471). Gypsy/Roma(ni) students in Gezgin's sample feel that they are inferior and responsible for being 'unsuccessful' at school. Analysing these perceptions through a Bourdieuian lens, it can be seen as a product of Romaphobic socialisation because the vast majority of Gypsy/Roma(ni) children tend to believe what society (through the agents of the state such as teachers, figures of authority and media representations) tells them is correct. By utilising deep Bourdieuian analysis and reflexive questioning through field study, numerous other factors (such as poverty, discrimination, poor implementation of policies and ineffective service delivery, potentially resulting from inappropriate policy transfer) can be identified as factors in their 'unsuccess'. Once these are identified as the primary premise of 'unsuccessful' Roma or a pathologised view of Roma(ni)/Gypsy cultures, respondents lack of suitability for particular roles or activities can be brought into question and reconstructed through a process of co-construction with participants.

of alternative counter-narratives which frequently demonstrate community agency via utilising, subverting and engaging with policy formation whilst foregrounding (and performing) the structural inequalities which have been overcome by individual actors to permit of active challenges to normative conceptions and symbolic and enacted violence perpetrated against them. Thus for example, one serving police officer who is of Romani origins and who has family members pursuing typical and traditional residential patterns (caravan dwelling) and occupations had this to say:

"I think that the hostility [towards GTR people] is so great and so accepted that there is a tendency to just join in – have you heard the term a 'self-hating Traveller'? – to differentiate yourself and the people you know and your family from 'those Travellers,' the ones who commit crimes or do bad things, and then if you tell yourself often enough that you aren't like them [the 'bad' Travellers], then you can go along with it, agree, take on those attitudes and even find yourself mentally agreeing that yes, Travellers are thieves, and violent and not to be trusted and that there isn't any reason you shouldn't stop and search them or take down number plates or know that someone keeps a family tree which even includes names of small children living on a site. But when you stop and think, you know that this isn't happening for other communities. It's horrible really, it's a sort of schizophrenia" (Interview with a Roma(ni) police officer).

This officer has become extremely active in developing a police association for serving officers who are of Gypsy/Roma(ni)/Traveller origins and which came into being precisely because of the desire of these officers to complicate the narrative of 'criminal' and 'lazy' populations. The Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association (which has international membership beyond the UK) has successfully activated a range of capitals and transferred their locus of activities across fields, foregrounding their habitus and transferable knowledge to the extent that as both 'professionals' and trusted agents of the state they are welcomed into a range of policy and practice contexts as well as working directly with their communities. Accordingly, the GRTPA has become active in a range of UK and international consultations and programme development which pertain to their communities, including providing input into delivery of tailored services that support diversionary models for young people potentially at risk of becoming criminalised and hence feeding into the negative discourse and symbolic violence perpetrated on Roma(ni)/Gypsy/Traveller communities.

Representing and Deconstructing Knowledge

As the case studies above demonstrate, being able to identify and challenge the relationship between the subject and the state and contemplate and analyse underlying reasons for young people being 'educationally unsuccessful' or essentialised as a criminal minority is an essential requirement to asserting the right to a place in the public forum. As such, this form of awareness is as important as the implementation of policies and programmes designed to

support marginalised Gypsy/Roma(ni)/Traveller populations (which often fail, or merely deliver short-term and non-sustainable gains if adequate account is not taken of the situational position of disadvantaged groups). Whilst we have briefly outlined on two small case studies, there are multiple examples of other interiorised hierarchies that are adopted by subaltern groups as a result of various (and subtly distinct) types of symbolic violence. These examples become more publicly accessible and open to examination only when high-quality, critically analytical field research is used as a tool to enable such personal and political tragedies to be heard and recognised. Because the majority of negative hierarchical conceptualisations are mostly interiorised, frequently the outside world only has limited opportunities to hear about the realities of experience from the 'subordinated' or subaltern communities themselves. As such, not only does the relational sociological approach require reflexive researcher practice, but it also carries a strong moral requirement that the researcher must collaborate equally with communities in order to grasp the dialectical relationship between external domination and inequality.

Representation of subaltern communities is a highly conflicted area of discourse, but it is impossible not to refer to this aspect because it is key to collaborative research and the deployment of Bourdieuian theory when working with marginalised groups. From Gramsci (Green, 2011) to Althusser (1971), hegemony and the position of subalterns have been discussed at length. A substantial number of these discussions pertain to the issue of informed consent of subordinated groups to engage with research and their influence on representations. Edward Said (1977) has entered into these discussions, substantially influencing and drawing attention to the Western-oriented perspective that influenced perceptions of the 'exotic' Gypsy/Roma(ni) (see Okely, 2014). Indeed, Said's work has opened up various aspects of 'exoticised' identities for discussion and required the social science world to be aware of the Orientalist discourse they internalise and export through the processes of pedagogy and research practice:

> I will not deny that I was aware, when writing the book, of the subjective truth insinuated by Marx in the little sentence I quoted as one of the book's epigraphs: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented", which is that if you feel you have been denied the chance to speak your piece, you will try extremely hard to get that chance. For indeed, the subaltern can speak, as the history of liberation movements in the twentieth century eloquently attests. But I never felt that I was perpetuating the hostility between two rival political and cultural monolithic blocks, whose construction I was describing and whose terrible effects I was trying to reduce. On the contrary, as I said earlier, the Orient-versus-Occident opposition was both misleading and highly undesirable; the less it was given credit for actually describing anything more than a fascinating history of interpretations and contesting interests, the better. (Said, 1977: 336-337).

For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1995), any representation of the subaltern may be problematic and potentially the cause of epistemic violence. "The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as other" (Spivak, 1995: 24-25). Thus, even a well-intentioned effort may end up contributing to the degradation of a heterogeneous voice into a homogenous one. A further area of conflict and contradiction within the theoretical literature on this subject concerns the debate over whether and how a subaltern is both simultaneously a subject and a non-subject, given the subaltern individual is the one who must try to survive under the aegis of dominant groups (Çağan and Özay, 2010: 707).

Thus, despite the variety of formulations and range of arguments, it seems that as long as there is a superior/subordinate relationship in existence between some groups, subordinated groups will require representation. The challenge is in ensuring that such representations are transparent, fair and co-constructed with the subaltern group. Thus, in the words of Said, 'the necessity of an intellectual to operate against the status quo, loads him/her with the charge of representing the subordinated [other]' (Said, 1995: 24).

Direct Applicability of Bourdieu's Structural Constructivist Approach to Field Research

Applying Bourdieu's structural constructivist approach to social science research highlights the relational dimension of findings and enables the researcher to interrogate the complex symbiotic relationship between individualistic tendencies and structural effects, separate from overly simplistic dualistic debates. Thus, for example, a researcher is enabled and empowered to listen to a Gypsy/Roma(ni) individual reflecting on the contextual, social and historical background of the place where s/he has lived and has been living. A researcher is also able to recognise and build into emergent theoretical models the impacts of both structural and individual circumstances.

Bourdieu's sociological conceptualisations thus "reflect his very well directed glance which helps to distinguish the subtle and powerful social distinctiveness, presenting significant opportunities for a well-focused and inclusive field research" (Swartz, 2011: 201). As outlined above, this nuanced perspective is particularly useful when studying the circumstances of Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups, as such a perspective frees one from the limiting effects of the binary of determinism and voluntarism. It also offers the potential to carry out nuanced research into the complex realities and negotiated choices in Gypsy/Roma(ni) neighbourhoods, where identities are simultaneously (re)framed and calibrated against mainstream actors and state agencies' expectations, narratives, and policy implementations.

A researcher who is not constrained by the necessity of framing their arguments to fit one model or 'side' of commonly identified dichotomies may thus exploit the chance to move continuously (and in a non-linear fashion)

between agency and structure, theory and practice, enabling the research to proceed in a far more flexible manner. Utilising this method means that during field research it is possible to elide the processes of data gathering and data analysis as concurrent analysis and emergent awareness of multiple dimensions are granted space to reshape and refine subsequent interviews and observations. Utilising the Bourdieuian model means that the researcher goes to the field with an empty frame and empowers the participants to complete the picture during the process of co-producing research findings, thus ensuring that contextual features of the field and its mutual relations with other domains, habitus, fields and capitals will not be ignored.

We assert that a field should only be studied while overtly considering the historical, cultural and structural position of residents. Indeed, in common with Bourdieuian principles, we suggest that to understand Gypsy / Roma(ni) people and to analyse the data which emerges from our interactions with them, it is necessary to undertake an analysis of the geographically and morally defined space in which they live (Picker et. al. 2015; Chiesa & Rossi, 2013). A definition of identity that takes account of the fluid contextual and dynamic nature of this quality means that 'identity' is highly impacted and affected by the environment in which it is constructed. Furthermore, power relations impact the performance of identity. In the context of this paper, we have framed identity construction as the process through which an individual *becomes* a member of a given society through learning the 'habitus,' 'game,' and 'field' to which they have access (Nagel, 1994; Spencer, 2014). In other words, identity is not created through the accident of birth but through living in a particular manner and defining oneself as a constituent part of a particular culture or community. It follows that observing the daily lived experiences of Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups is important when seeking to understand elements of their identity and modes of engagement with the domains of existence and agencies with which they come into contact. Accordingly, observations and co-constructed narrative interpretations may be used to gain a better understanding of what precisely respondents are articulating, the meanings of such discourses, and how (and in what ways) the communities' structural position and the degree of symbolic violence which they have experienced differentiates them from other marginalised groups.

A focus on these elements inevitably opens up debate over whether the meaning and interpretation of Gypsy/Roma(ni) experiences[4] have a role in diminishing a belief in personal agency and reinforcing the inequalities they encounter in in their daily contacts with broader society and those with access to a wider range of fields and capitals. To belabour this point further, the process described above can be seen as a cultural class analysis, gaining traction at the intersection of class/status and cultural analyses.

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[4] For example, reflecting on the case study examples of the young people in Çanakkale who internalised the concept of educating failure, attributing this to their own failure.

In order to fully understand the dialectical relationship between external structure, fields of social activity, and individual agency, it is necessary to calibrate a theoretical model through consideration of access to and utilisation of economic, cultural, symbolic and social capitals, the four key elements or domains of power which support access to mobility across and between fields and which determine an agent's position within a specific social field (Bourdieu 1986). While engaging with the issue of the situation of Gypsy / Roma(ni) peoples, it is clear that the debate must not be allowed to degrade into a binary discourse which focuses purely on the economical or cultural situation impacting the communities, as all of these elements are integral parts of their *sui generis* position and the domination and status subordination they typically encounter.

Bourdieu further considers that to provide a fully nuanced discussion of the complex nature of social groups (and individuals) and their circumstances, (and moreover for our purposes particularly pertinent in understanding the significance and processes of identity constructions), the interplay between 'capitals', 'field' and 'habitus' offers a more relational perspective than that typically offered by classical identity or class discussions. While Bourdieu was trying to answer the question "what makes a social class?" in his article of that name, he defined a social class as a group of people having similar social positions and externally imposed similarity of living conditions and who are, as a result, encouraged to follow similar practices and lives (Bourdieu, 2010). Thus by interrogating the dialectical relations between groups externally located in popular discourse as belonging to a particular social class and their ethnic, national, occupational, cultural and other contextual circumstances, it is possible to gain a more granulated overview.

Bourdieu consistently revisits the concept of *field* to explain the contradictory positioning found between social classes as the interplay of capitals leading to the discrete shaping of fields that are overtly impacted by access to power relations and structures. In turn, the concept of *habitus,* which determines the observable preferences, behavioural tendencies, and practices of individuals and groups, are both products of, and derive from, their class position (or, for our purposes, ethno-social identity) and through these dynamics reproduce existing structures of power. *Habitus* can be defined as a complex combination of the effects of free will and structures that surround the individual. However, it should be emphasised that *habitus* is created "without any deliberate pursuit of coherence" and thus interiorizing a habitus is an unconscious process (Bourdieu 1984: 170). In this way, we see again the centrality of Bourdieu's analogy of social positioning and power as a 'game' in which individuals engage with. They predominantly accept the rules of the game and struggle to perform to the best of their ability within the position they have been afforded. Individuals act according to these unacknowledged rules, utilising the forms of capital they have access to, in order to maximise the benefits they are able to achieve in return for participating in the game through

daily struggle. These elements of Bourdieuian theory can be seen as cornerstones of a social order that is regarded as normative and even natural. As demonstrated in our case studies, this can lead to self-blame for failing to achieve, regardless of whether the 'player' does not have access to the correct 'games kit' to enable them to transfer across fields and play with a higher league 'team.' Thus the *field* within the Bourdieuian perspective is defined as a force field "which imposes its own rules upon its residents" (Wacquant, 2007:63). The precise limits of a field may be regarded as ambiguous precisely because every field has its own contextual and dynamic background. As such, effective social science research necessitates regularly reviewing and taking into consideration both the background of the researcher and potential impacts of a specific researcher working in a specific field of activity (reflexivity), as well as the contextual conditions of the subject and their field, habitus, and access to various kinds of capital.

When a Gypsy/Roma(ni) neighbourhood is at the center of research, it can be assumed that the researcher will encounter a sense of belonging or identity that is peculiar to the neighbourhood, as well as typically socio-spatial limitations which disconnect the area from surrounding neighbourhoods. Accordingly, various types of exclusion such as transportation or geographical boundaries (Picker et. al., 2015) will often reinforce the 'difference' between the neighbourhood and outside spaces. By taking a relational approach to the research, we are able to account for diverse aspects of this segmented and yet potentially entwined relationship between the Gypsy/Roma(ni) place of residence and neighbouring locales. The research field becomes a two-dimensional space which is both limited by external effects and within which its residents often struggle unceasingly (Göker, 2007: 545) whilst simultaneously partaking of a rich set of cultural and social capitals in connection with their neighbours and peers. Given that studies frequently focus on Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups' high level of social exclusion and the limitations they face by engaging in multifaceted reflexive research analysed through a Bourdieuian lens, we can both examine the effects of external elements and how they contribute to social exclusion and the importance and range of internal resilience and capitals which support social inclusion within the social field within which actors operate in their neighbourhood. Gypsy/Roma(ni) people are not seen as impotent agents who are only able to submit to external effects; instead, the field within which actors and agents 'play the game' becomes a place of observation with regard to its residents' coping techniques, strengths, operationalised agencies and potentials.

Before concluding this discussion we summarise some basic points a researcher should reflexively contemplate before field research can be analysed through a Bourdieuian framework: "Firstly, the position of the field should be analysed according to [overt and existing] power domains. […] Secondly, the relationship among agents or institutions competing in this field should be analysed. Third, systems of tendencies agents adopt via interiorising habitus

should be analysed" (Bourdieu qua Wacquant, 2014: 90). Bourdieu places particular importance on the role of power within field analyses, enabling this approach to be used as a tool for questioning the potential hierarchy and superiority of relations affecting the position of those groups being analysed. Through a close focus on the complexities of both overt and covert, internal and external power relations, it is possible to reveal the inequalities experienced by individuals within groups engaged in hierarchical relations. It is also possible to grasp the individuals' semantic worlds; for example, to be born into a field (read: ethnic group or sub-group) which has a 'negative' reputation automatically brings the individual disadvantages which they may not even be aware of until they come into contact with the outside world. Thus, in our case studies, the Gypsy/Roma children who are secure in their neighbourhoods and confident in their cultural and social capital participate in the dominant habitus by learning how to act, dress, speak and 'perform' Gypsy-ness. However, when they reach school age, they may feel like 'a fish out of water' for not having access to cultural and symbolic capital or familiarity with the dominant habitus within the school milieu. During the field research in Turkey (Çanakkale), one of the most common phrases that Gypsy / Roma participants used was related to being in 'an aquarium' (Gezgin, 2016: 201) when outside of their neighbourhood or in another part of the city (nearly nobody had actually been to another city). They also referred to feeling 'drowned' or 'vulnerable,' thus illuminating the core importance and security with which they associated their residence within a particular familiar, secure location amongst their community and neighbours.

Interestingly, the core importance for these Gypsy/Roma(ni) respondents of being in close proximity to their locale was not replicated for other groups in their wider neighbourhood. In contrast, in our second case study, we demonstrate how membership of a stigmatised community was found to demote the status of an individual within a skilled role, operating within the same professional habitus, and with access to an identical set of economic, cultural, and in-work social capitals as his peers. This could occur as the symbolic (negative) capital associated with his ethnicity effectively demoted his standing within the 'game' until such time as he and his Gypsy/Roma(ni) colleagues utilised their agency to empower themselves and their community through creating and operationalising a new and effective field of activity (the police association), which made use of their multiple habitus and cross-cutting sets of social capitals (including networks of access to activists; politicians and policy makers) pertaining to social justice and Gypsy/Roma(ni) equalities.

By viewing these two contrasting case studies through the prism of Bourdieu's sociology, we are able to gain a rounded picture of how the same set of characteristics can be used within the 'game' in different ways depending upon the 'field' in which the agent or actor is located at any given time.

Conclusion

This article offers a short presentation on the usage of basic concepts of Pierre Bourdieu, including habitus, capital, and field, and how this approach has relevance and applicability in field research with Gypsy/Roma(ni) communities. Whilst this example has touched upon case studies from both Turkey and the UK, we assert that Bourdieu's theoretical model enables social scientists to present a multifaceted analysis of minority groups such as Gypsy/Roma(ni) people resident in any socio-geographical context in the world, freeing us from the struggle to engage with and explain the mismatch between externally imposed policies and apparently contradictory behaviours in the 'field' given the focus on relational and contextual narrative within this framework.

Accordingly, applying Bourdieuian approaches to the study of Gypsy/Roma(ni) groups allows researchers to move away from dichotomic positioning and the requirement to handle data in a two-dimentional way. It permits the interweaving of participants' habitus and the external effects of structural constraints such as poverty, capitalist economic policies, and racism. It should, however, be underlined that it is impossible to suggest that both structure and agency have equal importance in the daily lives of Gypsy/Roma(ni) people, given the social exclusion many face and the complexities of their individual circumstances. As such, it is clear that social fields and relations are too complex to be able to explain in linear relation networks. The relational approach as delineated by Bourdieu is a 'must' in order to fully support engagement with contextual details while revealing these groups' unjust suffering and limited access to social justice, so as to permit 'speaking to power' whilst celebrating Gypsy/Roma(ni) agency and engagement with the complex, if at times limited, choices which exist in their daily lives.

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