

the human personality. Reason, deliberation and calculation emerge only after specific habits have been laid down; their operation depends upon such habits. In turn, the development of habits depends upon prior instincts.

The ongoing acquisition and modification of habits is central to individual human existence. For example, much deliberative thought is dependent on, as well as being coloured by, acquired habits of language. In addition, to make sense of the world we have to acquire habits of classification and habitually associated meanings. All action and deliberation depend on prior habits that we acquire during our individual development. Hence habits have temporal and ontological primacy over intention and reason.

An important implication of the idea of interaction between individuals and habits through mechanisms of habituation is that it confounds explanations of social phenomena that are exclusively unidirectional. It provides a means of avoiding both, on the one hand, the exclusively 'top down' explanations of individuals in terms of cultures, structures or institutions, and on the other hand, the exclusively 'bottom up' modes of explanation that attempt to start from individuals alone. The conceptual problems with these two alternatives have been visited elsewhere (Hodgson 2004). The approach sketched here avoids these two extremes, and instead is both interactionist and evolutionary, paying heed to both the uncertainty of the human condition and its situation in evolutionary and historical time.

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### HABITUS

Habitus is an old philosophical notion, originating in the thought of Aristotle and of the medieval Scholastics, that was retrieved and reworked after the 1960s by sociologist Pierre **Bourdieu** to forge a dispositional theory of action suited to reintroducing the inventive capacity of agents within structuralist anthropology, without that falling back into the Cartesian intellectualism that skews subjectivist approaches to social conduct, from behaviourism to symbolic interactionism to **rational choice theory**. It plays a central role in Bourdieu's (1972/1977, 1980/1990, 2000/2004) lifelong effort to construct a 'generalized economy of practices' capable of subsuming economics by historicizing and thereby pluralizing the categories that the latter takes as invariant (such as interest, capital, market and rationality), and by specifying both the social conditions of emergence of economic actors and systems of exchange and the concrete manner in which they encounter, propel or thwart each other.

The roots of habitus are found in Aristotle's notion of *hexis*, elaborated in his doctrine of virtue, meaning an acquired yet entrenched state of moral character that orients our feelings and desires in a situation, and thence our actions. The term was translated into Latin as *habitus* (past participle of the verb *habere*, to have or hold) in the thirteenth century by Thomas

Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, in which it acquired the added sense of ability for growth through activity, or durable disposition suspended midway between potency and purposeful action. It was used sparingly and descriptively by sociologists of the classical generation such as Emile **Durkheim** (in his course on *Pedagogical Evolution in France*, 1904–5), his nephew and close collaborator Marcel **Mauss** (most famously in the essay on ‘Techniques of the Body’, 1934), as well as Max **Weber** (in his discussion of religious asceticism in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1918) and Thorstein **Veblen** (who ruminates on the ‘predatory mental habitus’ of industrialists in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899). It resurged in phenomenology, most prominently in the writings of Edmund Husserl, who designated by habitus the mental conduit between past experiences and forthcoming actions. Husserl (1947/1973) also used as conceptual cognate the term *Habitualität*, later translated into English by his student Alfred Schutz as ‘habitual knowledge’ (and thence adopted by ethnomethodology), a notion that resonates with that of habit, deployed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) in his analysis of the ‘lived body’ as the silent spring of social behaviour. Habitus also figures fleetingly in the writings of another student of Husserl, Norbert Elias, who speaks of ‘the psychic habitus of “civilized” people’ in his classic study *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (1937).

But it is in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who was steeped in these philosophical debates, that one finds a thorough sociological revamping of the concept designed to transcend the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism: habitus is a *mediating* notion that helps us revoke the common-sense duality between the individual and the social by capturing ‘the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality’, that is, the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting *dispositions*, or trained capacities and struc-

tured propensities to think, feel, and act in determinate ways, which then guide them in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu.

Bourdieu first reintroduced the notion denotatively in his youthful empirical studies in the **economic anthropology** of the changing peasant society of his native Béarn in south-western France and of the Berber-speaking Kabyle communities of colonial Algeria (Bourdieu 1962; Bourdieu and Sayad 1964), and then elaborated it analytically in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972/1977). In this and subsequent writings, Bourdieu proposes that practice is neither the mechanical precipitate of structural dictates nor the result of the intentional pursuit of goals by individuals but rather

the product of a dialectical relationship between a situation and a habitus, understood as a system of durable and transposable dispositions which, integrating all past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions*, and make it possible to accomplish infinitely differentiated tasks, thanks to the analogical transfer of schemata acquired in prior practice.

(Bourdieu 1972/1977: 261)

As individual and group history sedimented in the body, social structure turned mental structure, habitus may be thought of by analogy to Noam Chomsky’s ‘generative grammar’, which enables speakers proficient in a given language to produce proper speech acts unthinkingly according to shared rules in creative yet predictable ways. It designates a practical competency, acquired *in and for* action, that operates beneath the level of consciousness; but, unlike Chomsky’s grammar, habitus (1) encapsulates not a natural but a *social* aptitude which is for this very reason variable across time, place, and most importantly across distributions of power; (2) it is *transferable* to various domains of practice, which explains the coherence that obtains,

for instance, across different realms of consumption – in music, sports, food and furniture, but also in marital and political choices – within and amongst individuals of the same class and grounds their distinctive **life styles** (Bourdieu 1979/1984); (3) it is enduring but *not static or eternal*: dispositions are socially mounted and can be eroded, countered or even dismantled by exposure to novel external forces, as demonstrated by situations of migration, for example; (4) yet it is endowed with *built-in inertia*, insofar as habitus tends to produce practices patterned after the social structures that spawned them, and because each of its layers operates as a prism through which later experiences are filtered and subsequent strata of dispositions overlaid (thus the disproportionate weight of the schemata implanted in infancy); (5) it introduces a *lag*, and sometimes a hiatus, between the past determinations that produced it and the current determinations that interpellate it: as ‘history made nature’, habitus

is what confers upon practices their relative autonomy with respect to the external determinations of the immediate present. This autonomy is that of the past, enacted and acting, which, functioning as accumulated capital, produces history on the basis of history and so ensures that permanence within change that makes the individual agent a world within the world.

(Bourdieu 1980/1990: 56)

Against structuralism, then, the theory of habitus recognizes that agents actively make the social world by engaging embodied instruments of cognitive construction; but it also asserts, against constructivism, that these instruments were themselves made by the social world (Bourdieu 1997/2000: 175–7). Habitus supplies at once a principle of sociation and individuation: *sociation* because our categories of judgement and action, coming from society, are shared by all those who were subjected to similar

social conditions and conditionings (thus one can speak of a masculine habitus, a national habitus, a bourgeois habitus, etc.); *individuation* because each person, by having a unique trajectory and location in the world, internalizes a matchless combination of schemata. Because it is both structured (by past social milieus) and structuring (of present representations and actions), habitus operates as the ‘unchosen principle of all choices’ guiding actions that assume the systematic character of strategies even as they are not the result of strategic intention and are objectively ‘orchestrated without being the product of the organizing activity of a conductor’ (Bourdieu 1980/1990: 256). For this dispositional philosophy of action, the economic actor is not the isolated, egoistic individual of neoclassical theory, a computing machine that deliberately seeks to maximize utility in pursuit of clear goals; she is instead a carnal being inhabited by historical necessity who relates to the world through an opaque relationship of ‘ontological complicity’ and who is necessarily tied to others through the ‘implicit collusion’ fostered by shared categories of perception and appreciation (Bourdieu 1997/2000: 163; 2000/2004).

Retracing the philosophical origins and initial usage of habitus by Bourdieu (2000) to account for economic rupture and social disjuncture brought by the Algerian war of national liberation allows us to clear up four recurrent misunderstandings about the concept. First, habitus is never the replica of a single social structure since it is a layered and dynamic set of dispositions that record, store and prolong the influence of the diverse environments successively encountered in one’s life. It follows, second, that habitus is not necessarily coherent and unified but displays varying degrees of integration and tension, depending on the character and compatibility of the social situations that produced it over time: irregular universes tend to produce unstable systems of dispositions divided against

themselves that generate irregular and sometimes incoherent lines of action. Third, the concept is no less suited to analysing crisis and change than it is cohesion and perpetuation. This is because habitus does not necessarily agree with the social world in which it evolves. Bourdieu (1980/1990: 62–3) warns that one must ‘avoid unconsciously universalizing the model of the quasi-circular relation of near-perfect reproduction that is completely valid only in the case where the conditions of production of habitus are identical or homologous to its conditions of functioning’. The fact that habitus can ‘misfire’ and have ‘critical moments of perplexity and discrepancy’ (Bourdieu 1997/2000: 191) when it is incapable of generating practices conforming to the milieu constitutes a major spring of social innovation and economic change – which gives Bourdieu’s notion a close affinity with neoinstitutionalist conceptions of bounded rationality and malleable preferences, as in regulation theory (Boyer 2004). Lastly, habitus is not a self-sufficient mechanism for the generation of action: it operates like a spring that needs an external trigger and thus it cannot be considered in isolation from the particular social worlds or ‘fields’ within which it evolves. A full analysis of practice thus requires a triple elucidation of the social genesis and structures of habitus and field, and of the dynamics of their ‘dialectical confrontation’ (Bourdieu 1997/2000).

Though philosophers such as Charles Taylor, Jacques Bouveresse and John Searle have discussed Bourdieu’s elaboration of habitus in relation to the philosophy of mind, language and self, it must be stressed that for Bourdieu the notion is first and foremost a stenographic manner of designating a *research posture*, by pointing out a path for excavating the implicit categories through which persons ongoingly assemble their lived world, which has informed empirical inquiries into the social constitution of competent agents in the gamut of

institutional venues. Thus Suaud (1976) has illumined the making and unmaking of the priestly vocation in the French Vendée by showing how the seminary acted in continuity with the closed village community during the 1930s to trigger mass callings, but lost its capacity to forge a robust religious habitus when the Church ceded symbolic pre-eminence to the school by the 1970s. Charlesworth (2000) has captured the formation and deployment of a distinctive working-class sensitivity, fostering silence and inarticulacy, born of the embodiment of the abiding experience of economic dispossession and political powerlessness in a declining small town of southern Yorkshire in England. Lehmann (2002) has traced how musical dispositions instilled by instrumental training combine with class dispositions inherited from the family to determine the professional trajectory and strategies of musicians inside the hierarchical space of the symphony orchestra. Wacquant (2000/2003) has dissected the production of the nexus of embodied skills, categories and desires that make up prize-fighting as a masculine bodily craft in the black American ghetto, revealing that the manufacturing of the pugilistic habitus entails not just the individual mastery of technique but, more crucially, the collective inscription of a heroic occupational ethic in the flesh within the microcosm of the boxing gym. These studies demonstrate that the assembly and employment of the cognitive and motivative schemata that compose habitus is accessible to methodical observation. Ultimately, the proof of the theoretical pudding of habitus must consist in its empirical eating.

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**HEDONISM** See: utilitarianism

**HIERARCHY** See: corporate governance; organization theory

### HIRSCHMAN, ALBERT O.

Albert O. Hirschman, born 7 April 1915 in Berlin, is a political economist and social scientist who is a major and highly influential author in fields such as development economics (1958) the theory of the firm and other formal organizations (1970), the history of political ideas, the economics of

inflation (1981: 177–208) and the epistemology of the social sciences and the sociology of knowledge (e.g. 1986: ch. 5). After fleeing his native Germany right at the beginning of the Nazi regime in 1933, he studied and worked in France, Britain and Italy before settling in the USA (1941), where he became engaged in research and teaching at Berkeley, Yale, Columbia, Harvard and Princeton universities. In 1985, he retired from his post of director of the School of Social Sciences of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

Hirschman's wide-ranging international as well as interdisciplinary academic work is significantly and self-reflectedly shaped by the author's rather unique biographical experience (cf. 1995, part II) not just as an academic (London School of Economics, 1935–6; doctorate in economics, Trieste 1938), but also as soldier (in the French and US armies, as well as in the Spanish Civil War), an underground activist in German-occupied France (1940), an employee at the US Federal Reserve Board where he was involved in the administration of the Marshall Plan (1946–52), a government advisor working for the World Bank and independent consultant (Columbia, 1952–6). His highly distinctive style of intellectual work has been described by himself and others as driven by a propensity for 'lateral' thinking, for 'self-subversion' (1995), and 'trespassing' or 'boundary-crossing' (1998), often combined with a sense of irony, a keen interest in paradoxes, unanticipated consequences (of both the 'perverse effects' and the 'blessings in disguise' variety), 'trust in doubt' and the fallibility of 'general laws'. The intellectual playfulness and elegance of much of his writings, many of which are 'non-technical' by the standards of modern economics, corresponds, with all its subtlety of imagination, to a concern for humanistic and progressive values and the role these values can play in the conduct of social and economic research.

The accomplishment of social theory is arguably its capacity for categorizing a