

Slide 2: What is habitus

1. Habitus – is ‘a set of dispositions which generate practices and perceptions’
2. It is defined as structures of the mind and is characterised by a set of acquired dispositions and preferences
3. Our class position, Bourdieu argues, determines our habitus
4. And this is expressed in our lifestyle choices which are signs of TASTE

TASTE

1. So taste itself is embedded into particular class conditions and guides our choices
2. It includes the kind of music we choose to listen to, whether we go to an art gallery or theatre to see what kinds of performances, what kind of television programmes we watch, what kind of food we eat and clothes we wear

Lifestyles

1. Habitus also leads us to certain perceptions and dispositions – how we act, speak, carry ourselves and the gestures we use, how we dress, stand

Good and bad taste

1. Because these symbolic associations are associated with class
2. Some things are perceived as being in good taste or in poor taste
3. Thus habitus leads to reinforcing power structures.

Habitus informs the following

Cultural capital

1. The non financial social assets such as education and intellect
2. Thus the habitus might lead to some people being more socially mobile

Economic capital

1. This is the amount of resources one has
2. The money, for example, to pay the fees for private school or to fund businesses.

Social capital

1. These are the group memberships or networks of influence that might help an individual

Symbolic capital

1. This is the honour, prestige and recognition that is given to people
2. Sometimes this is seen as a disguised form of economic capital

Consumption

1. According to Bourdieu, class can still be identified by what we consume
2. Our consumer behaviour displays our class identities
3. Different social groups have distinctive social practices and we judge people on these basis.

News and newspapers

1. We may go onto a website to read about a major news event
2. And you may have a particular image of someone who reads the Daily Mail or the Guardian or The Times (even if online)
3. This is often a crude stereotype and people may not actively subscribe to the full spectrum of views
4. But it is still a consumer choice which news to read or watch
5. The product of habitus according to Bourdieu which highlights beliefs, values, structures and practices

Shops

1. The same is true of shops and where we decide to buy our clothes from (including charity shops as well as brands) are all a product of habitus

Television and Habitus

1. So as we have seen, systems of domination (and power) related to class are expressed in all areas of cultural practices and production
2. The power model of habitus has also been applied to television itself
3. Where television is seen as an area where power/domination is a goal
4. Bourdieu uses the idea of a field – a social arena where people compete for resources

A Field

1. A field is a system of social positions and is based on power relationships
2. So you have broadcasters competing amongst each other for resources/audiences/profit

Television teaching habitus

1. Television can promote a sense of community and could reinforce a sense of habitus
2. It is also a teaching tool which influences us and society as a whole
3. Suggesting class taste

Chavs and the demonization of the working class in popular culture

1. The media has been written about in terms of middle class values and voices domination
2. The word chav or chavi is thought to be a Romany word for 'child' and was used in the northeast as a derogatory term.
3. Others suggest that the word chav is an acronym for Council Housed and Violent
4. Owen Jones in his book Chavs: the demonization of the working classes – the chav caricature is attributed to a whole class as a means of blaming the poorest in society for their own condition

A classless society

1. Not only the media but comedy programmes use this representation
2. So this hatred of working classes has become acceptable
3. So in Little Britain you have comedians that dress up as chaves for amusement and become representative of working class communities
4. So whilst there may be programmes that challenge the notions of class, humour itself is used to reinforce class distinctions and taste preferences based on class

Music and habitus

1. A diagnosis in the WORD magazine in 2010 noted that 60% of British artists in a recent UK top 10 had been to public school compared with 20% in 1990
2. Wealth and a private education help to make it big in British music today (economic and perhaps social capital)
3. Buying equipment, studio time, venue hire and publicity
4. So the notion of habitus can implicate us within power relations

Habitus blurred

1. But we could argue that habitus might not include how the mass media have blurred differentiation of taste boundaries

Other critiques

1. Bauman highlights consumption being characterised by choice
2. Where individuals do construct self identity and that the media have contributed to the choice in who or what we associate with
3. So barriers of distance can be removed and people may attach themselves to symbols and associations
4. So instead of being defined by locality, class or religion
5. We choose to identify ourselves as horror film fans, football supporters, reality television watchers, soap opera watchers or documentary watchers

Television and habitus

1. So instead of being limited by habitus, and instead of television reinforcing dominant power structures
2. We could argue that television challenges those structures
3. Because people have choice
4. Because consumer identities are chosen they can be easily 'unchosen'

Music tastes and age

1. Taste as we have seen highlights group membership and group belonging, social identity and self.
2. Cultural taste is an important ingredient of social life and identity
3. So the consumption of a teenager is different from those of a middle aged or older adult
4. It is argued by some, that taste becomes narrower as one ages.
5. Cultural capital – may become less important with increasing age

Music

1. One study into music genres and age found that musical tastes narrow in old age
2. Music the study found was used to invoke memories and emotion rather than promote interaction
3. There is also the anti-cultural capital of certain genres which conflict with age-appropriate behaviour.
4. Cultural-capital theory argues that taste is both produced by and reinforces privilege
5. But the interesting question raised is whether this remains the same throughout one's life.
6. So whilst we can debate whether it is difficult to change one's habitus or not, maybe it is more or less important over one's lifetime.