

Institutions and Social Structures¹

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Abstract. This paper clarifies the terms 'institutions' and 'social structures' and related terms 'rules', 'conventions', 'norms', 'values' and 'customs'. Part one explores the *similarities* between institutions and social structures whilst the second and third parts explore *differences*. Part two considers institutions, rules, habits or *habitus* and habituation, whilst part three critically reflects on three common conceptions of social structures. The conclusion comments upon reflexive deliberation via the internal conversation.

Introduction

Whilst the terms 'institutions' and 'social structures'² feature extensively in many social scientific disciplines, there is more than a little ambiguity about what each term means and how they relate to one another.³ Although a degree of clarity is sometimes gained from the context, this is not always so. In any case, the alternative is not to simply abandon attempts at clarification and definition, but to proceed with working definitions that others might build upon. Let us consider some of the ambiguities I have in mind.

Perhaps the most common way of (mis)treating the *relationship* between institutions and social structures is to use them interchangeably. This may be done without thinking, or it may be rooted in the common idea that institutions are kinds of social structures. For Hodgson (2006a: 2, *passim*): 'Institutions are the kind of structures that matter most in the social realm: they make up the stuff of social life'. For Wells 1970: 3) 'Social institutions form an element in a more general concept known as social structure'. Risman (2004: 431) simply 'prefers' to define gender as a social structure rather than defining 'gender as an institution', but she sees the difference as largely linguistic.

Another common approach to institutions and social structures, noted by Jessop and Nielsen (2003: 1), is to (mis)treat them as patterned social practices, in particular regularities in the flux of events. This confuses the *conditions* that make action possible with the action itself. This is remarkable given that Giddens's (1979, 1984) *Structuration* theory, Bhaskar's (1989) *Transformational Model of Social Action* (TMSA) and Archer's (1995, 1998) *Morphogenetic* approach, all of which reject the idea that institutions and social structures are patterns, have been available for decades.

The term 'institution' is often used to refer to things like: gender, money, the family, religion, property, markets, the state, education, sport and medicine, language, law, systems of weights and measures and table manners. This ignores important differences in the nature of these things. The institution of money, for example, does *not* contain human beings, whereas the institution of the family clearly *does*. Are money and families different kinds of institution, or is one of them not really an institution at all? For Schmid (1994: 3-5) 'early retirement, further education, retraining and regulation of working hours, trade unions, labour and social security laws, labour market programs, codetermination and collective bargaining' are all institutions. The problem here is that the term 'institution' becomes a 'catch all' term to refer to all kinds of social phenomena. Portes (2005) refers to this as the 'institutions are everything approach'.

The term 'social structure' is also used in many ways and, as Porpora (2007: 195) notes: 'there continues to be a certain blurriness in the way we speak of social structure'. The term can be used negatively, to refer to phenomena like 'rules, relations, positions, processes, systems, values, meanings and the like that *do not* reduce to human behaviour' (Lawson 2003: 181, emphasis added). But because there are many things that *do not* reduce to human behaviour, this meaning is impractically broad. Moreover, even if social structures and institutions are irreducible to human behaviour, this tells us nothing of the differences between them. In a similar vein, and by emphasising the first word of the pair, '*social* structure' can be used to refer to anything that is the result of human action, as opposed to some naturally occurring phenomenon, once again making the meaning impractically broad. The term 'social structure' can be used in an 'architectural' sense where we refer to the structure of a bridge, market, industry or organisation; or to the way a bridge, market, industry or organisation is structured. It can be used to refer to *specific* phenomenon like the structure of social class or gender; or to *general* phenomena, where it acts as a place-holder for a series of un-named 'structural' phenomena. It can also be used to refer to society as a whole, or perhaps in a general sense to mean anything that is external to an organisation or an individual which, once again, makes the meaning impractically broad. Incidentally, my argument is not that all of these ways of using the term are exactly wrong; it is that there is simply far too much ambiguity.

Finally, discussion of social structures and institutions, often involves the use of terms like habits, *habitus*, rules, conventions, norms, values, roles, customs, laws, regulations, practices, routines, procedures and precedents, not to mention less commonly used terms like mores, scripts, obligations, rituals, codes and agreements. Once again, there is often confusion about what each of these terms mean, how they relate to one another, and how they relate to social structures and institutions. Consider two examples. In considering 'habits, routines, social conventions, social norms' as types of rules, (1999: 92) conflates properties that should be associated with human agency, (i.e. habits) with properties that should be associated with institutions (i.e. conventions and norms). He also makes the

common mistake of confusing the conditions that make action possible (i.e. conventions and norms) with subsequent actions (i.e. routines). Bourdieu, and followers, sometimes suggest that *habitus* (a property of human agency) is some kind of structure. Bourdieu's definition of habitus as 'structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (1998: 72, *passim*) appears regularly. To be fair, Bourdieu, and followers, sometimes suggest that *habitus* is a disposition, a property of human agency, and sometimes the term 'structure' is used not as a social, but as a 'cognitive structure' (Lizardo 2004: 381). Once again the charge is one of ambiguity.

Given this ambiguity, remedial work needs to be done to bring some clarity to the terms 'institution' and 'social structure'. And this is the objective of the paper. Clarifying the meaning of institutions and social structures, however, requires some work on related terms, so I will also deal with rules (and related terms), habit or *habitus* and habituation.

The first part of the paper uses these insights to explore the *similarities* between social structures and institutions on the one hand, and human beings, actors or *agents* on the other. The second and third parts use these insights to explore *differences*. The second part considers institutions to be sets of rules, conventions, norms, values and customs, but then goes on to consider the relation between institutions and habits or *habitus* and the process of habituation – and touches upon some new developments in neuroscience. The third part draws largely on an important historico-theoretical overview of over a century of writing on social structures by Lopez and Scott, (but departing from them in significant ways) to re-consider social structures.

1. The *similarities* between social structures and institutions *vis-à-vis* agents

I open this section (based upon Hodgson 2004: 179-181) by stating the social ontology that forms the basis of my analysis, because this: allows the reader to identify fundamental points of agreement or disagreement, without having to guess my position; obviates the need to repeat arguments that, if not widely known, are readily available; and highlights those issues and arguments that, whilst important, are beyond the scope of this paper.

- a) *Ontic differentiation between agents, and social structures and institutions.* Agents on the one hand, and social structures and institutions on the other, are fundamentally different kinds of things. Social structures and institutions are non-agential phenomena; and agents are non-structural, non-institutional, phenomena.
- b) *Ontic differentiation between agential properties and social structures and institutions.* Habits are embodied or internalised dispositions, capacities or powers and, as such, are *properties of agents*. The causal influences that generate habits might well lie (directly or indirectly) in

phenomena like social structures and institutions that are external to agents, but once they are embodied or internalised, they become the emergent properties of agents.⁴

- c) *The dependence of social structures and institutions on agents.* Social structures and institutions exist only via the intentional and unintentional actions of human agents.
- d) *The dependence of agents on social structures and institutions.* For their socialization, survival and interaction, human agents depend upon social structures and institutions, that influence their behaviour. Taking the previous three points together, we might say that agency, and social structures and institutions, whilst independent in the sense of different, are nevertheless mutually dependent: no agency, no structure or institution; and no structure or institution, no agency. This meaning of *dependence* should be borne in mind later, when I refer to social structures and institutions *existing independently* of agents.
- e) *The rejection of methodological and ontological individualism.* Social structures and institutions are irreducible, in an ontological and/or an explanatory sense, to individuals, to the subjectivity of individuals, and to inter-subjectivity. This is a rejection of what Archer (1995: 84 *passim*) calls 'upwards conflation'.
- f) *The rejection of methodological and ontological collectivism.* Individual actions are irreducible, in an ontological and explanatory sense, to social structures. This erroneous doctrine results precisely from reducing individual actions and intentions to social structures. This is a rejection of what Archer (1995: 81, *passim*) calls 'downwards conflation'.
- g) *The temporal priority of social structures and institutions over any one agent.* Social structures and institutions pre-exist any particular episode of human action. Social structures and institutions can be changed, but the starting point is not of our choosing. This is a rejection of what Archer (1995: 87, *passim*) calls 'downwards conflation'.
- h) The foregoing points, encapsulated in Bhaskar's TMSA and Archer's *Morphogenetic* approach, constitute an updated, and more sophisticated version not only of Giddens's Structuration theory, but of the 'agency-structure' framework more generally – although it is more accurate, if more cumbersome, to refer to the 'agency-structure/*institution*' framework. The basis of these two critical realist approaches is this: in order to undertake (even the most insignificant) social action, agents have no choice but to (consciously and/or unconsciously) engage with the social structures and institutions that pre-exist them. To hold a conversation, agents have to engage with the institutional rules of grammar, and the convention of how far to stand from the

interlocutor. To enter paid employment, and thereby sell their labour power to those who own capital, agents have to engage with the social structure of class. By engaging with these institutions and structures, agents *reproduce* or transform these structures and/or institutions and, are themselves reproduced or transformed in the process. Social structures and institutions are the *conditions* of human action, they make human action possible; but they are not outcomes or actions and so cannot be *patterns* of actions. To put matter bluntly, there is more going on here than agents interacting (intersubjectively) with other agents; agents can only interact with other agents because they can interact with non-agential phenomena.

- i) Everything that has been said above for social structures and institutions, holds also for rules conventions, norms, values, customs, but *not* for laws, regulations practices, routines and precedents, or roles and I want to eliminate the latter group from the analysis in three steps. First, I eliminate practices, routines and precedents on the grounds that they are not conditions of action; they *are* actions. They are probably what we have in mind when we say things like: 'John routinely treats his female employees as if they were idiots'; 'the practice around here is to buy cakes on your birthday' or 'Sue set the precedent of leaving early on Friday'. Second, I eliminate roles on the grounds that they are properties of organisations, not institutions. Agents are obliged to undertake a particular set of practices when they take up positions within an organisation. Finally, I eliminate laws and regulations on the grounds that, whilst they are a kind of rules they are: (a) explicitly and consciously specified and identified; (b) often backed by formal sanctions; and (c), in virtue of (a) and (b) are, once again, properties of organisations, not institutions. By a process of elimination, then, I am left with *rules, conventions, norms, values⁵, customs*, and these will form the basis of my analysis of institutions. Whilst it might be possible to identify distinctions between these terms, I will not do so in this paper.⁶ Henceforth, and where appropriate, I will often place the terms 'rules', 'conventions', 'norms', 'values' and 'customs' in brackets after the term 'institution'.
- j) *Ontic similarity between social structures and institutions.* What makes social structures and institutions (and for reasons that will become clear below, rules conventions, norms, values, customs), similar, is that they are drawn upon, reproduced and transformed, by human agents.
- k) It should be noted that many of the above points would be rejected by those for whom the very idea of structures and institutions (and rules conventions, norms, values, customs) existing independently (in the sense set out above) of the ideas, discourses, or actions of agents is a mistake. I cannot engage with these arguments, so a few brief words must suffice. I have in mind here (those) postmodernists and poststructuralists who reduce social structure to ideas, language or discourse – e.g. Jackson and Carter (2000: 41 & 43). I also have in mind Harré's

social constructivist notion of social structures – e.g. see the symposium involving: May & Williams (2002) Harré (2002); Strydom (2002); and Carter (2002). I also have in mind those who, on some definition, can be considered ontological individualists such as King (2000; 2005) and Turner (2007). The ontology I subscribe to does not, however, mean a total rejection all of the arguments these various writers raise.

Now that we know how social structures and institutions (rules conventions, norms, values and customs) are similar, we need to consider how they differ. Let us start with institutions.

2. Institutions

There are several notable 'Institutionalists' whose work spans the social sciences. One of the clearest, and one who has taken the trouble to clarify and define institutions (as opposed to using them in their work) is Hodgson, for whom: 'Institutions are systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions' (Hodgson 2006a: 18). My initial definition, then, is that institutions are: *systems of established rules; put another way, institutions consist of, or are constituted by, rules*. I will augment this below.

Now, the analysis of rules has a long tradition, although our current understanding, at least in sociology, has come to us predominantly via Winch and Wittgenstein. On this understanding, however, rules are little more than intersubjectively held meanings about appropriate ways of behaving: they do not exist as phenomena external to the agent. By contrast, the conception of rules I operate with is a more realist version, wherein rules 'have determinate content of their own, outside of the agreement of actors' (Kemp 2003: 63). Rules, just like social structures and institutions, are irreducible to the meanings or actions of agents; indeed, rules satisfy points (a) to (i) mentioned above.

Hodgson (2006: 18) describes rules as: 'socially transmitted and customary normative injunctions or immanently normative dispositions, that in circumstances X do Y'. This is an unfortunate turn of phrase because, despite his best efforts to repudiate this interpretation, it encourages the (mis)interpretation that rules are *rational decision* rules, rather like rules economists (and game theorists) invent for *homo economicus* to follow; and follow to the letter. The rules Hodgson has in mind, however, are not of this ilk. Indeed, they ought to be thought of as 'rules of thumb' that guide, but do not determine, action. Students and lecturers, for example, know that in lectures, there is a tacit, unwritten, rule that (effectively) states: 'when in the lecture theatre, do not interrupt the lecturer unless invited'. Because this rule is adhered to, by most students, most of the time, the lecture can 'go on'. Yet as is well known, not all students observe this rule. Rules can be broken, and they guide to varying degrees, but this is often sufficient for them to work (MacCormick 1998).

The fact that rules have been, and continue to be, used by some in a rationalistic manner, has led others to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Something like this has, arguably, led Bourdieu (e.g. 1998, 10-30, 72 and *passim*), and his followers (e.g. Noble & Watkins 2003 and 522; Lizardo 2007: 344) to reject the very idea of rules as a basis for action. Whilst these writers correctly reject a rationalistic concept of rules, the use of rules as 'rules of thumb' is not only perfectly compatible with Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, something like it is absolutely necessary for the process of habituation. But more of this later.

I noted above (point i) that everything I said about social structures and institutions, holds also for rules, conventions, norms, values and customs. Whilst there have been various attempts to define (some of) these terms, and a few attempts to identify differences between them, most famously by Weber (1968, especially chapter 1), Parsons (1951), and less famously, Tuomela (1995, especially chapter 1), Hodgson (1988; 2006a & b) and MacCormick (1998), there is a sense in which differences tend to disappear when these terms are actually put to use. Many writers use rules, conventions, norms, values, customs interchangeably.⁷ Recognition that (a) rules are similar to conventions, norms, values and customs, and (b) institutions consist of rules, allows me to augment my initial definition thus: *institutions are systems of established rules, conventions, norms, values and customs; institutions consist of, or are constituted by, established rules, conventions, norms, values and customs.*

What, then, is the link between institutions and human action? The short answer is this: external institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) become internalised or embodied within agents as habits via a process of habituation, whereupon the habits dispose agents to think and act in certain ways, without having to deliberate. The long answer is to explain this more fully, and involves habit, *habitus* and habituation, which we now deal with in turn.

Habit and habitus

According to Camic (1986: 1044) 'the term "habit" generally denominates a more or less self acting disposition or tendency to engage in a previously adopted or acquired form of action'. Furthermore, Camic (*ibid*: 1046) and Burkett (2002: 225) suggest that the term 'habit' has become associated with a rather mechanistic, deterministic and unchanging response to stimuli. To avoid this interpretation Marcel Mauss substituted the term 'habit' with the Latin term '*habitus*'. Because I am not convinced that simply substituting *habitus* for habit makes matters clearer, I will continue to use them interchangeably, using whichever of the terms is more appropriate in context. Whilst Bourdieu's works are littered with various definitions of *habitus*, the following seems the least ambiguous:

Habitus, understood as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, apperceptions,

and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems (Bourdieu 1998: 82).

Whilst I cannot go into great detail on *habitus*, it is probably wise to state the following key points. First, *habitus* is not an observable behaviour, pattern, routine or action (in the sense noted in part one) but a *disposition, capacity or power* that generates a *tendency*. Kleptomaniacs, for example, might possess the *habit* of stealing, but this does not mean they steal all the time: sometimes they do and sometimes they do not, and there may be no pattern to their behaviour. *Habitus* is, however, always present in the form of a disposition generating a tendency to steal. A *habitus*, then, is an *agential disposition* that generates a *tendency* for the agent to do *x* – on tendencies see Fleetwood (2001) and (2008).

Second, *habitus* is a largely unconscious disposition to engage in an action. The ‘feel for the game’ is something that allows us to play ‘the game’ (a metaphor encapsulating living and acting in society) without stopping to deliberate about every move – although it might be possible to do this in some circumstances by stopping to reflect upon our actions (Noble & Watkins 2003).

Third, despite the fears of many, *habitus* is not (necessarily) a mechanistic, deterministic and unchanging conception implying determinism. Indeed, once *habitus* is understood as a tendency in the manner noted above, then many of these fears disappear.⁸

Fourth *habitus* governs the physiological or biological aspects of actions like holding a cup and playing golf, *and* the social-psychological aspects of actions like holding the cup with an extended ‘pinkie’ and deferring to the golf club captain – in certain social environments. *Habitus*, then, is psychophysical concept; it is ‘in’ the mind / brain (embrained) and in the body (embodied).

Fifth, it is often implied, if perhaps not intended, that *habitus* is something external to human agency, often via terminology like ‘institutional *habitus*’, ‘family *habitus*’, ‘class *habitus*’, ‘gender *habitus*’ and so on.

Sixth, and in contrast to the last point, many writers conflate agency and structure/institution, as in the following example:

Any conception of institutional *habitus* would similarly, constitute a complex amalgam of agency and structure and could be understood as the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organisation. Institutional

habitués, no less than individual *habitués*, have a history and have been established over time (Reay, David & Ball, 2001: para 1.3).

Seventh, *habitus* is not (somehow) in two places at once. It is not internal *and* external; not a property of agency *and* structure; not a property of the human mind / body *and* the social world; and nor is it a property of the social system, which is reflected in 'personalized *habiti*' as Pickel (2005: 441) puts it. In a well argued paper on 'masculine *habitus*', Connolly (2006: 143-4) reminds us of the way physical objects and events facilitate thinking. Indeed, his comments recall the ways in which, for example, people have been shown to be faster at judging the sensibility of a sentence like 'close the drawer' when it is accompanied by a hand movement pretending to close the drawer (Ignatow 2007: 122). Connolly then asks: 'where does this *habitus* lie?' Unfortunately, his (potentially anti-realist) answer not only denies a distinction between the external world and the mind / brain, but also slides into ambiguity writing: 'the psychological tools with which an individual thinks and acts are *not just internalised and contained within the mind*, but are also crucially *made up on* the social environments and settings within which the individual is located' (emphasis added). This could mean (i) that the concepts with which we think and act (possibly meaning *habitus*) are internalised and contained within the mind whilst also existing outside the mind, contained in the social environments and settings; or (ii) that these concepts (*habitus*) are made up on wider social environments. It seems to me that (i) is implausible and perhaps nonsensical - at least when put this way. Assuming the ambiguous phrase 'made up on' means something like 'influenced or shaped by', then (ii) is plausible. But there is nothing in this that means a 'distinction between the external world and the mind is untenable' (*ibid*). References to embodying or internalising social structures and institutions does *not* necessarily mean that these things 'disappear into the body' or become 'literally part of us'; it does *not* 'represent the ontological penetration of the individual' by these external phenomena as Elder-Vass puts it (2007c: 334). This is an important, if often misunderstood point, and the following analogy illustrates it beautifully: 'This is the same species of error as the claim that a child leaving the zoo has animals in their head, rather than thoughts or beliefs about the animals they have seen' (*ibid*).

Let me be clear. Institutions (and social structures) are always and everywhere *external* to human agents. *Habitus* is always and everywhere *internal* to human agents. In appropriate circumstances, *habitus* emerges within the nervous system of our mind / brains and bodies. The institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) remain precisely where they were, namely, external to us, and another phenomena, *habitus*, emerges, internal to us.

Habituation

Building upon Hodgson (2006a: 18), I define habituation as the process through which institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) become internalized and embodied within agents,

generating the dispositions we call habits or *habitus*. It seems to me that the process of habituation involves the following three (main) processes:

- (i) Repetition, regularity, routinization and continuity. The (let us say) rule-guided agent finds herself repeating the same action over some extended period. As Hodgson (1988: 127) puts it: 'repeated acts tend to congeal into habits'.
- (ii) Reinforcement, or incentive and disincentive. There are positive and negative reinforcements to engaging in rule-guided action, such as approval or disapproval by members of the appropriate community – although this should not be interpreted to mean that agents necessarily deliberate about whether or not to be guided by the rule. See Hodgson (2003).
- (iii) Intimacy, familiarity or close proximity. To internalise or embody institutions (rules conventions, norms, values and customs) the agent has to engage with them, live with them and use them, until agents feel 'like a fish in water', as it is commonly put.

It is via these three (main) process of habituation that institutions and agents are linked. Metaphorically speaking, through these processes, institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) 'touch' agents. This is very often recognised, even if implicitly – as the following example shows. In an article investigating the way a 'masculine *habitus*' is internalised within young boys in UK schools, Connolly (2006: 144) writes of the 'importance of wider social relations and structures'. He then goes on to cash out these wider social relations and structures in terms of 'the local housing estate, the boy's immediate family, their peer group, the school, the classroom'. In his empirical findings, Connolly goes into detail on what, in my terminology, would be the rules, conventions, norms, values and customs drawn upon by teachers when dealing with pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and gender. Moreover, it is not just teachers that are so guided. Black boys, for example, are guided by the rule, convention, norm, value or custom that: 'Asian boys cannot run fast' (ibid: 150).⁹

It is worth noting that habituation does not *necessarily* require one agent (or agents) to *instruct* another agent (or agents) on which rules conventions, norms, value or customs are appropriate in which context, or how to be guided by them. The degree of consciousness involved in the process of habituation is an empirical matter, but for the purposes of this paper, it does not change matters.

Reconstitutive downward causation

Hodgson has recently identified one vitally important property of institutions, and I would extend this to rules, conventions, norms, values and customs: they have the capacity for *reconstitutive downward*

causation. Whilst there may be something of a consensus (at least between those that accept points a to i in section one) on the claim that *social structures* enable and constrain agents' intentions and actions, it is also believed, although less commonly, that social structures *cannot* directly affect agents' intentions and actions. Institutions and social structures are different because only the former can cause *reconstitutive downward causation*.

This important difference between social structures and institutions gets lost, or at least is confused, in the writing of Bourdieu and his followers, because it is extremely common to read of structures generating the *habitus*. Metaphorically speaking, social structures are not 'magical forces' that penetrate agents' minds and bodies, throwing a kind of mental switch and causing them to change their intentions. And yet institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) do have something like this ability – although I do not want to push this metaphor any further. What prevents this explanation from being 'magical' is the fact that the process of habituation explains how institutions effect agents' intentions and actions. The following comments from Hodgson incorporate the points made thus far, and then extend them to the idea of reconstitutive downward causation:

What have to be examined are the social and psychological mechanisms leading to such changes of preference, disposition, or mentality. What does happen, is the framing, shifting and constraining capacities of social institutions give rise to new perceptions and dispositions within individuals. Upon new habits of thought and behaviour, new preferences and intentions emerge...[R]econstitutive downward causation works by creating and moulding habits (Hodgson 2002: 170-1).

The following example explains how reconstitutive downward causation works.

For reason of cost, and a desire to minimise pollution and road congestion, a person may use the bus to travel to work. As a result of this repeated behaviour, an associated set of habits of thought and behaviour will be reinforced. These habits may have further repercussions. However, if the bus service is withdrawn, then the individual will be obliged to use another means of travel. It may be that there is no alternative to the car. The individual will then begin to drive to work and develop another set of habits. Even if a preference for public transport is maintained, it could eventually be undermined by repeated personal car use. The change in the provision of public transport can alter preferences for that mode (2003: 166).

How exactly does repeated car use cause a new set of habits of thought and behaviour, leading to a preference for car use? Hodgson's example does not elaborate, but it is not difficult to imagine what he

has in mind. Consider the daily routine of finding the car keys, walking to the car, getting started, driving the familiar route to work, (in relative warmth, dryness, comfort and convenience vis-à-vis bus travellers) parking, then doing the same every evening. When this goes on every day of every week of every month of every year, it becomes ritual, a habit. Through repeated behaviour of this kind, the commuter may well eventually develop a preference for car use. As Veblen wrote in 1908: 'habits of thought are the outcomes of habits of life' (Hodgson 2004: 171). Habits, then, are not (always) internalised or embodied consciously or actively, but sub-consciously and passively. Even if agents were initially conscious of some aspect of behaviour, perhaps via instruction, through repetition, and over time, it often retreats into our sub-conscious. Habits are multiple, and on occasion, can lead to contradictory intentions and actions. To have a habit is to have a tacit skill, a 'feel for the game'. As Hodgson (2003: 164) puts it: 'Through their habits, individuals carry the marks of their own unique history'. This is virtually identical to Bourdieu for whom: '*habitus* is history turned into nature (1998: 78). Habits or *habitus* emerge via this process of habituation, and intentions and actions can change, entirely without deliberation. This, of course, gives institutions causal properties. These causal properties are of a different kind than the causal properties possessed by human agents, but they are causal in the sense that they alter the intentions and actions of agents, often without the agents being aware. See point k in section one.

Whether Hodgson and Bourdieu accept the following point, it is likely that intentions and actions are sometimes caused by habit alone, sometimes by deliberation alone, and sometimes by a combination of habit and deliberation in a complex iterative process. Elder-Vass makes the point with his usual succinctness:

[I]t might be possible that our actions are directly and non-consciously determined by our current dispositions, while allowing that those dispositions are themselves the outcome of a series of past events. Those events include (i) very recent reflections that we tend to see as directly causally effective 'decisions'; (ii) older reflections that shaped our dispositions consciously at the time but which we may now have forgotten; and (iii) experiences that affected our dispositions (for example in the subliminal acquisition of a habit or skill) without us ever consciously deciding how' (Elder-Vass 2006: 175).

Habituation and neuroscience

Several articles have appeared recently (many in the *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*) explaining the neuroscientific underpinnings of *habitus* – e.g. Burkitt (2002), Pickel (2005), Ignatow (2007), Lizardo (2004 & 2007) and Elder-Vass (2007c) not to mention their critics such as King (2000 & 2005) and Turner (2007). Many of these articles draw upon the work of Gallese (2000, 2001, 2003) Gallese & Metzinger (2003), and Gallese & Lakoff (2005), especially work on 'mirror neurons' and the

'shared manifold hypothesis'. I will refer to this body of work as Gallese *et al.* Let me try and sketch the basic idea. For a succinct, constructive, critical elaboration of Gallese *et al* see Borg (2007).

Mirror neurons are specific neurons that discharge: (i) when I observe another individual executing a motor action X (e.g. grasping a cup); (ii) when I execute action X; and (iii) when I imagine activating action X in the absence of the other individual. Imagining is a form of pretence reasoning, a kind of 'off-line' version of executing action X – if it were 'on-line' my imagining action X would cause me to execute action X. This gives me a kind of tacit and practical knowledge about actions of type X, and I am able to use this to understand and predict the actions of others. I can, for example, predict (at least with a degree of accuracy) that the person who grasps the cup, will subsequently drink from it. Gallese *et al*, go on to make two additional, and radical, developments. First, they claim that the system of mirror neurons allows me to understand the intention underlying another individual's execution of action X, that is, to know their reasons for doing it. Second, they claim that what goes for motor actions like grasping a cup, also goes for things like feelings and emotions. Drawing, largely, upon Phenomenology, and the notion of *empathy* (a *portmanteau* term to refer to a wide range of expressive behaviour) Gallese *et al*, suggest that feelings and emotions displayed by others can be 'empathized', and thereby understood. The same system of mirror neurons that is at work for motor actions is also at work when we empathize with others. The following comment extends these points:

When we enter into a relation with others there is a multiplicity of states that we share with them. We share our bodily schema, our being subject to pain as well as to other somatic sensations. At this point we need a conceptual tool to capture the richness of the experiences we share with others. I will introduce this conceptual tool as the *shared manifold* of intersubjectivity. I posit that it is by means of this shared manifold that we recognize other human beings as similar to us. It is just because of this shared manifold that intersubjective communication and mind-reading become possible. The shared manifold can be operationalised at three different levels...

- The *phenomenological level* is the one responsible for the sense of similarity, of being individuals within a larger social community of persons like us, that we experience anytime we confront ourselves with other human beings...Actions, emotions and sensations experienced by others become meaningful to us because we can *share* them with them.
- The *functional level* can be characterized in terms of simulation routines, *as if* processes enabling models of others to be created.

- The *subpersonal* level is instantiated as the result of the activity of a series of mirror matching neural circuits (Gallese & Lakoff 2001: 44-5).

How successful is this neuroscience as an explanation of the underpinnings of *habitus*? The answer, unfortunately, is: not very. Despite references to social structures, institutions and occasionally things like rules (e.g. Gallese 2001: 33), the analysis shifts away from phenomena such as these that are external to human agents, away from an agency-structure/institution framework, to intersubjectivity and an agency-agency framework. This neuroscience does, however, offer two lessons, albeit with a little finessing.

First, although Gallese *et al's* neuroscience might be sound, confusion appears to creep in at what they call the *phenomenological level*.¹⁰ Let me re-describe the *phenomenological level*, but this time inserting a reference to rules.

- The *phenomenological level* is the one responsible for the sense of similarity, of being individuals acting within a social environment consisting of rules that are external to us, and that influence our intentions and actions. These rules experienced by others, become meaningful to us because we can *share* them with them.

The *habitus* emerges at the *functional level* and is explained via the *subpersonal* level as the result of the activity of a series of mirror matching neural circuits. The mirror neuron system might explain, not individuals simply observing other individuals, but individuals observing other individuals being guided by rules. Indeed, invoking their wide notion of empathy, we might be able to see this as a process that allows individuals to know that the reason for a person doing X, is that they are being guided by some rule – where ‘knowing’ the rule means ‘knowing’ the rule tacitly, or knowing *how* to follow the rule. The *manifold* we *share*, then, is not just one of intersubjectivity. The reason we are able to enter into a relation with others, is not just because we share a multiplicity of states that we share with them (e.g. bodily schema, being subject to pain, other somatic sensations) but also because we share a set of rules with them. The shared manifold is also a *shared manifold* of institutions, rules, conventions, norms, values and customs.

Second, unless the action in question has a very significant impact upon me (say by burning me), then the process of mirror neurons discharging seems to be involved in the three (main) processes of habituation noted above - a ‘constant encounter and interaction with the world via our bodies and brains’ as Gallese (2005: 456) puts it.

In sum, then, institutions: (a) consist of systems of established rules, conventions, norms, values and customs; (b) are sometimes consciously, at least at first, but more often unconsciously, internalised or embodied as habits or *habitus*, via a process of habituation, itself rooted in, but irreducible to, the nervous system; (c) assist in making the intentions and actions of other agents relatively predictable; (d) exist independently of the agents who draw upon, reproduce or transform them, and in so-doing, reproduce or transform themselves; and (e) may, via a process of reconstitutive downward causation involving habituation, *habitus* and habit, transform the intentions and actions of these agents. The foregoing arguments suggest that:

An institution is a system of established rules, conventions, norms, values and customs that become embodied or internalized within agents as habits or habitus, via a process of habituation rooted in the nervous system, to assist in rendering (relatively) predictable, the intentions and actions of agents who draw upon, reproduce or transform these phenomena, whilst simultaneously reproducing and transforming themselves and who may, via a process of reconstitutive downward causation, have their intentions and actions transformed.

3. Social structures

Lopez and Scott (2000) identify three broad approaches to social structures which they refer to as *institutional*, *embodied* and *relational structures*. Of these three approaches, I will argue that only the latter are *bona fide* social structures; the former are both *very similar, if not identical to, what many would just call institutions*. Let me go through these broad approaches in turn.

Institutional Structure

Lopez & Scott define *institutional structure* as:

those cultural or normative patterns that define the expectations that agents hold about each other's behaviour and that organize their enduring relations with each other (Lopez & Scott 2000: 3).

In attempting to explain why institutional structure is a social structure, in many places they abandon the term 'institutional structure' and simply refer to 'social institutions' (circa 24 *passim*). Although they do not make much use of the term 'rule' it seems clear that they have it in mind. It is presupposed in examples they use such as queuing, turn-taking in conversations and collective bargaining. Furthermore, they argue that institutions are built from norms, and norms are 'rules of conduct,' (ibid: 25). They also refer to rules in the work of ethnomethodologists such as Cicourel (ibid: 94).

The following points, however, show where Lopez & Scott's understanding of institutional structure differs from the understanding of institution I am trying to sustain. First, institutions are not patterns as they often hint at (*ibid*: 25). Second, Lopez & Scott do not mention reconstitutive downward causation, nor seem aware of the fact that agents' intentions and actions might be changed by institutions. Third, for them, the key mechanisms through which institutions operate are not habits and the process of habituation, but 'the concept of social positions and role expectations' (*ibid*: 29).

Social institutions regulate actions by defining social positions agents can occupy and the behaviour that is associated with these positions... As a part of culture, knowledge about social positions is held in the individual mind, but this knowledge is shared by those who interact together (*ibid*: 29).

Each social position defines a role in social life for its occupants...Roles are definitions of those things that people are expected to do...They are blueprints or templates for action...They specify the rights and obligations that are entailed in social positions, and tell us what is expected of us and what we should expect others to do (*ibid*: 30).

For them, institutions are built from norms, norms are synonymous with rules, and norms or rules generate regular behaviour. Institutions regulate behaviour by defining social positions, and associated *roles*. Roles now appear to be doing what norms previously did, and because, norms and rules are synonymous, then roles now appear to be doing what rules did. If I interpret them correctly, their understanding of social positions and role expectations fits with the Institutional understanding of habits and the process of habituation.

Alongside norms and rules, there are social positions and roles. An agent, who takes up a position, inherits a set of practices. For example, a person who takes up the role of lecturer, inherits a set of practices (e.g. teaching, research and administration) and a set of rules involved with these practices. Some rules are explicit, such as those contained in the employment contract; and some are implicit, such as those regulating how 'late' is 'late' in terms of a student who hands in a 'late' essay. Whether explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious, many of these rules, via a process of habituation, become embodied in the form of habits. When the lecturer becomes experienced, these habits become a social skill that, for example, avoids the need to stop and weigh up the pros and cons of each 'late' essay. The lecturer employs the 'it is only a day late' rule. If this interpretation is plausible, then there seems a place for social positions and roles, or positioned-practices, alongside the processes of habit and habituation.

Institutions, then, consist of rules and norms that allow those agents who draw upon them to co-ordinate their actions with others who do likewise. In this case, however, *institutional structures become very similar, if not identical, to what many would just call institutions.*

Embodied structure

Lopez & Scott (2000: 4) define *embodied structure* as: 'the habits and skills that are inscribed in human bodies and minds'. They then draw upon Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* in an attempt to show how social structures are 'inscribed' or in my terminology, internalised or embodied. They suggest that the 'class *habitus*':

is the result of the particular experiences and opportunities shared by those who occupy a particular class position. It is because people acquire a class-specific *habitus* that there are similar patterns of class action in various fields of activity; and it is because of these similar objective patterns that they acquire the *habitus*. Politics, leisure, religion, art, and so on all show similar patterns of class behaviours when they are the results of (and therefore the conditions for) the application of class *habitus*es...Individuals acquire these systems of classification and social behaviour without realizing that they are doing so (*ibid*: 104-5).

Whilst I have no problem with the general idea that 'individuals acquire these systems of classification and social behaviour without realizing that they are doing so', what is needed is an explanation of the processes by which this occurs. Here we come to the nub of the distinction between social structures and institutions. We can provide such an explanation for institutions, but not social structures. Institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) are, and remain, external to agents, causing *habitus* to emerge via a process of habituation. There is, however, no similar process by which social structures can be internalised or embodied. The way out of this dilemma is to abandon the misleading term 'class *habitus*' and recognise that agents are *not* engaging with social structures (or institutional structures), *at least not directly*. Instead, agents are engaging directly with institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs). I will elaborate upon this below, after discussing relational structures.

We started this section with a definition stating that embodied structure consists of the habits and skills that are internalised or embodied in human bodies and minds. But to explain internalisation or embodiment, we had to use the processes of habituation through which *habitus* is formed. And this makes *embodied structures very similar, if not identical, to what many would just call institutions.*

Relational Structure

Lopez & Scott define *relational structure* as:

the social relations themselves, understood as patterns of causal interconnection and interdependence among agents and their actions, as well as the positions that they occupy (Lopez & Scott 2000: 3).

In contrast to the last two broad approaches, relational structures are, I will argue, *bone fide* social structures. Before getting down to this, however, we need to deal with a division in the concept of relational structure. Elder-Vass, who has recently written cogently on social structures, observes that relational structure:

can refer to the whole entity that is structured by the relations between its parts, which I shall call *structure-as-whole*, or it can refer to the way that a group of things (generally the parts of a whole) is related to each other, which I shall call *structure-as-relations*. (Elder-Vass 2006: 100. See also Elder-Vass 2007b & c).

Whilst he hesitates to say that the term 'social structure' should be restricted to structure-as-whole 'because of the confusion this would cause when dealing with...normative institutions' (2007b: 465) he does not rule this out. He defines an institution as 'the causal power of a norm group...to tend to induce conformance with a normative standard' (*ibid*: 470), insisting that the *relation* between the individuals of the group that matters is their commitment to endorse the practices arising from the norm with each other. An institution, then, is not the norm *group* itself (i.e. a bunch of people), but the *emergent property* or power of the norm group. Whilst he does not define norms, they appear to be remarkably similar to rules, not to mention conventions, norms, values and customs (*ibid*: 472). See also Elder-Vass 2007c).

Whilst Elder Vass is not entirely clear, and to be fair, his paper deals primarily with social structures and only tangentially with institutions, I interpret the differences between us as follows. His definition turns on norms; my definition turns not just on norms, but also rules, conventions, values and customs. He thinks an institution *is* the causal power to induce conformity. I think an institution *has* the causal power to induce conformity. He thinks structure-as-whole is a kind of structure-as-relation because the fundamental principle at work is a *relation* which he thinks is a *commitment to abide by the norm*. I think structure-as-whole is *not* a kind of structure-as-relation because the fundamental principle at work in a structure-as-whole is a commitment to abide by a norm *not* a *relation*, and a commitment to abide by a norm is not a relation. This is quite tricky, so allow me to proceed cautiously. It is true that relations between individuals in a group are necessary for the group to be a group. It is also true that individuals in a *norm* group must commit to the norm if the group is to be a *norm* group as opposed to some other kind of group. But a relation is not the same thing as a commitment; a relation (might) *cause*

commitment; a relation typically, involves more than commitment – e.g. a social relation, typically, involves power, but we would not say the relation *is* power. This will become clear in a few moments when I explain why relations might be causally efficacious.

Now, interesting as this debate is, it is rapidly becoming the subject of another paper. I call a halt to it, by asserting my prerogative (as author) to interpret what Elder-Vass takes to be a structure-as-whole, as an institution. I will say nothing more about structure-as-whole, and turn now to consider structure-as-relations in more depth.

For Elder-Vass, treating social structure as structure-as-relations means rejecting its causal efficacy because, he argues, relations themselves are not causally efficacious: only their relata are.

[R]relations as such can have no causal effect on the world. It is only when actual entities are related that the set of entities so related can have an effect; and, as I have shown in chapter three, when we claim that a set of lower-level entities and the stable substantial relations between them have a causal effect, this is synonymous with claiming that there is a higher-level entity formed from these parts and relations that is the causally effective element. Ultimately, then, the idea that structures have causal effects is incoherent if structure is taken to mean structures-as-relations and not structures-as-wholes (Elder-Vass 2006: 100, emphasis added)

Two key phrases make Elder-Vass's argument compelling. First is his claim that: 'relations as such can have no causal effect on the world. It is only when actual entities are related that the set of entities so related can have an effect'. Second, is Ollman's worry that a focus solely on relations between things, without the things themselves, might lead to reification of the term 'between' (cited in Elder-Vass 2006: 56). I must admit, this threw me for a while until in a discussion, a colleague¹¹ pointed out that there is no such thing as a 'relation as such', or a relation without relata. There can be no 'between' if there are no things 'either side' as it were. Of course a 'relation as such' has no causal efficacy, but this is because it is not real – although ambiguous phraseology might suggest or imply otherwise. Is there a sense in which relation-as-structure can be rescued by abandoning the misleading idea of a 'relation as such' and allowing that relations are always relations between things? I think there is.

The roots of a plausible notion of structure-as-relations lies in what Elder-Vass (2006: 55) previously attributed to Collier who writes that: 'The latticework of relations constitutes the structure of "society"'. For Elder-Vass, 'the latticework of relations constitutes structure (i.e. the mode of organisation)'. I assume this means that the relations constitute the mode of organisation or even 'the way a group of things or people relate' (Elder-Vass 2006: 100). It might be less confusing to treat structure-as-relation

as a *latticework of relations*, with different latticework's referring to different ways in which the parts relate. We would then be able to differentiate between relational structures because we could differentiate between latticeworks. One latticework involving relations between employers and employees would constitute a class relation; a different latticework involving relations between men and women would constitute the structure of gender; and yet another latticework involving relations between white and black people would constitute the structure of race; and so on. Notice that we are dealing here with relations, not rules, conventions, norms, values and customs, and hence clearly, not with institutions.

If the *relations* between a set of unchanging things are altered and new, systematic and stable relations emerge, then the entity will become a different one. The change will be caused solely by changes in the relations. We could identify a different latticework, a different way in which the parts relate. Imagine a scenario wherein an unemployed person contemplates offering her labour power on the labour market, and an employer contemplates hiring labour power. At the stage of contemplation, when the two parties are unaware of each other, are totally unrelated, each has causal powers X and Y respectively, and these powers exist independently of any relation between them. If the two parties come together and sign an employment contract, then at this point, a very definite relationship emerges: an *employment* relation which, in Marxist terms, is simultaneously a class relation.

Notice that the employment relation is a very definite or particular one. The employee and employer may be related in terms of being family, friends, or supporting the same football club, but these relations are *not* the same as the employment relation, they constitute a different latticework. If the way the people relate should change, that is, if the relations should change, people would act differently. If, for example, the employer married the employee and the latter ceased work, then the employment relation would disappear and a different relation, a family relation, would emerge. The relations that we are focussing upon in this example, those that constitute the employment relation, are not *external*, but *internal* relations – i.e. where the nature of one of the relata, depends upon the nature of the other: landlord and tenant would be another example.

Now, has the relation (between things) caused anything? The employee, who previously had causal powers X, now has *additional* causal power X^1 - e.g. the power to purchase goods with wages. The employer, who previously had causal powers Y, now has *additional* causal power Y^1 - e.g. the power to produce extra products with the additional labour. What is the *cause* of these additional causal powers? There are (at least) three possibilities:

- a) The cause of the additional powers could be the employment relation, the way the people are organised or related.

- b) The cause of the additional powers could be something involved in creating the relationship, like the employment contract or the workplace.
- c) The cause of the additional powers could be something to do with the act of transferring resources. The employer transfers wages (which was part of Y) to the employee and the employee transfers the control of labour power to the employer (which was part of X).

Cause (b) seems to depend upon cause (a) in the sense that the employment contract depends upon the employment relation, indeed, the contract officially registers the existence of the relation. *No employment relation, no employment contract.* Cause (c) also seems to depend on cause (a). The resources without the transfer, and hence without the relation, remain in their original locations and cannot become *additional* causal powers. *No employment relation, no transfer, no resources.* By default we are left with cause (a) and may conclude that employment relations, as an example of (social) relations more generally, are causally efficacious.

In sum, then, having abandoned the misleading idea of a 'relation as such' and recognised that relations are always relations between things, I conclude that: (social) relations are causal; (social) relations are emergent entities; structure-as-relation is plausible and so, therefore, is relational structure. Unlike institutional structures, embodied structures and also structure-as-whole, which are all more accurately interpreted as institutions, relational structure, *qua* structure-as-relation, is a *bone fide* social structure. The foregoing arguments suggest that:

A social structure is a latticework of internal relations between entities that may enable and constrain (but cannot transform) the intentions and actions of agents who draw upon, reproduce and/or transform these relations.¹²

Conclusion

Recognition that institutional and embodied structures are better understood as institutions, and that a social structure is a latticework of internal relations, helps to explain why there is no process, like habituation, by which social structures can be internalised or embodied. Understanding this requires an understanding of the differential ways in which agents engage with, or are linked to, social structures and institutions. I have elaborated upon this elsewhere (Fleetwood 2008) so will be relatively brief here.

Consider agency and *institutions*, and bear two points in mind. First, agents engage with institutions via three (main) habituation processes: (i) repetition, regularity, routinization and continuity; (ii) reinforcement, or incentive and disincentive and (iii) intimacy, familiarity or close proximity. Via these processes, metaphorically speaking, institutions 'touch' agents. Recall the example of Connolly who details what are, in effect, the rules, conventions, norms, values and customs drawn upon by teachers

and pupils. Second, the habituation process is *largely* unconscious, which does not preclude the possibility that things can be learned consciously, and then these things slip to ‘the back of the mind’ as it were, such that forget whence they came – see the quotation from Elder-Vass on p12.¹³ This can be summed up by saying that *habituation is the process that links institution and agency*.

Now consider agency and *social structures*, and bear two points in mind. First agents engage with social structures by entering into particular relations – relations of class or gender for example. Continuing with the metaphor, social structures do not ‘touch’ agents – or at least not directly. There is nothing like the three (main) habituation processes going on here. Second, the engagement with social structures is conscious.¹⁴ Stated briefly, agents consciously take social structures into consideration when they reflexively deliberate upon some potential course of action. This reflexive deliberation occurs via the *internal conversation* whereby agents literally talk to themselves (and sometimes others) about their needs, concerns and the social structures that might constrain or enable them. They then formulate (fallible) courses of action, or agential projects, they think might result in their needs being met and their concerns addressed. This can be summed up by saying that *reflexive deliberation, via the internal conversation is the process that links social structure and agency*.

Although agents engage with institutions via the (largely) unconscious process of habituation, and engage with social structures via reflexive deliberation and the internal conversation, this does not mean that social structures have no effect on *habitus*; any effect is likely to be indirect. When Bourdieu and followers suggest that the social structure of class, generates a particular *habitus* (they would say ‘class *habitus*’), they have in mind something like the following – the diagram is borrowed from Harker and cited in Mouzelis (1995: 194).

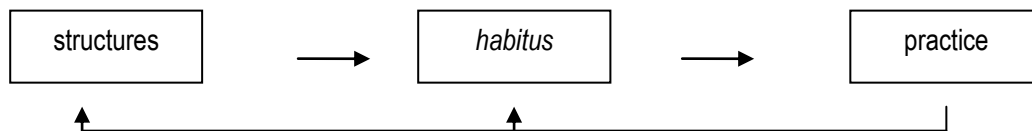


Figure 1

If I am right, however, this is a mistake. Instead, we should sketch this diagrammatically as follows:

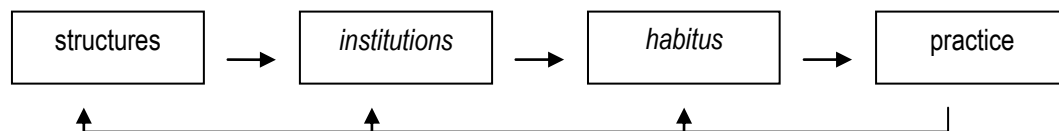


Figure 2

It is likely that social structures ‘effect’, ‘influence’ or ‘shape’ institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) which, in turn, cause the emergence of a *habitus* that, in some sense, ‘reflects’ or ‘expresses’ these social structures. Social structures have a causal role to play in generating the *habitus*, but only *indirectly* via institutions and, I might add, *organisations*. Elaboration upon exactly how social structures ‘influence’ or ‘shape’ institutions (and organisations); and how institutions (and organisations) ‘influence’ or ‘shape’ *habitus* is the subject for another paper. Yet having a clear understanding of the similarities and differences between institutions and social structures is a necessary precondition for such an elaboration.

Notes

¹ I thank three anonymous referees for their extremely helpful comments on previous drafts.

² I will not distinguish between social and cultural structures. On this see Archer (1995).

³ Others share this concern. Battiera (2006); Hodgson (2002, 2003, 2004, 2006a & b); Jessop & Nielsen (2003); Lawson (2003); Nielsen (2006); Rogers-Hollingsworth (2002); Searle (2005) and Portes (2005) seek to tighten up our understanding of institutions. Archer (2000); Elder-Vass (2006, 2007a, 2007b); Jackson (2007); Lewis (2000); Lewis & Runde (2007); Lopez & Scott (2000); Lounsbury & Ventresca

(2003); Risman (2004); Porpora (1998, 2007) and Scott (2001) have done something similar for social structures.

⁴ See Elder-Vass (2006 and 2007a) for an elaboration of emergence.

⁵ Rule-guided behaviour may have an ethical element to it, because rules do not just guide, they often guide us to do the 'right' thing - hence the inclusion of values. See Van Staveren (2001: chapter 7) and MacCormick (1998).

⁶ Should it transpire that a convention, norm, value or custom has is a property that means it should be not be associated with a rule, I will happily disassociate it. Until such time I proceed with this more inclusive definition.

⁷ Burns & Carson (2002); Rogers Hollingsworth (2002); De Cindio, Gentile, Grew & Redolfi (2003); O'Mahoney (2005); Lindbladh & Lyttkens (2002) are recent examples.

⁸ See McLeod (2005) and Burkitt (2002) for refutations of *habitus* as a mechanistic and deterministic concept.

⁹ Something like these three processes is going on, even if it is not explicitly mentioned, in the following articles - selected because they are relatively recent, and they deliberately use the concept of *habitus*: Colley (2003); David, Ball, Davies & Reay (2003); Holdsworth (2006); McDonough (2006); Nash (2003); O'Mahony (2007); Taylor (2005).

¹⁰ What I interpret as 'confusion' might, of course, be clarity on their part and disagreement between them and myself. After all, they are coming, philosophically speaking, from a Phenomenological tradition that, at best is vague on the metaphysics of reality, and at worst anti-realist. Gellesse *et al* might simply reject my realist position on the existence of rules as real entities, irreducible to intersubjective agreement.

¹¹ I thank Filipe Sousa for this insight.

¹² This is in-keeping with Porpora (1998: 344) and (2007:198).

¹³ The fact that we can reflect upon unconscious habits of others does not involve a performative contradiction as one referee suggested: it means we are *consciously* discussing the *unconscious* habits of others.

¹⁴ Archer (2003) has an entire book dedicated to the relation between structure and agency, and her work has been elaborated upon by Elder-Vass (2007c) and Mutch (2004).

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