

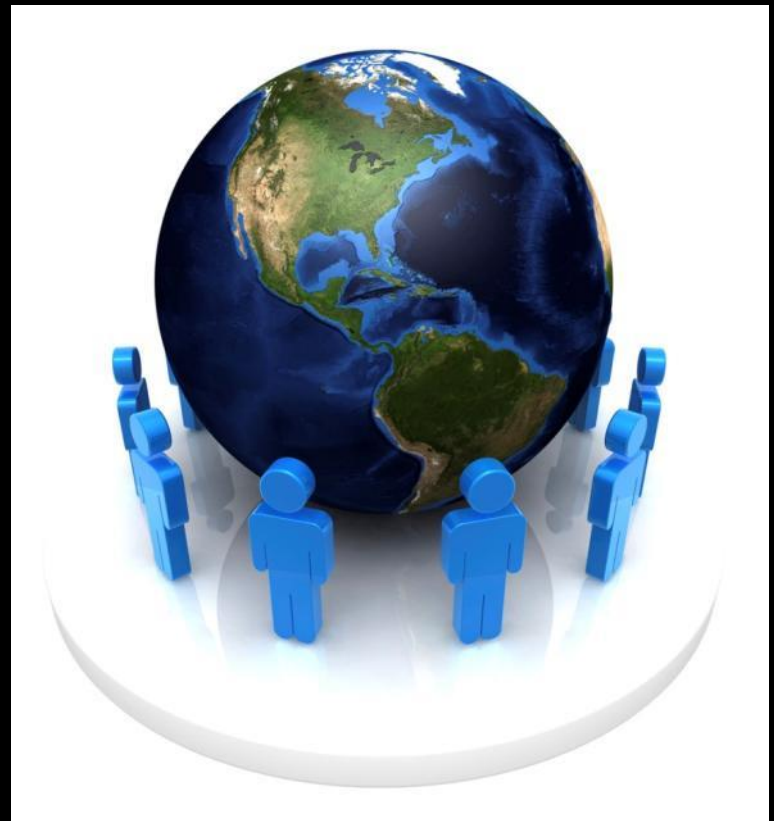
Social Reproduction: Habitus and Structuration



Households

What is Social Theory?

- How to interpret human social activity (actions):
 - At a wider cultural level
 - At the level of the individual/social agent
- A way to “people the past”...
- Derives from Anthropology & Sociology



What is Social Theory?

- Explores the role that **individuals** play in social change
- **Social reproduction:**
 - Over time groups of people reproduce their social structure & patterns



Peopling the Past

- “How do you envisage those households?”
- “You mean how do I imagine their composition?”
- “No, how do you envisage them going about their daily actions”
- I felt quite defensive “Archaeologists don’t do that. We don’t go around envisaging people leading cows to pasture & gossiping around the household chores”
- “Yes, but what *if* you were allowed to do it....Now just tell us how you see them. What do they look like?”
- “Well...” I said. And then I realized what I saw. “I see...a lot of faceless blobs”
(Tringham 1991:93-4)

A Theory of Practice

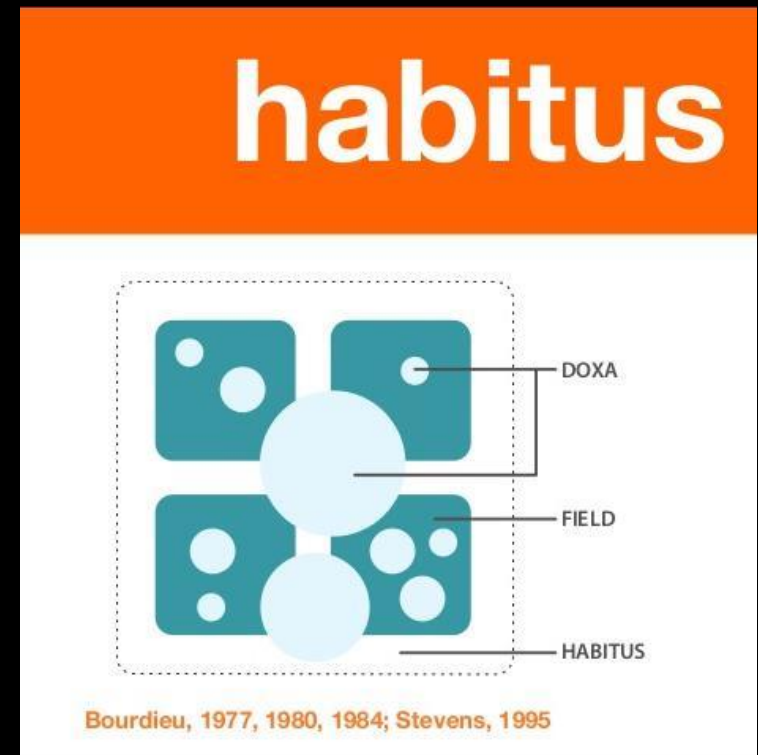
- Reacts against structuralist view of society
- Individuals (**social agents/actors**) play a key role in development of social change
- Social agents' lives are seen within wider patterns of the social world
- **Theory of practice:**
 - How individual social actors enact, reproduce & transform social rules



Pierre Bourdieu

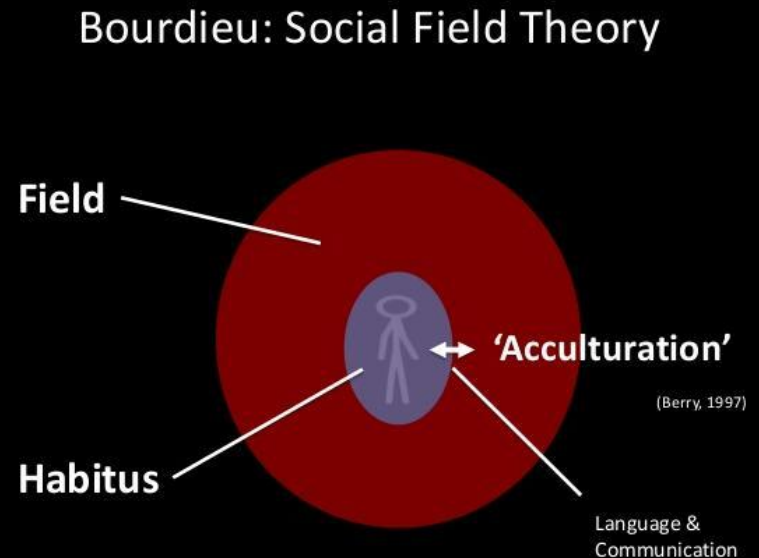
Habitus

- Culturally acquired rules & patterns of thought & behaviour
- It gives direction to concrete actions (**praxis**) by social agents/actors
- How we become culturally competent actors in society



Field

- A place where social agents interact & struggle for power
- Social worlds are made up of various fields
- A field is a **structured system of social positions** occupied by agents & structures
- Fields are **social spaces** in which **agents perform**



Doxa

- What is taken for granted within a society
- “the natural & social world appears as self-evident”
- Shared, subconscious social rules which structure society



Doxa

- Reifies social boundaries:
 - Our sense of our place in society
- Agents occupy positions in social field
 - Try to alter rules to their benefit
 - Making use of their capital (power) to favour their social position



Capital

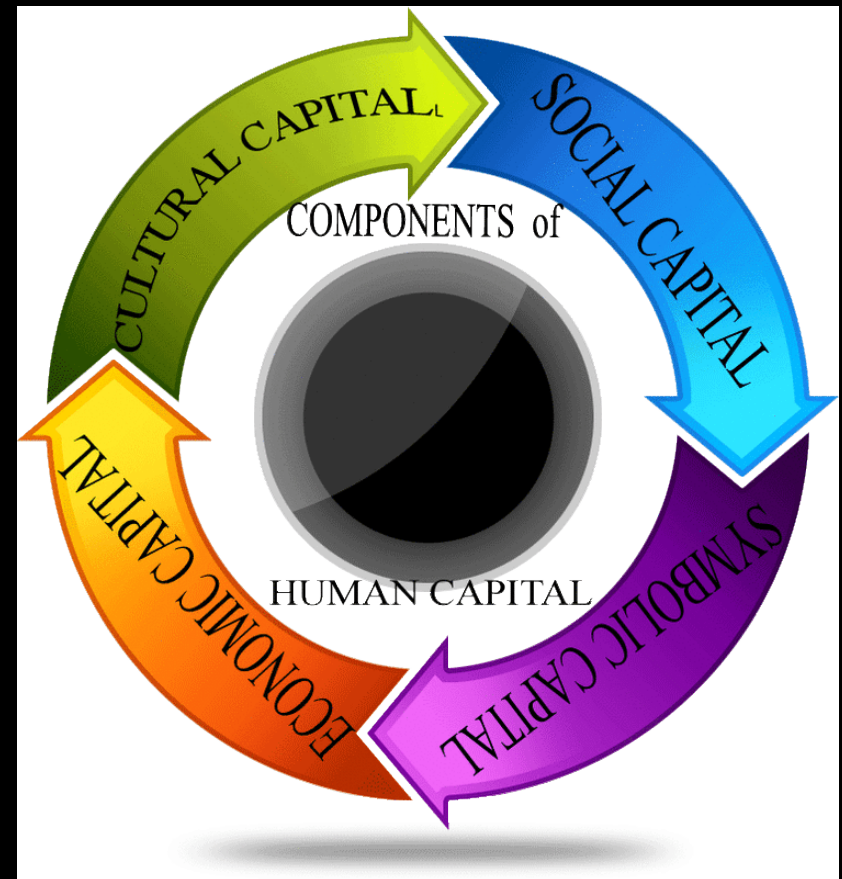
- Strategies or resources used to make the social agent's position in its field clear
- Agents are able to exercise more power & influence in a certain field through judicious use of capital



Roman hoard from the Hague

Capital

- **Cultural capital:** culturally acquired experience & knowledge
- **Symbolic capital:** socially ascribed power, prestige, honour
- **Economic capital:** material resources
- **Social Capital:** who you know



Praxis

- How daily actions are performed & embodied
- Practice theory: analyses repetitive practices in daily life
- Explores relationship between human action(s) & society
- Social phenomena which we observe archaeologically are the result of the actions of intentional individual actions
 - Peopling the past



Red Polished jug

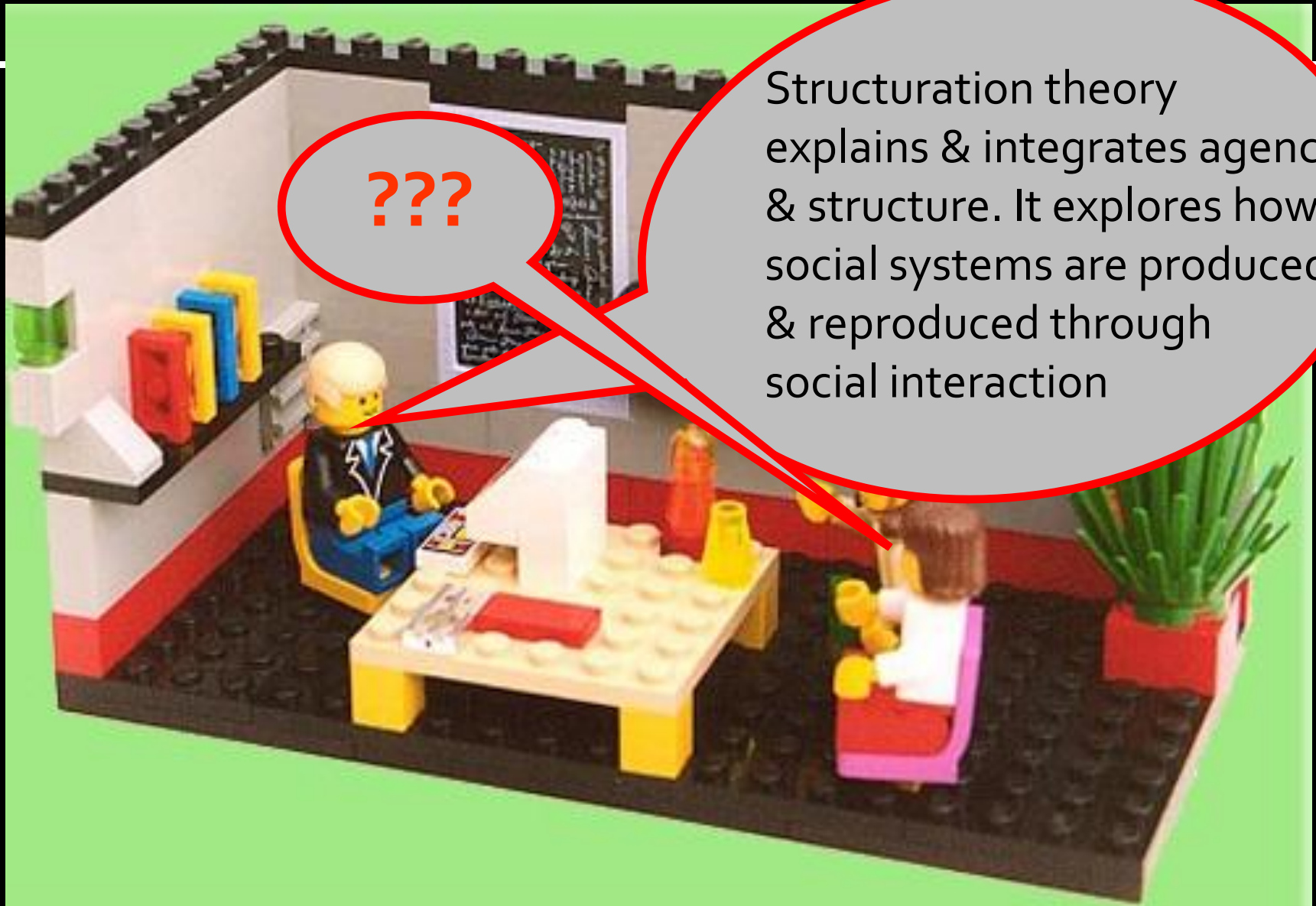
Incorporating Practice

- Actions, bodily practices, gestures
- Individuals learn certain postures, gestures, actions at the hearth
 - They know these subconsciously
 - These convey information of status, identity
- Connerton (1989): gestures & postures are important for communal memory: ritual performance
- Mnemonics of the body



Bichrome jug: depiction of warrior

Giddens and Structuration

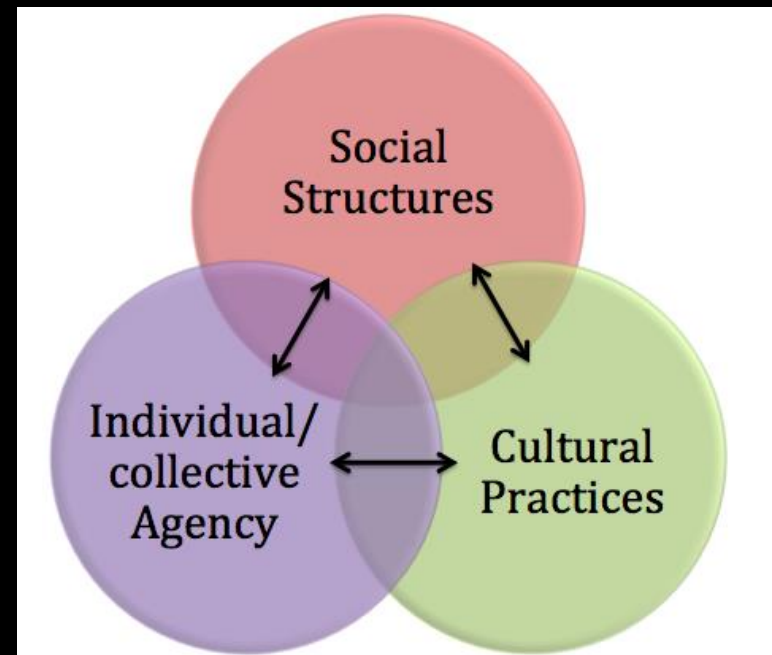


Structuration

- Social practices are ordered across time & space
- Human social activities are recursive & are continually recreated by social actors
- In, & through their actions, agents reproduce (& maybe alter) the conditions that make these activities possible
- Human actors/agents have **reflexive capacity**. Therefore they have the capacity to understand what they do as they do it

Structuration

- Human agency & social structure are not two separate concepts or constructs, but are two ways of considering social action
- Duality of structures:
 - Culturally situated actors who undertake social action & interaction in various situations
 - The rules, resources & social relationships that are produced & reproduced in social interaction



Structuration

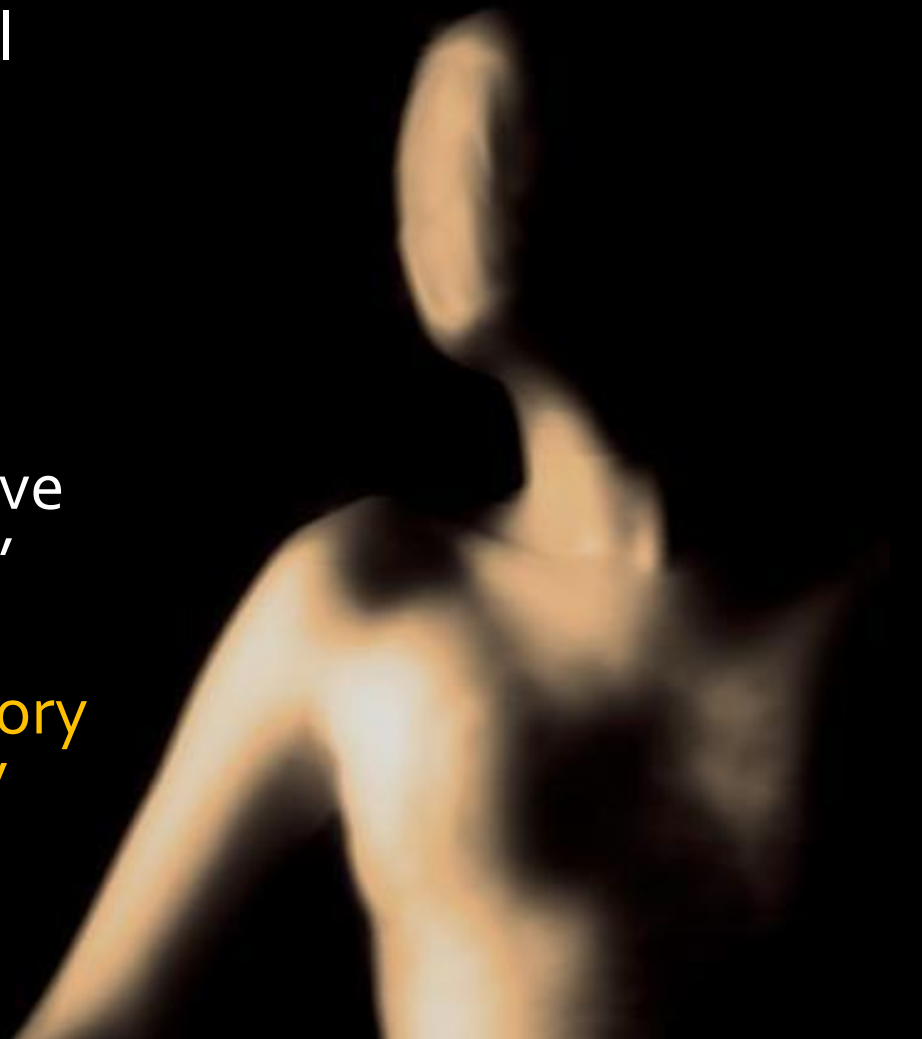
- Major social [structural] change can be brought about by the accumulation of many small & daily acts of change...
- Human action effects social change



Red Polished model of plough scene

Structuration

- Members of society are social actors / agents
- They make decisions & enact social practices...
- “People know the world they inhabit, & they rework that knowledge through their active engagement with that world” (Barrett 1994: 36)
- Moving away from “a prehistory of genderless, faceless blobs” (Tringham 1991: 97)



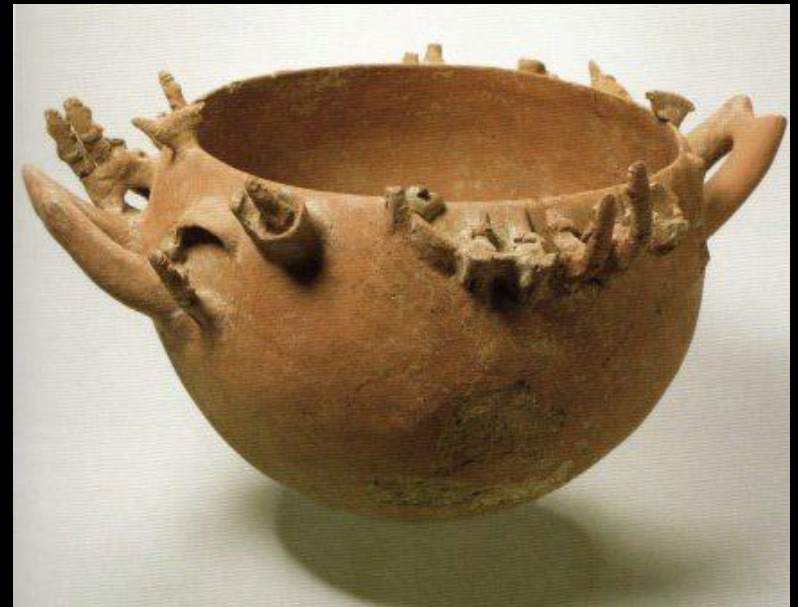
Agency

- Agency is action:
 - Doing / being
- The ability to effect change
 - Unconscious and/or involuntary behaviour
 - Purposeful or goal directed activity/ intentional
 - Autonomous acts or actions of self-consciously active human
- Intentionality is not a prerequisite to agency



Implications for the Household

- Examining an essentially static archaeological record
- Tringham's faceless blobs
- How can we identify people's actions & even engender the past?



Kalavassos bowl

Summary

- Social archaeology gives us way in which we can attempt to people the past
- Two key theoretical approaches:
 - A theory of practice: habitus
 - Structuration theory
- Focuses on human action / agency
 - Leads us to concept of object agency