

QUOTATION

PIERRE BOURDIEU ON INTERACTING WITH CONTINGENCIES (HABITUS) AND VERBALLY GOVERNED BEHAVIOR

Since the habitus, the virtue made of necessity¹, is a product of the incorporation of objective necessity, it produces strategies² which, even if they are not produced by consciously aiming at explicitly formulated goals on the basis of an adequate knowledge of objective conditions, nor by the mechanical determination exercised by causes, turn out to be objectively adjusted to the situation. Action guided by a “feel for the game” has all the appearances of the rational action that an impartial observer, endowed with all the necessary information and capable of mastering it rationally, would deduce.

... The conditions of rational calculation are practically never given in practice: time is limited, information is restricted, etc. And yet agents *do* do, much more often than if they were behaving randomly, “the only thing to do.” This is because, following the intuitions of a “logic of practice” which is the product of a lasting exposure to conditions similar to those in which they are placed, they anticipate the necessary immanent in the way of the world.

¹ The sociologist discovers the necessity, the constraint of social conditions and conditioning, right in the very heart of the “subject,” in the form of what I have called the habitus.

² This word, strategies, evidently has to be stripped of its naively teleological connotations: types of behavior can be directed towards certain ends without being consciously directed towards these ends, or determined by them.

From: Bourdieu, P. (1990). *In other words: Essays towards a reflexive sociology* (pp. 9, 11, 15). Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

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