

# BODY HEALTH AND SOCIETY

SUMMARY

# OUTLINE

- organization: assessment
- bringing the concepts together
- exercise – homework
- final assesment examples
- revision



# ORGANIZATION

- absences
- synopses
- essay topic + bibliography
  - essay design?
  - what is the literature in the essay good for?
- Questions?

# SUMMARY

- body biological
- body and social dis/order
  - exercising power- shaping bodies: body social – body political
- biosocial differentiation of bodies

# REVISION

## THEROTETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

1. Introduction: body – a biological entity?
2. Techniques of the body (Marcel Mauss): body – first **instrument** of a man – socially coded
3. The two bodies (Mary Douglas): body – metaphor of society – exchange of **meanings** physical x social
  - Correspondance of social and individual norms
4. Embodied information in face-to-face interaction (Erwing Goffmann): body – product of social **interaction** – symbolic world creation – shaping the behavior
5. **Habitus**, body as both, the outcome and structuring principle (Loic Wacquant - Pierre Bourdieu): body – product and driving force of social structuring
6. Docile bodies (Michel Foucault): body – **disciplined** according to the needs of social and political order, self-mastery
7. **Embodiment** (Robert Murphy): body – locus of culture, perception and habitus grounded in body
9. Body as a discourse negotiation (Emily Martin)
10. Body as a locus of cultural resistance (Aihwa Ong)
11. Body – a central nod in a symbolic and social structure (Nancy Scheper Hughes)
12. Bodies incommensurable and the menopause (Margaret Lock): body – product of biosocial differentiation

# DIFFERENCES?

2. **Techniques of the body** (Marcel Mauss): body – first **instrument** of a man – socially coded
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9. Body as a **discourse** negotiation (Emily Martin)

# EXERCISE

Choose one of the following topics:

- Gender
- Beauty
- Illness
- Eating
- Health
- Sexual behavior
- Death

**Explain (/ give an example) them using all of the discussed concepts**

- **Body techniques** – habitual learning: learning to eat
- **Social body** – social categories: to eat correct; polite - smacking
- **Body interaction** – social interaction: to eat correct; polite - smacking
- **Habitus** – social structure – individual habitus: taste; to eat correct/polite/well
- **Docile bodies** – historical development of the disciplinarian of eating: how society discipline population/ individuals
- **Embodiment** – how is culture embodied

# SOCIAL BODY

## MARY DOUGLAS: SOCIAL BODY - UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCE

„The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. Through physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of other. As a result of this interaction the body, itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The forms it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in manifold ways. The care that is given to it, in grooming, feeding and therapy, the theories about what it needs in the way of sleep and exercise, about the stages it should go through, the pains it can stand, its span of life, all the cultural categories in which it is perceived must correlate closely with the categories in which society is seen insofar as these also draw upon the same culturally processed idea of body.“ (Douglas in Fraser – Greco, 2005: 78)

- „Social body limits the ways the physical body is perceived.“
- „Physical experiences of body are always modified by social categories, through which the body is understood, support certain understanding of society.“ (Douglas 2003: 66 in Soukup 2014)



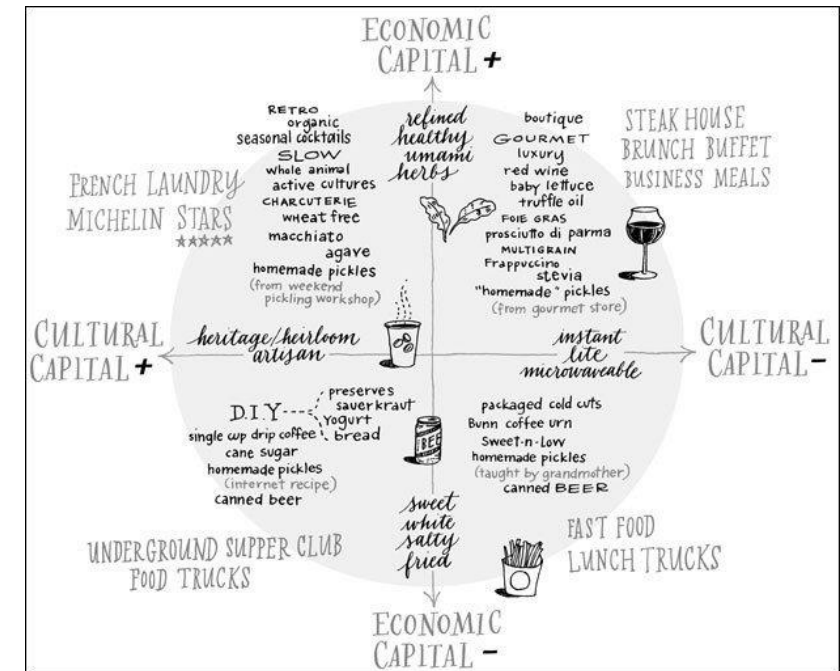
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# BOURDIEU: HABITUS AND SOCIAL FIELD

(RŮŽIČKA – VAŠÁT 2011)

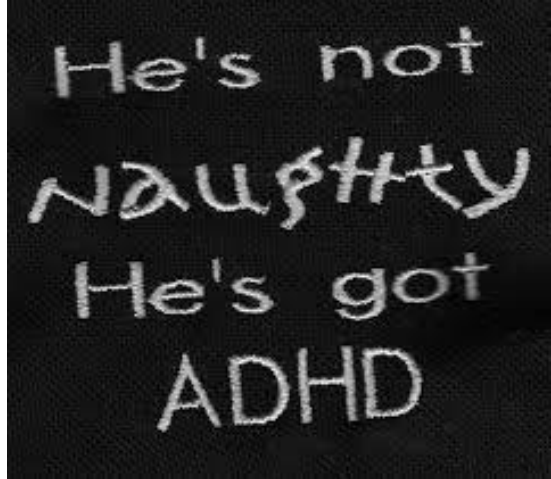
Strategy, through which actors and institutions live (and fight)... depend on positions they occupy in the structure of the field – i.e. depend on the distribution of specific symbolic capital... and on dispositions which constitute habitus... On the extend till which they want to maintain or change the current distribution – and there fore the rules of the game (Bourdieu 1986: 183)



# THE BODY POLITIC

(SCHEPER-HUGHES, LOCK 1987)

- aspect of **power and control in the relation between individual and social body**
  - social body is not just a social representation of a natural individual body, social and individual bodies are structured with power and control
- **Mary Douglas – Body politics and borders**
  - state of danger – widening social control
  - the borders between an individual and society – blurring; around an individual and society are strengthening
  - →→clean, strong, prepared, healthy society – through ... individuals
  - group regulation in vs. out
    - witches, gypsies, disabled, religiously/ politically alternative
  - individual body regulation in vs. out
    - beliefs connected with a lost of blood, semen, milk, tears



## Culture as a discipline which provides code for disciplining of the individual body according to the needs of social and political order

- medicine, criminal law, psychiatry, modern sciences

→ changes in organization of the social and public life in industrial societies (disappearing of the traditional expression of individual and social dissatisfaction) → enabling medicine and psychiatry to gain a hegemony in taking care (and being responsible) for defining human discomfort (Scheper-Hughes, Lock 1987)

The development of the human sciences resulted in society becoming the object of scientific observation. 'Human behaviour became . . . a problem to be analysed and resolved' . . . [leading to behaviour becoming bound up] with 'mechanisms of power' (Foucault 1988:106). The establishment of normative standards creates the conditions for the development of the forms of self-mastery and self-regulation necessary to successfully govern free and civilised citizens (Rose 1996). The role of the state, therefore, is to create the conditions for a form of personal autonomy and citizenship which incorporates responsibility for oneself and for dependent others through adoption of these norms. (Collyer 2015)