

A new way to understand urban-rural relations: Habitus studies of rural places

VANDA JÓVÉR¹

Abstract

“Taken for-granted divisions of geographic space (such as centre and periphery) must be viewed according to BOURDIEU, as the effect of distance in social space, i.e. the unequal distribution of the different kinds of capital in geographical space” – as REED-DANAHAY, D. (2020, 17) puts it in their book about the spatial aspect of Pierre BOURDIEU’s action theory. Field, social space, capital, disposition, and habitus are all essential components of BOURDIEU’s theory, but what about places? This paper focuses on the importance of geographical space, place and scales in a habitus analysis and tries to show the possibilities the concept of habitus can offer in spatial studies. While research on the relationship between BOURDIEU’s concept of habitus and spatiality is becoming increasingly popular (BERGER, V. 2018; Németh, K. 2020; REED-DANAHAY, D. 2020), still few scholars (e.g. MÁTÉ, É. *et al.* 2022) undertake place-based habitus analyses. The present paper aims to provide an overview of the international academic discourse on place-based (in this case mainly rural) habitus analysis. Considering a dozen empirical studies from different perspectives and in different geographical areas, I focus on the specificities of habitus analysis in rural places. After briefly introducing the concept of habitus and its critiques, I will describe the characteristics of habitus studies in rural places by presenting various views. Then, I will show how the relationship between rural and urban habitus studies suggests that habitus does indeed contribute to the persistence of urban-rural structures.

Keywords: habitus, Bourdieu’s action theory, urban-rural structures, rural places

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Introduction

According to LIPSTADT, habitus studies can be considered “the spatial studies of lives” (LIPSTADT, H. 2008, 38). These studies focus on the habitus of the individual, which is significantly shaped by the determining role of family and education. Some interpretations (REED-DANAHAY, D. 2020) have argued that spatiality is an essential aspect of BOURDIEU’s concept of habitus, while only a few studies have so far emphasized the importance of place (e.g. LINDNER, R. 2003; NEUHAUS, F. 2015; MÁTÉ, É. *et al.* 2022). Among the place-based habitus studies, the present study focuses mainly on studies related to rural places. Since urban space is often used as a

reference point in studies of rural places, I will also briefly mention the role of urban space in shaping the habitus of rural places.

As well as using the concept of habitus as a theoretical framework, the analysis of the difference between rural places and urban places has long been addressed for a long time in social sciences. Studies used different perspectives to explore the components of the urban-rural relationship, including the few studies of place-based habitus that have been conducted in the last two decades. These works try to capture the relationship between place and habitus by interpreting BOURDIEU’s much-debated concept of habitus in diverse ways. The present paper aims to provide an overview of the international aca-

¹ Doctoral School of Earth Science, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Pázmány Péter sétány 1/a. H-1117 Budapest, Hungary. E-mail: vanda.jover(at)hotmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6668-6082>

demic discourse on place-based (in this case mainly rural) habitus analysis. After presenting the approach and its critiques, I will illustrate the possibilities of applying the concept of habitus as a theoretical framework in research on places. By comparing the defining elements of the methods and interpretations of the habitus of rural places that emerge from each study, I interpret the relationship between urban and rural habitus. As a result, I draw attention to novel aspects of habitus analysis that can contribute to understanding rural-urban relations.

Methodology

This study aims to comprehensively analyse the possibilities of interpreting the habitus of (rural) places. The concept of habitus, often disputed due to specific conceptual weaknesses, offers several different interpretations, mainly related to time and space. The present study does not aim to define habitus. It, however, undertakes to present different interpretations of habitus to show how the use of its concept as a theoretical framework can contribute to an understanding of differences, that are place-based. Using the Jstor database (January 2022), I will try to shed light on the particularities of habitus research in rural areas and of rural habitus itself in the light of twelve empirical studies (plus one rather theoretical approach from DIRKSMEIER, P. 2006).

My paper is based on the different interpretations of habitus depending on the researchers' stance and the subject, method, and conclusion of the research. I filtered for the common usage of words 'rural' and 'habitus' in the abstract, since geographical space, and above all rurality, is a key element in the present analysis. This study analyses all search results without exception, regardless of discipline (*Table 1*).

The articles analysed here were all written after the year 2000, mainly by sociologists and anthropologists, the research areas are varied. In my view, it is important to underline that the studies analysed here all highlight the dimension of the place. Many interpretations of BOURDIEU'S concept tend to be more concerned with definitional precision, often ignoring the spatial aspects of habitus. In contrast, the present paper focuses on the possibilities arising from examining the relationship between habitus and (rural) places.

The concept of habitus and some of its critiques

In the second half of the 20th century, Pierre BOURDIEU developed the first comprehensive description of his theory to understand similar patterns of action (BOURDIEU, P. 1977 [originally written in French, first published in 1972]). Habitus, which is part of BOURDIEU'S theory of action, is also commonly used in

*Table 1. The authors of the empirical studies analysed here**

Published	Authors	Research field	Research area
2001	ILAHIANE, H.	Anthropology	Ziz Valley (Morocco)
2004	CORBETT, M.	Sociology	Nova Scotia (Canada)
2005	BENDER, S.	Anthropology	Japan
2008	FUNNELL, R.	Sociology	Southwest Queensland
2009	WATT, P.	Urban Studies	Essex (England)
2010	PINI, B., PRICE, R. and McDONALD, P.	Sociology	Queensland (Australia)
2012	BENSON, M. and JACKSON, E.	Sociology	London neighbourhoods
2014	KOO, A., MING, H. and TSANG, B.	Sociology	Hebei province (China)
2014	SEEGER, V.	Education Sciences	Western China
2015	LING, M.	Anthropology	Shanghai neighbourhoods
2016	LAI, L.	Anthropology	Rural China
2019	REQUENA-I-MORA, M. and MORENO, G.M.	Sociology	Spain

*With the date of publication, and the author's research field.

everyday language, with a history of the concept going back to the work of Aristotle. In one of BOURDIEU's formulations (2009), habitus is a system of enduring dispositions that, drawing on experience, functions as a pattern of perception, evaluation, and action in every moment of the present. In BOURDIEU's view, actions are often explained by examining the 'coercive and constraining' effects of social structure (for more on this, see FÁBER, Á. 2017). In BOURDIEU's interpretation, habitus plays a key role in the cementing of existing inequalities. BOURDIEU argues that everyone has a habitus, which can be interpreted as a stable framework of action. Habitus, thus, forms similar individual and social patterns of practice based on experience. But this action frame does not mean a static fixedness of experience of the past, it also gives the possibility to react to the impulses of the present.

Although habitus is not one of BOURDIEU's best-known concepts, it is undoubtedly the most controversial, mainly because of its latent determinism (REAY, D. 2004). The concept of habitus has mostly been criticized (KING, A. 2000) for providing an "overdetermined explanation of social action" (JACKSON, P. 2008, 165), essentially ignoring the factor of individual freedom of choice. BOURDIEU, P. (1990) describes habitus as a limited number of choices that the agent can make. The same habitus can lead to different actions, in which the 'field' associated with the action plays a significant role. In BOURDIEU's words, "practice is the result of a dialectical relationship between situation and habitus" (BOURDIEU, P. 2009, 213).

The field in question, like habitus, is part of the conceptual framework of BOURDIEU's practice theory. In BOURDIEU's theory of action, fields constitute the 'objective' structural system of social space. The fields interact through their specific 'rules of the game' with both the action and the habitus. The habitus itself is activated through contact with the field and results in different practices depending on the context (FÁBER, Á. 2018). An important attribute of fields is that they are "things that objectively exist in reality and can be examined by empirical methods" (FÁBER, Á. 2018,

68). Interpreting the interrelationship between field and habitus, the field can be imagined as a social medium, for example, the scientific field, where specific rules of the game prevail. The agent's habitus reacts with this field to produce practices that conform to the field's set of rules. This does not mean, of course, that the same habitus in interaction with other fields cannot lead to different actions, nor does it mean that the practices typically adopted in a given field are compatible with the rule system of other fields. In FÁBER's interpretation of BOURDIEU, habitus "operates without problems only in the context in which it has been acquired" (FÁBER, Á. 2018, 57).

Conceptual considerations for understanding the habitus of rural places

Besides, the critiques highlighted above, of particular interest here are those related to the application of the habitus concept in geography. In their debate with ENTRIKIN, J.N. (2001) and CASEY, E.S. (2001) on habitus, ENTRIKIN argues that the use of BOURDIEU's concept in geography (1990) leads to misunderstandings, not only of the individual's relationship to space but also of key concepts such as place and space. The concept of habitus assumes that agents in similar positions within a given field can be associated with similar dispositions and hence similar actions (JACKSON, P. 2008). This leaves us wondering how we can attribute a habitus to a neighbourhood, or even a village, and what relationship habitus has to space in general. In various studies of habitus, the influence of family, education, or work often plays a role, but *physical* space is relegated to the background of the analysis. If we assume, as BERGER puts it, that "habitus is created by incorporating the constraints of social space" (BERGER, V. 2018, 142), and if we consider "appropriated" physical space or even a particular place, as social, then we must take into account not only the constraints of social space in the Bourdieusian sense but also the character of the space or the place itself. (Social reality, according to BOURDIEU, is objec-

tified in appropriated physical space, for more on this see BOURDIEU, P. 1996.) Appropriated physical space, whether we think of the relations within a city or the rural-urban divide, is “similarly like fields, a space of struggle” (BERGER, V. 2018, 149). Considering this further, “habitus guides spatial practices and the shaping of spaces” (BERGER, V. 2018, 148), creating certain structures, and we can assume that these structures also reflect on the habitus that creates them. In my opinion, it may be a conceptual gap to attribute a certain habitus to a concrete place, but the study of habitus in relation to place wants to draw attention to the fact that space or place can also have a structuring, habitus-forming effect, a specific set of rules that essentially shape practice.

According to REED-DANAHAY, D. (2020), the concept of habitus is BOURDIEU’S most important contribution to spatial studies (which is not exclusively limited to social space) and can shed light on the links between social practices and (appropriated) physical space. REED-DANAHAY even concludes in their interpretation of habitus that it is almost inseparable from spatiality. As BOURDIEU argues “social space tends to be translated, with more or less distortion, into physical space” (BOURDIEU, P. 2000, 134). Consequently, habitus, which is closely related to the position in social space, is also linked to physical space. In REED-DANAHAY’S interpretation, for BOURDIEU “social space is an underlying structure of symbolic classification that is expressed and constructed by the positioning of and relationships between habitus and physical space” (REED-DANAHAY, D. 2020, 16). In the following, I will show that considering the empirical studies discussed here, research in rural areas shows specificities not only in the methods of analysis but also in the interpretation of habitus.

Different perceptions of habitus in rural settings – Literature review

Researchers of habitus have used various methods to reconstruct the creation and

persistence of spatial and social structures. In spatial studies, there have been few examples of analogous studies, and most of them have focused on urban space (e.g. LINDNER, R. 2003; NEUHAUS, F. 2015). In urban habitus, the daily routine appears as a part of habitus to a different extent (NEUHAUS, F. 2015), i.e., a set of semi-consciously repeated daily actions, like going to work or shopping. In contrast, the authors focus on other elements in the rural habitus, such as the role of family, tradition, or work in shaping the habitus. Studies of urban habitus tend to focus on the functioning of the city and the impulses that affect it, while the increasingly competitive field of cities requires diversity and specificity to be marketable. (Although not using the concept of habitus, building on lifestyles, attitudes and daily activities FABULA, Sz. *et al.* [2021] illustrates essentially similar results on urban diversity.) Consequently, the habitus of cities presents a more colourful, less uniform picture than that of the rural habitus, in which general preconceptions of the city and urban existence play an important role. Urban and rural concepts, however, coincide in the analysis that habitus is based on opposing dispositions. Rural habitus cannot be characterized regardless of the urban habitual elements, and also the characteristics of cities or urban districts can be better interpreted in the light of the rural habitual elements.

Considering the studies discussed here, the rural habitus gives the impression of a counterpart to DIRKSMEIER’S specific conception of the urban habitus. DIRKSMEIER, P. (2006) relates urban habitus in general to the capital of the individual living in the city. (According to BOURDIEU’S (1990) theory, every individual has capital that is not necessarily material but can be economic, symbolic, or cultural). In DIRKSMEIER’S theory, ‘urban behaviour’ is a kind of surplus on the scale of an individual’s capital. The extent of the surplus may vary according to the perception of a given urban space and may accordingly influence the individual’s position in the social space. In this interpretation, the acquisition of ‘urbanity’ (certain habits, behaviours, dialects)

may represent a capital surplus for an individual living in a rural area, even if no real change in the individual's social status occurs (for more about the habitus as 'social sense of place', see NÉMETH, K. 2020). Take, for example, the memorable 'up-and-coming' figure in classic literature, Julien Sorel, who expected his spatial mobility to lead to progress in social space. Moving from the countryside to the city or from a small town to the capital can often mean an increase in cultural capital and prestige. These indicate above all the acquisition of a set of tools ('place-based cultural capital') that makes the agent compatible with the new environment. An example could also be Pierre BOURDIEU, who "from a rural family in the South of France, became an emblematic figure in French intellectual and scientific life" (FABER, Á. 2017, 45), and in the process, BOURDIEU's habitus underwent an organic change. This could also imply that the possession of a rural and an urban habitus are mutually exclusive, with the individual either possessing the 'surplus capital' of urbanity or not.

As in the case of urban spaces, stigmatization and selective belonging can be observed in rural studies. Selective belonging is a form of response to stigmatization (WACQUANT, L. 2007) when a group of residents of a neighbourhood with a dubious reputation wants to distance themselves from the community. To do so, they draw cognitive (or even tangible) boundaries around themselves to portray their neighbourhood as better situated (WATT, P. 2009). Whether it is the Ziz Valley in Morocco (ILAHIANE, H. 2001), or Peckham in London (BENSON, M. and JACKSON, E. 2012), habitus can play a key role in the (de)valuation of certain places. Conscious reflection, based on which the agent shapes their actions, clothing, etc. to 'fit the place', can over time become semi-conscious, and automatic. This mechanism impacts the 'quality' of the place, contributing to the maintenance of existing structures. This is not only a feature of cities and neighbourhoods but can also be observed in rural areas, within or between municipalities, and can be the basis of segregation.

People with different 'place-based' habitus can often no longer recall the real cause of the conflict over time. Their experiences in the past persist in their habitus and influence the structures of the present. In the words of JACKSON, habitus can be "a central mechanism in the reproduction of political, social, and economic structures" (JACKSON, P. 2008, 166).

Exploring rural habitus – Different approaches to ruralism

In the following, I present the defining elements of the rural habitus. By highlighting the different interpretations of habitus according to the researcher's views, as well as the object, method, and conclusion of the research, I will try to show how the concept of habitus can help to understand spatial differences. In their study of habitus in Morocco, ILAHIANE, H. (2001) focuses on a marginal social group, the Haratin (freed slaves), living in an area close to the Sahara. They consider habitus as a norm of action that drives the individual to do the 'right thing'. Hence, the practice is a product of habitus, and the agent reproduces the belief about the right action, excluding the possibility of other *modus operandi*. The author presents, through in-depth interviews and by reflecting on historical factors, the coexistence of three groups of people who have lived in the same area for a long time, the Arabs, the Berbers, and the Haratins. The Haratin people have historically been an 'oppressed' social group, like women, but gradually gained the right to land ownership and political representation as a result of French colonialism. Despite the change in power relations, however, the ever more common hostility towards each other and the discourse of 'us and them' has not decreased but come to the forefront. According to the formerly 'privileged' inhabitants, the habitus of the Haratins stigmatizes the perception of the whole region, and they foresee the birth of a new Somalia. Here, the image of Somalia is being used by politicians as a negative vision. (For more on the spa-

tial dimensions of fear produced by politics and Othering, see SÁGI, M. 2022a.) Despite the disappearance of legal distinctions, the society living here does not question the negative preconceptions of the other side, and the antagonism is deeply embedded in their actions. ILAHIANE, H. (2001), in their interpretation of habitus, sees the individual as highly vulnerable to the habitus of their group, which may be explained by the strong structuring influence of religion. Despite the economic capital and power acquired by the Haratins, 'Monsieur le Capital and Madame de la Terre', in Marx's words, still haunt the habitus of the villages of the Ziz Valley (ILAHIANE, H. 2001).

FUNNELL, R. (2008) has researched the role of rural habitus in individual decisions in small rural towns in Southwest Queensland. In their interpretation, habitus is not a pure academic concept. FUNNELL draws attention to rural forms of disposable capital, which can be sharply divided along the lines of biological sex. The body and the experiential capital that is embedded in it play a key role in their study of local men. Similar to FUNNELL, R., BENDER, S. (2005) writes about the importance of embodied capital. He examined the relationship between body and place in a Japanese community, analysing the tradition of "Taiko" drumming. Of the studies analysed here, BENDER's research highlighted the most the importance of embodied capital and the connection between 'local bodies' and 'local places'. The body capital gained in rural places, the experience of physical work in a rural environment, and a strong physique are difficult to build on in the context of urban living because they are not necessarily advantageous for administrative work traditionally associated with cities. FUNNELL, R. (2008) highlights not primarily the social structures in rural areas but the prejudices against urban life, which make holders of capital acquired through agricultural activity stay due to the limited utility of their experience. The author, like BOURDIEU, argues for the role of education, and gender, in shaping habitus.

Similarly, the close link between rural habitus and agriculture is emphasized in another study of rural Australia (PINI, B. *et al.* 2010). In their study, the authors analyse the emergence of certain categories, such as the rural working class, and the role of education, constructed in the context of the urban-rural contrast. They, like FUNNELL, R. (2008), describe gender, the development of physical skills instead of theoretical knowledge acquired in school, and, in this context, the body with its embedded habitus as key factors in the rural habitus. This form of embodied capital is a recurrent element in habitus linked to rural places, which, in contrast to urban habitus analyses, divides habitus according to gender. In the authors' approach, education and teachers have a great responsibility in shaping the construction of rural areas, whether encouraging or cautioning students to continue their education. Their point of view reflects the assumption that for the individual, further education is likely to open the way to an urban habitus.

CORBETT, M. (2004) examines, in their work on Nova Scotia, a frequent conclusion of policy analyses, which argues that the primary cause of rural 'underdevelopment' is the under-education of rural youth. Through in-depth interviews, they describe the quality of 'place-bounded cultural capital' that plays a decisive role in decision-making through the habitus of interviewees. The issue of gender is also important in CORBETT's (2004) study, where they characterize educational institutions as traditionally gendered. They argue that women in the study have fewer opportunities to make a living through physical labour, and, thus, more women typically take their chances on the school benches. (Similarly to CORBETT, albeit with a different approach was taken, TIMÁR, J. and VELKEY, G. [2016] write about the structuring effect of gender on the migration decisions of people living in rural spaces.) Considering women's experiences in the field, CORBETT, M. describes the school as a choice that generally offers the possibility of social and spatial mobility. In school, the individual gains the-

oretical knowledge from unfamiliar places rather than practical knowledge from the place they know, i.e., ‘alienation’. CORBETT concludes that the educational system and the place-bound habitus work against each other, with place-bound cultural capital, seemingly conflicting through education-acquired uniformed capital, opening the way to disaffiliation.

REQUENA-I-MORA, M. and MORENO, G.M. (2019) investigated environmental awareness in the habitus of a rural community in Spain by conducting in-depth interviews. They described rural communities as generally less wasteful, although the people they interviewed rarely described themselves as environmentalists. According to the authors, environmental awareness is not a conscious good deed in rural areas, but merely a mode of action ingrained as a result of socialization. Taking their conclusions further, the same element of habitus, environmental behaviour, can be both reflexive and unconscious, depending on the place. What is a conscious pattern of action in the case of the urban socialized agent (although it may become routine over time) is a natural way of practice in the rural habitus, the individuals do not reflect on their actions in this way, nor do they identify themselves as environmentalists.

Whether it is the study of the formation of an individual’s life course or the habitus of place, agricultural activity is a recurrent element in the rural concepts of habitus mentioned in this paper. The Moroccan conflict referred to above was based on the distinct roles played by certain ethnic groups in agriculture, historically established and long legally regulated, while others contrasted rural cultural capital with urban cultural capital. The rural habitus, in the light of these studies, limits the capital that can be acquired by the agent, who, by choosing to try urban life, forgoes the knowledge offered by tradition and picks up an urban habitus. In the urban context, the rural habitus and its capital seem to be incompatible with action. Considering these studies there is an equivalence between rural habitus, agricul-

tural activity, and the identification of rural areas, which contributes significantly to the low prestige of rural cultural capital in an urban context. According to FUNNELL, R. (2008), the traditional division of labour in rural habitus remains unchanged despite its change with the restructuring of agriculture. In their statement, FUNNELL, R. couples the urban-rural relation with the dimension of the ‘agriculture-industry contrast’, one of the most dominant elements in the construction of the countryside. Perhaps one of the most important findings of the studies analysed here is that almost all of them show urban habitus and the quality of urban capital forms over rural ones. This raises further questions about habitus’ role in preserving differences, given that the habitus studies themselves assume a strongly questionable hierarchical relationship.

The above-mentioned habitus studies, however, do not reveal what kind of habitus is eventually created by multiple migrations between urban and rural areas over the course of life, whether there is a transition between the two, or what commuting entails (for more on this, see NÉMETH, K. 2020). In their study on habitus, KOO, A. *et al.* (2014) analyse the impact of migration on the individual. Their interviewees are school-age children who, during their studies, are forced to relocate to large cities due to their parents’ pursuit of better income opportunities. They then eventually return to their rural residence due to the specificities of the Chinese education system. Almost all of those interviewed have suffered a decline in their academic performance after returning to their school of origin, and their cultural capital gained in the city has not been of use in the rural school. To achieve what the authors call a ‘higher-qualified’ effect, students who landed at urban schools acquired over time the dialect, dressing habit, and behaviour of the citizens, which were of little value and made integration more difficult upon their return. According to SEEBERG, V. (2014), the disproportionality of the education system is a major contributory factor to the location-dependence of the ability to

build on cultural capital and, thus, cementing the urban-rural divide. LING, M. (2015), writing on the stigmatization of vocational schools, describes a similarly contradictory relationship. While the tastes and dressing of students from rural places change, the biggest tension is caused by the change in their work preferences. By studying in an urban school, students prefer indoor office work, which LING, M. (2015) sees as conflicting with the state's agenda of reproducing low-skilled service workers. The results of these studies suggest that not only the rural habitus is not adaptable to an urban context but also those with an urban habitus have difficulties in thriving in rural areas, and, thus, calling into question the hierarchical relationship suggested by previous findings.

During mobility, the context of action changes, not only the place where the action takes place but also the field. Whether mobility is a commute or a permanent change of location, the reflection on the changed context affects the individual's habitus if the action toolkit they possess is not compatible with the new context. In addition, going back to the stable nature of habitus described above, it is important to mention NÉMETH's argument (2022) about HADAS' concept of plural habitus (HADAS, M. 2021), according to which if habitus is constantly changing, how can it be defined as a (more or less) stable system of dispositions? BOURDIEU, P. assumed (in REED-DANAHAY's interpretation, 2020) that the individual longs to feel at home and that mobility is linked to the feeling of happiness that this implies. Those who choose to migrate or commute in the hope of a 'better life' may acquire a very particular habitus. The newly emerging secondary framework of action, often called the split habitus, can prevent individuals from feeling 'at home' and comfortable in the spatial and social context in which they act. As a result of spatial mobility, the actor needs multiple sets of tools (for more on this, see HADAS, M. 2021). Moving between places often creates a sense of being an outsider, in essence never really feeling at home (REED-DANAHAY, D. 2020).

Certain habitus-shaping factors, such as gender, race or class, and capital embedded in the body, are more strongly reflected in rural than in urban habitus studies. The authors of the habitus studies presented above (ILAHIANE, H. 2001; FUNNELL, R. 2008; PINI, B. *et al.* 2010) analyse the role of habitus almost exclusively in shaping men's choices. Rural habitus in their reflection is characterized not only by the dominant element of agriculture but also (perhaps due to the individual positioning of the researchers) by masculine dominance and certain invisibility of other genders. The importance of gender in shaping habitus has been stressed by BOURDIEU, P. and by those who have further developed his concept (MCCLELLAND, K. 1990; REAY, D. 2004). Belonging to gender, or not belonging to the dominant gender, can be embedded in the individual's habitus in a comparable way to belonging to a religion, social class, race, or any group (for more about the powerful structuring effect of gender in urban spaces, see SÁGI, M. 2022b). Habitus leaves its mark on the body through actions, whether it is a strong physique due to physical work or a disposition to do or not to do certain things. The inclusion of geographical space, location, and scales (like the body itself) in a habitus analysis, and the use of the concept of habitus in geography in general, can, in my opinion, make an important contribution to the understanding of existing urban-rural differences.

In the following, I briefly summarize the findings of the empirical habitus studies listed here, with a particular focus on the interpretation of habitus, the methodology, and certain recurrent elements (body, gender, and class) that may contribute to the persistence of urban-rural differences. Furthermore, I am to provide a clearer understanding of the interpretations of the rural habitus, especially in the light of the studies analysed here. On the other hand, if I take into account that for BOURDIEU reality is relational and "places and spaces are defined in relation to each other" (BERGER, V. 2018, 149), then an understanding of urban habits(es) and their study is essential to the analysis of rural habitus.

The majority of the studies listed here try to capture the rural habitus (more precisely, the habitus of different specific places with very similar elements) through the individual or group, mainly based on interviews. Most concentrate on the role of the rural place in shaping individual choices and life courses (CORBETT, M. 2004; FUNNELL, R. 2008; PINI, B. *et al.* 2010; KOO, A. *et al.* 2014; SEEBERG, V. 2014; LING, M. 2015). They seek to show how the rural habitus (and the associated embodied agricultural capital, weak exchange-valued symbolic capital, family demands, etc.) contributes to the maintenance of existing structures. Similarly, ILAHIANE, H. (2001), BENDER, S. (2005), WATT, P. (2009), BENSON, M. and JACKSON, E. (2012), and REQUENA-I-MORA, M. and MORENO, G.M. (2019) examine the persistence of structures through habitus, but they focus on practices rather than life course. The dimension of time appears in a completely different way in these studies, but they also highlight the structuring role of habitus. However, I would highlight two of the studies listed, which use a different method of analysis, moving away from the individual. Both SHAVIT and LAI look at a specific mediator (SHAVIT, Z. [2013] websites, LAI, L. [2016] the spaces of a traditional home) and use them to demonstrate the relationship between place and habitus. I consider that this is a way of overcoming the contradiction that BOURDIEU's notion of habitus is primarily about the individual or the group and that these studies are trying to say something about space, but mostly about specific places.

With varying emphasis, the body is a recurring scale in the studies. BENDER, S. (2005) (connection of local bodies to local places) and PINI, B. *et al.* (2010) (choosing body over mind) are more explicit about embodied capital being inseparable from the place, but others (such as FUNNELL, R. [2008] or REQUENA-I-MORA, M. and MORENO, G.M. [2019]) also write about practices, embodied capital, linked to place. Gender is also a frequent element in close connection with the body, and is an important structuring factor about the rural habitus. The 'traditional' gender roles, the

practices expected of the male body (physical work) and the spaces linked to it, as well as the spaces traditionally associated with women (in these studies, duties linked to the home, or school), determine the forms of capital that can be acquired or that are to be acquired, reinforcing the resulting possible emigration (mainly women) or staying (men).

The most dominant central factor in writings about the conflicting field of urban-rural relations (CORBETT, M. 2004; WATT, P. 2009; PINI, B. *et al.* 2010; BENSON, M. and JACKSON, E. 2012; SHAVIT, Z. 2013; KOO, A. *et al.* 2014; LING, M. 2015; REQUENA-I-MORA, M. and MORENO, G.M. 2019) is class. Class is an important category in SHAVIT's bourgeois construction of the idyllic rural (2013), in WATT's selective belonging of the middle class (2009), in LING's stigmatization of migrant students (2015), in REQUENA-I-MORA's and MORENO's everyday practices of urban post-materialism versus rural poor (2019), in BENSON's and JACKSON's middle-class practices of space-making (2012), etc. They, following BOURDIEU's views, see the rural habitus as the result of a conflictual relationship between dominators and oppressed, which contributes to the maintenance of structures. The oppressor in this relation may be a capital-owning class, or even (as in all the China-focused studies cited here) the state itself. As a result of the symbolic violence exerted by oppressors, rural places, in the light of these studies, can be associated with a number of different socio-spatial constructions of urban-rural relations, from the idyll to the "troubled places" (CORBETT, M. 2004), through post rural (SHAVIT, Z. 2013), or quasi rural (WATT, P. 2009). These are all spatial categories that are closely related to perception, action patterns, and thereby to habitus.

Conclusions

Hence, BOURDIEU's concept of habitus (1990) is difficult to separate from place-boundedness and can, therefore, not only be understood in the context of social space. The rural habitus studies discussed here portray rural

habitus as the agent's capital, which plays a decisive role (depending strongly on factors such as gender or class) in shaping an individual's choices and life course. The analytical aspects of the rural habitus concepts examined here reflect a 'multi-layered' habitus, in which family plays a primary role, followed by educational experience and work, and the role of geographical place is also crucial. Differences in spatial habitus studies may arise from the different choices of study methods (justified by the urban/rural context). Rural habitus studies use in-depth interviews providing a more nuanced understanding of individuals' dispositions than either quantitative (NEUHAUS, F. 2015), or qualitative (MOLOTCH, H. *et al.* 2000; LINDNER, R. 2003) studies in urban spaces.

Overall, the spatial habitus studies show a hierarchical relationship between urban and rural areas. Considering rural habitus analyses, the availability of urban habitus offers the actor more opportunities, while the value of rural capital decreases as one moves away from the rural area. However, urban capital cannot always be utilized in a rural context. To use the metaphor of BLONDEEL, P. (2005), once an individual learns to perceive and behave in a group- and site-specific way, they will be able to read and write the map, whether in a rural or urban area. The relationship between rural and urban habitus studies suggests that habitus does indeed contribute to the persistence of urban-rural structures through the reproduction of social practices. Using habitus as a theoretical framework can help to understand the emergence and reproduction of specific structures and differences in both urban and rural areas.

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