Bounded Relationality

Gender, class and ethnicity as embodied cultural capital and the process of marginalisation.

Thomas M. Schneidhofer[1,2] & Markus Latzke[1]

[1]Interdisciplinary Group for Management and Organisational Behaviour, WU Vienna

Vienna University of Economics and Business

Althanstraße 51, A-1090 Wien

Tel: + 43-1-313-36-4550

Fax: + 43-1-313-36-90-4550

[2]Institute for Sociology

Leibniz University Hanover

Schneiderberg 51, D-30177 Hanover

Tel: + 49-0511-762-5212

For correspondence purposes, please contact either of the authors:

thomas.schneidhofer@wu.ac.at or markus.latzke@wu.ac.at

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Stream: Embedding career in its social, cultural and historical context

Abstract

Conceptualising career fields as the social context within which careers take place, gender, ethnicity and class appear as guises of embodied cultural capital, which has to be related to the respective field and the corresponding habitus. This paper explains the process of marginalisation within the managerial career field. Adapting a theory of practical action originated by Pierre Bourdieu and developed in several research fields, the paper emphasises the relational, and thus historical, transactional, and contextual nature of marginalisation. So doing, it links three levels of analysis (getting marginalised/marginalise, becoming marginalised/marginalise and playing marginalised/marginalising). As a result, the paper shows that marginalisation is bounded by relations, and appears as a social (yet naturalised) consequence of careers.

Introduction

Although much progress towards equal opportunities has been achieved, individuals face multiple forms of inequality, discrimination and exclusion in the course of their professional trajectories called careers (Özbilgin, 2009). Defined as "sequences of job experiences over time" (Arthur/Rousseau, 1996: 3), careers visibly reflect the results of societal mechanisms for rewarding and punishing its members. Careers research, as a consequence, documents marginalising effects of several "historically and culturally contingent" (Prasad *et al.*, 2008: 171) variables like gender, class, or ethnicity. However, there is a call for further theoretical consideration in the field, especially with lenses allowing for acknowledging history and the broader sociocultural dynamics that frame contemporary marginalisation (Prasad *et al.*, 2008: 183).

In recent years, researchers have been re-reading Bourdieu intensively (e.g. McLeod, 2005; Özbilgin/Tatli, 2005a; Vaughan, 2007; Emirbayer/Johnson, 2008). Additionally, they increasingly use his framework for research (e.g. Golsorkhi *et al.*, 2009; Huppatz, 2009; Erel, 2010; Sha *et al.*, 2010) and academic teaching (Barlösius, 2006: 7). Owing partly to problems inherent to social sciences themselves (see Martin, 2003), relational thinking underlying his theories seems to fit contemporary complex times more adequately than any substantialistic alternatives (Emirbayer, 1997; Swartz, 2007). Thus, his theory seems especially promising for explaining marginalisation, for it arguably emphasises power issues underlying marginalisation more precisely.

In this paper, we conceptualise careers relationally as trajectories in a social field. Gender, class, and ethnicity then appear as guises of embodied cultural capital. Hence, marginalisation emerges as a social consequence of the processes appearing on three levels of analysis: first, on the macro-level of analysis of the field, as "getting marginalised (and marginalise)" through the interplay of orthodox and heretic forces engaging in symbolic violence based on the paradox of *doxa* and the resulting androcentric, ethnocentric and sociocentric principles. Second, on the meso-level of analysis of habitus, as "becoming marginalised (and marginalise)" through the janus-faced relations of dispositions, schemas and stereotypes leading to homological reproduction through similarity (principle of homology). Third, on the micro-level of analysis of capital, as "playing marginalised (and marginalising)" through the strategies and position-takings arising from different starting positions represented by capital portfolios, investment and accumulation of capital as well as struggling for conversion rates of one guise of capital in another in order to follow – or challenge – the field's *illusio* restricted by the principle of isotimy.

This has three main advantages: First, it links macro-, meso- and micro-levels of analysis as often called for in careers research (Gunz/Peiperl, 2007). Second, it captures the dynamic nature of marginalisation, for the three processes presented have to be looked at concomitantly, and ever-changing in the course of time. This emphasises the relational and thus historical, transactional and contextual nature of marginalisation, evenly called for in careers research (Judge/Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007: 74). Third, it enables to spare a rational theory of action underlying marginalisation without reducing actors to structural dopes, because the interplay between field, habitus, and capital is non-deterministic yet non-voluntary as well (Lizardo, 2004). As a by-product, the paper contributes to the scepticism arising around the idea of boundaryless career (Rodrigues/Guest, 2010; Dany et al., 2011; Inkson, forthcoming; without ignoring the valuable insights provided by the theory): careers – and as a consequence, marginalisation – are bounded to the relations arising in the field of career, yet with a certain understanding of the term "boundary".

To this end, we first take a look at the literature concerning gender, class/social origin and ethnicity with respect to career issues. This brings us to the concept of intersectionality as well. Subsequently, we outline marginalisation as practice arising on three levels of analysis. Finally, we take a look on all three levels simultaneously, showing why – and how – marginalisation is an expression of bounded relationality.

Gender and Career

A recent handbook ascertains that the research on sex and gender (for an overview, see Alvesson/Billing, 1997; Calás/Smircich, 1996; Powell/Graves, 2003) has "mushroomed[1]" (Benshop, 2006: 275). Careers research is here no exception. Concluding, a recent meta-study (Ng *et al.*, 2005) provided evidence of small but statistically significant disadvantages for women relative to men (cf. Arnold/Cohen, 2008: 21), a result which is transferable to many areas of social life (Zahidi/Ibarra, 2010). Benshop (2006: 281f.) identifies three research lines explaining these differences: First, on a macro level, scholars take advantage of economic theories (like e.g. occupational sex segregation explained with human capital theories, or on the demand side of the labour market with attention to institutional, socio-cultural and structural constraints with segmentation theory or queuing theory). Second, on a micro-level of analysis, authors emphasise socio-psychological approaches (like e.g. preference theory, gender stereotypes). Third, on the meso-level of organization, she finds social constructivist and post-structural feminist frameworks (e.g. Acker's gendering processes dependent on the "ideal worker", or the gendering of organizational culture, see Acker, 2006).

In a nutshell, as far as the career outcome is concerned, it has to be acknowledged that women get paid less even if they had – or did – all the "right stuff" (i.e. proving their career mobility adequately, and being as well educated as their male colleagues, see Stroh *et al.*, 1992; Strunk/Hermann, 2009). Additionally, they advance more slowly (Melamed, 1995; Schneer/Reitman, 1995). Possible obstacles include glass ceilings (Lyness/Thompson, 1997; Corsun/Costen, 2001), glass cliffs (Ryan/Haslam, 2007), lavender ceilings (concerning sexual orientation, Carr-Rufino, 1996), rock ceilings (Sherman, 2002) or even concrete roofs (Bell/Nkomo, 1999) or walls (Eagly/Carley, 2007) in some parts of the world (and at some points in time). Men, by contrast, may even take advantage of glass escalators (at least in "female professions", see Wiliams, 1992),. Besides that some researchers claim that this gap even widens (Schneidhofer *et al.*, 2010; Schneidhofer *et al.*, 2011 forthcoming), a special disadvantage arises for non-white women (Ng *et al.*, 2005; Ibarra, 1995; Parks-Yancy, 2002; Adib/Guerrier, 2003). Hence, we take a closer look at ethnicity as well.

Ethnicity and Career

Two overview articles provide insights into the effects of race and ethnicity in organizations (Proudford/Nkomo, 2006) and towards career issues (Prasad *et al.*, 2007) like the slower progression of minority ethnic employees within organizations and their underrepresentation in senior positions (e.g. Baldi/McBrier, 1997; Powell/Butterfield, 1997). Research has shown race disparities concerning employment rates (Fairlie/Sundstrom, 1999), wages and earnings (Juhn, 2003/Murrell/James, 2001) and social networks (Ibarra, 1995). Here as well, Ng et al (2005) provide evidence of small but statistically significant disadvantages for non-whites relative to whites in their meta-study. Fewer studies have been conducted to enlighten the role of seemingly advantaged minorities like Asian Americans (Cheng, 1997) or disadvantaged like Hispanics (Sanchez/Brock, 1996).

Ethnicity remains relevant to the workplace experience of minority ethnic employees, which are subjected to racial discrimination (Kenny/Briner, 2010), including negative stereotyping, feeling undermined and having their credibility doubted (Fearful/Kamenou, 2006; Kamenou/Fearfull, 2006). Blacks have limited access to several labour markets, role models, are less represented in higher education and have overall lower career aspirations which affect their courage to plan and prepare for higher-end jobs and careers negatively (Chung *et al.*, 1999; McCollum, 1998). Meta-analysing 16 studies, Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) found that race or ethnicity do not seem to contribute much to differences in career aspirations or decision-making attitudes, however, they revealed, that racial/ethnic minorities perceived fewer career opportunities and greater barriers

[1] mush·roomed,: 1. To multiply, grow, or expand rapidly: 2. To swell or spread out into a shape similar to a mushroom.

than their White counterparts. Again, 'concrete' ceilings (Davidson, 1997) are argued to prevent minority ethnic worker's progression to the higher levels of their organizations.

Race and gender seem to have combined effects as suggested by Sherman (2002) who sees black women confronting a 'rock ceiling' of racism and sexism that prevents them from attaining upward mobility in organizations. Earnings among Mexican and black women are lagging behind the earnings of white women (Antecol/Bedard, 2002); as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission revealed in 2004, black women earn 66 cents to a dollar for males and Hispanic women earning only 59 cents (in Prasad *et al.*, 2007: 174). Another example is the relationship between mobility and compensation, which is moderated by race and gender (Dreher/Cox, 2000).

Besides gender and ethnicity, there seems to be at least one additional variable associated with marginalisation: class/social origin.

Class/social origin and Career

Social class respectively the socioeconomic status (SES), which is typically measured by occupation, income, education (for a critical review see Braveman *et al.*, 2005) or the prestige of either mother's or father's occupation (Nakao/Treas, 1994) seem to have far reaching consequences for different life spheres. Especially in health research, SES differences are found for rates of mortality and morbidity from almost every disease and condition (Antonovsky, 1967). Interestingly, Adler et al. (1994: 16) point out that "…the relationship of SES to health is not simply a threshold effect in which morbidity and mortality increase only at severe levels of deprivation, but is a graded relationship occurring at all levels within the spectrum of social position". Upward socioeconomic mobility appears to reduce risk and partially compensate for earlier disadvantage, whereas downward mobility increases risk (Turrell *et al.*, 2002).

Social origin also seems to affect careers, as it has been shown in several studies that the familial socioeconomic background influences career success to a great extent (Blau/Duncan, 1967). According to Sirin's (2005) meta-analysis the neighbourhood context, indicating the proportion of adults in that neighbourhood who have completed high school, may even have a greater impact on academic achievement than family SES for minority adolescents. Anyway, the pervasive impact of social class on career development, vocational behaviour and occupational attainment is shown in several studies (for an overview see Diemer/Ali, 2009). Be it the access to educational and vocational resources in one's school and community (Constantine *et al.*, 1998), available vocational role models (Ladany *et al.*, 1997) or better access to parental support (Blustein *et al.*, 2002) and social networks (Jacobs *et al.*, 1991). These resources, in turn, are influencing vocational expectations and aspirations (Diemer/Hsieh, 2008 , Ali/McWhirter, 2006), occupational self-concept implementation (Blustein *et al.*, 2002), occupational attainment and earnings (Sewell/Hauser, 1975) as well as workplace experiences (Kliman, 1998) and retirement (Brown *et al.*, 1996).

The combination of the three variables mentioned above can intensify or extenuate marginalisation effect as they intersect.

Intersectionality

Bourdieu (2000: 107) once stated that "sexual properties are as inseperable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity". Hence it comes no wonder that there is also ample evidence that all three variables mentioned above – gender, ethnicity and class – play together (Jones, 2003; Kamenou, 2007; Gardiner, 2010: 400). To this end, Crenshaw (1989) introduced the concept of intersectionality, originally "to identify remedial gaps in relation to black women's experiences of discrimination and to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences" (Boogard/Roggeband, 2010: 56). Bell and Nkomo (2001: 164) for example show that breaking the class ceiling only accounts for white women, whereas non-white women have to tear down concrete walls (or climb over them). The interplay of gender, class, and ethnicity (and several other variables like age, nationality, appearance etc.) is complex, however, and heavily depended on the context (Adib/Guerrier, 2003). It is interesting to notice that domination on one axis of intersectionality (like being male in a masculine labelled occupation) might be confounded with discrimination on another (like having ethnic back-

ground, Acker, 2006), a phenomena which is referred to as the paradox of intersectionality (Boogard/Roggeband, 2010), which we will consider more deeply below.

The whole research – which is Eurocentric and Anglocentric (Benshop, 2006: 275) – is characterized by the fundamental dilemma, that each explanation either reduces actors to structural dopes sensu Lévi-Strauss (1978), blaming the "society" or the "market", or alternatively over-emphasizes the actor sensu Sartre (1993), blaming the victim (Benshop, 2006: 276). In order to bring these various lines of reasoning together, we develop a multilevel process-model of marginalisation based on the idea that gender, ethnicity and class can be conceived of as guises of embodied capital. To this end, we draw on literature translating Bourdieu for organisation and management studies (Özbilgin/Tatli, 2005b; Emirbayer/Johnson, 2008; Swartz, 2007), as well as feminist (McCall, 1992; Chodos/Curtis, 2002; Huppatz, 2009), migration (Erel, 2010; Sha *et al.*, 2010) or social (Hartmann, 2000; Hofbauer, 2010) re-readings of his framework.

Bridging lenses: The process of marginalisation with a refurbished Bourdieusian framework

Conceptualising gender, ethnicity and class/social origin as guises of embodied cultural capital is quite unusual for each of the interdependent variables. First, as far as sex/gender is concerned (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1997; Bourdieu, 2001), Bourdieu regarded capital as gender-neutral (McCall, 1992), and (even worse) women as mere repository and transmitters of cultural capital rather than players in the game (Lovell, 2000). Second, as far as ethnicity is concerned, the term "capital" is more often understood in an essentialist' way, leading to a "Rucksack"-approach in migration studies (Erel, 2010). Third, concerning class/social origin, the matter of fact is predominantly focused on the meso-level of analysis presented here ("habitus", see e.g. Hartmann, 2000), which implicitly or explicitly denies the possibility of "making something out of one's body" and frames the fact of an starting disadvantage to a fatal diagnosis.

In contrast to other grand theories, this is no big deal, however. Bourdieu has never intended to present his theory consolidated or systematically (Barlösius, 2006: 7). Instead, he always wanted to be open minded to the research topic.

Within the social space, various perspectives about familiy politics, migration, culturally beliefs about the self and the others, primary socialisation etc and thus, marginalisation, may be identified. These perspectives are broken by several semi-autonomous fields, like a prism refractures light by the surface of an object (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 17). With other words, fields are not determined by their environments but translate or fracture external forces according to their own dynamics, which themselves depend on the interplay of actors relationally. Analyzing the process of marginalisation within the Managerial Career Field (Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003; for the field of paid caring work, see Huppatz, 2009), we will take a look at the relations that constitutes the social context of manager's careers. This field is made up by capital, which represent that something is at stake worth playing – or fighting – for. Owing to the fact that it is neither structure (field) nor the actor (capital) responsible for the relations emerging per se, Bourdieu conceptualises habitus between both levels of analysis. On each level, different boundaries shape the process of marginalisation, based on several relations and distinct principles. On the macro-level of analysis (field), actors "get" marginalised (and marginalise) due to the relations between orthodox and heretic forces. On the meso-level of analysis (habitus), actors "become" marginalised due to the relations of sets of schemas, which appear as naturalised. On the micro-level of analysis (capital), actors play marginalised (or marginalising) owing to their capital portfolio and their investment strategies arising for accumulation. For all three levels being only analytically distinct, we will finally bring all three levels together. Figure 1 summarizes this idea, which is explained hereinafter.

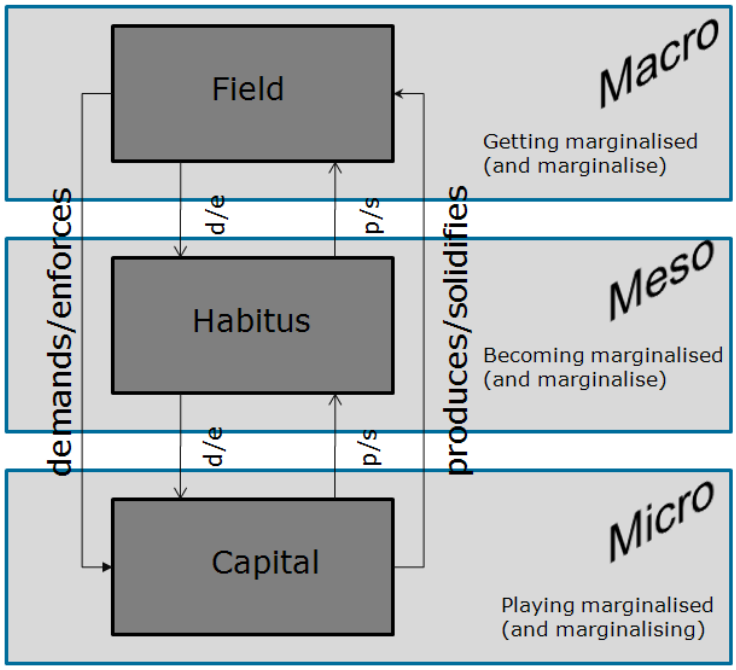

Figure 1: Theoretical framework for the process of marginalization (based on Özbilgin/Tatli, 2005b)

Macro-Level: Getting marginalised (and marginalise)

Career fields constitute the social context within which careers take place (Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). They are part of the social space, yet relatively autonomous and following own rules and logics arising when actors realise their strategies in following the field's *illusio* in order to acquire and accumulate capital. *Illusio* – coming from latin *ludus*, the game – means that something is at stake in a field, which is worth playing for. And this 'something' is called capital, which refers to more than 'money' (i.e., economic capital, see more detailed at the micro-level of analysis). It also refers to social capital (like access to networks) and cultural capital (like competences and knowledge, but also degrees and titles). This puts two things into focus: a) power struggles arising around the accumulation (and conversion rates) of capital as well as the history thereof; b) the preservation of power with securing reproduction strategies. Roughly, every field can be divided into forces who have the power and make the rules (i.e. those who possess capital and the power to influence the conversion rates sustainably) and those who try to gain influence in order to get entitled to make the rules in the future: The former are called "orthodoxy", the latter "heresy" (Bourdieu, 1977: 169; Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 117), which, of course, are social relations rather than 'substantialist' entities.

The managerial career field analysed hereinafter is a special career field, which emerged in the course of changes in the field of economy (Bourdieu *et al.*, 1981). With the uprise of public limited companies, the accumulation and reproduction strategies within the field of economy have changed. As far as the former (accumulation) is concerned, personal domination, characterized by the transfer of economic capital "from father to son" (Bourdieu *et al.*, 1981: 45) lost relevance. Instead, structural domination, demanding for the acquisition of embodied cultural capital more strongly (like competences, knowledge, titles etc.), gained importance, for the new context opened up new possibilities (contexts) in making careers. For the first time, organizational career logics (Gunz, 1988) became possible, leading to a differentiation of several career fields, one of them characterized by a new elite of actors referred to as "managers".

But as far as the latter (reproduction) is concerned, the androcentric, ethnocentric and social elitist orthodoxy changed their strategies as well. They started to pay more attention to the institutions responsible for the acquisition of cultural capital (like schools, universities).

This has two implications: First, marginalisation changed its face, for the mere lack of economic capital (and thus, variables like social origin) lost its importance for the price of the lack of cultural capital, especially in his embodied (competences, but also gender/ethnicity/class) or institutionalized (titles) form. Second, this does not mean that the "career game" now became fair: maybe more fair (due to the statistical law), but the actors formally marginalised are now disadvantaged as well, yet in another way.

This has two reasons building the boundaries for marginalisation on the macro-level of analysis: the paradox of *doxa* and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001). The former refers to the question why the symbolic order of the world is broadly respected, even by those who are most disadvantaged by it (Hull, 2002; Bourdieu, 2005: 7). The latter gives the answer: domination is performed in the name of a principle acknowledged by both, the dominated (heretic) and dominating (orthodox, Bourdieu, 2005: 8), hence, the ones getting marginalised on the one hand, and those marginalising on the other. It is important to notice that this "confederation" is neither intentional nor determined, but historically grounded and socially contingent (as we will point out on the other two levels of analysis). For the matter of gender, which is the paradigmatic case (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 170), this belief in the social order follows the androcentric principle (Bourdieu, 2001: 3), reconstructing the "asymmetric relations of gendered power and privilege" (Chodos/Curtis, 2002: 400) explicitly in favour of men and masculinities, which he traces back to ancient times. This structure is reproduced symbolically, because the violence performed is "exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 167).

Similarly, the matter of ethnicity is relationally resolved following an ethnocentric principle based on the same relations. Orthodox forces exercise and try to maintain their power. For example, building on case studies of skilled Turkish and Kurdish migrant women in Britain and Germany, Erel (2010: 648) points out that migration results in new ways of producing and re-producing cultural capital that builds on power relations of either the country of origin or the country of migration. As a result, she is able to explain how orthodox institutions exercise protectionism by not recognising qualifications acquired abroad (with recourse on Bauder, 2003), or even where such qualifications get recognized, employers invoke criteria such as the lack of local professional experience (with recourse on Hage, 1998).

But this accounts for social class as well, a principle which we will call sociocentric principle: economic elites, which are less determined by individual efforts than social hegemony (Hartmann/Kopp, 2001; Hofbauer, 2010), tend to homophile reproduction. Homophily here refers to the degree of similarity of individuals regarding demography and identity (Ibarra, 1993) resulting in an exclusion of minorities from top executive positions. In a well known study, Bourdieu and de Saint Martin (1987) investigated the French elite and the reproduction of class structures. They emphasize the role of the educational system, which ensures the desired social selection in favour of children from the dominant class via the acquisition of exclusive educational degrees.

Finally, Boogard & Roggeband (2010) showed in their study of the Dutch police force, that status hierarchies on intersectional axes are cross-cutting, for being advantaged within one certain social category (e.g. being "executive" versus being "administrative") might be coincidented by being disadvantaged on another (e.g. being a "woman" versus being a "men", or representing "ethnic minority" versus "ethnic majority"). Additionally, in order to distinguish themselves from others, executive women describe administrative women in terms of stereotypical female attributes, thus reproducing their submission on the gender axis inadvertently as well. The authors call this phenomena the paradox of intersectionality (Boogard/Roggeband, 2010: 63), indicating that actors (inadvertently) reproduce inequality in the deployment of a positive identity. Now, from a relational perspective (in contrast to their interactional one), this appears rather as the result of symbolic violence stemming from the paradox of doxa. Hence, the reason of the practice is the reproduction of the social order, identifying the modus of implementing a positive identity – qua realisation and thus naturalisation of historical and thus social action.

In aligning orthodox and heretic forces constitutively, the marginalised are no longer conceived "beyond the not-marginalised", but rather "the necessary negativity of seemingly positive objectivity" (Dege *et al.*, 2010: 14). Additionally, this order appears as self-evident (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 171), taken for granted, which has implications for the meso- and micro-level presented here. With other words, gendered structures appear as natural and naturalised, although they are social and the historical result of contextual interest.

In a nutshell, the macro-level of analysis illustrates the "why" of marginalisation: actors get marginalised – and marginalise – owing to the relations emerging from the field's structure in orthodox and heretic forces, resulting in symbolic violence and the paradox of *doxa* as boundaries for the process of marginalisation. For the managerial career field, this constitutes a certain advantage for those already possessing promising structure-takings within the field: middle-aged, white men of upper social origin. On this level, Heidegger's "throwness in ones being" appears realised, and it seems as if the structure was to blame for marginalising.

But that does not tell us anything about the "how" of marginalisation, let alone the possibilities of playing against the rules: habitus, and capital.

Meso-Level: Becoming marginalised (and marginalise)

The habitus is a central concept in Bourdieu's theory as it becomes the bridge between agency and structure (Chudzikowski/Mayrhofer, 2011). Habitus includes processes of both objectification and subjectification; "it is embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history, it is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu, 1990: 56). As the mutual correspondence between objective and internalized structures, it is a model for, as well as a model of, reality.

Two major applications of the concept can be observed (Lizardo, 2004: 379). On the one hand, the habitus is a perceptual and classifying structure. Classifactory schemes that "make distinctions…between what is right and what is wrong, between what is distinguished and what is vulgar…" (Bourdieu, 1998: 8). On the other hand, but even at the same time, it is a generative structure of practical action, a general principle of distinct and distinctive practices, like what someone "eats, and especially the way he eats it, the sports he practices and the way he practices it, his political opinions and the way he expresses them…" (Bourdieu, 1998: 8). Perceiving, thinking and acting is done according to the rules of the field so that an agent is acting strategically without strategic intention (Bourdieu, 1990b: 12). "Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and minds, in fields and habitus, outside and inside social agents…It is because this world has produced me, because it has produced the categories of thought that I apply to it, that it appears to me as self-evident." (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 127f).

This may sound like the prolongation of the deterministic undertone of the macro-level of analysis, like agents were just the "puppets" of structure (King, 2000) that are passively perceiving and classifying and are stamped by society. Instead, Bourdieu's emphasis on the dynamic nature of the habitus as an active generative matrix of action sheds light on its evolutionary potential. In line with the arguments stated above, habitus is defined by Bourdieu (and most prominently cited) as:

> *"Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively "regulated" and "regular" without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor"* (Bourdieu, 1990: 53)

In an attempt to unmask the cognitive origins of habitus, Lizardo (2004) traces Bourdieu's thinking back to Jean Piagets blend of structuralism and developmental psychology. Piaget has been an active scholar with writings in physics, mathematics, philosophy, sociology but is mainly popular as a developmental psychologist for his stage theory of infant cognitive development (e.g. Piaget, 1936). Piaget's conception of knowledge regards it as cognitive structures that help to transform and are in their turn transformed by the environment (1970). The previously acquired cognitive and bodily structures can be subject to change, transformation or conservation via knowledge accumulation and development. The two processes of assimilation, a process through which action schemas are applied to new situations, and accommodation, when schemas are modified faced with sufficiently new and extraneous environmental configurations, act as the drivers. Bearing this in mind "it can be argued that Bourdieu's dialectical model of the habitus as both a structured structure and a structuring structure is directly related to Piaget's conceptualization of the process of knowledge acquisition as a dialectic produced both by structured action upon reality that transform the world, and by the

outer environment's subsequent structuring effect on the categorical schemata that we use to make sense of the world" (Lizardo, 2004: 385). With other words, habitus is embodied history and as such connected to the field and its dynamics. And this history builds the ground for the investments and strategies on the micro-level of capital.

Now, the term 'embodied' gets a special meaning if connected to contemporary neuropsychological research. The effects of a stimulating environment on the brain have first been shown in animal experiments with rats. The cerebral cortices of rats raised with environmental enrichment are thicker and contain a quarter more synapses (Diamond *et al.*, 1966). Interestingly this effect upon the brain occurs not just if experienced immediately after birth (Schapiro/Vukovich, 1970), but also following weaning (Bennett *et al.*, 1964) and during maturity (Briones *et al.*, 2004). The influence on the development of the brain from environmental factors starts even before birth as scientists found that the unborn human child is able to hear from the 20th week and reacting upon sounds from the 28th (VanHeteren *et al.*, 2000). Research results even suggest evidence of brain plasticity during lifetime. "Plasticity is an intrinsic property of the human brain and represents evolution's invention to enable the nervous system to escape the restrictions of its own genome and thus adapt to environmental pressure, physiologic changes, and experiences" (Pascual-Leone *et al.*, 2005: 377). Structural changes in the adult human brain could be observed in the hippocampus after a physic class (Draganski/May, 2008) as well as adult motor cortex plasticity during motor skills learning (Karni *et al.*, 1995). The socio economic status can impair the development of certain brain regions (Hackman/Farah, 2009), like the prefrontal cortex that is responsible for impulse control and action planning, the hippocampus with the effect of reduced cognitive performance and language areas. The latter is shown as the average vocabulary size of three-year-old children from families on welfare was less than half as large as for those from professional families (Hart/Risley, 1995).

In the managerial career field, habitus on the one hand as a perceptual and classifying structure in the process of marginalising, appears through stereotyping. For instance, terms associated with leadership are rather related to men than women (Scott/Brown, 2006). On the other hand, habitus as generative structure of practical action it opens or restricts the "corridor" of possibilities actors have (Hofbauer, 2010). Usually, agents holding a dominant position within a field (referred to as orthodox on the macro-level of analysis) show a prototypical habitus for this field (Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2005). This enables orthodox actors to move "naturally" within the field's structure. In contrast, heretic actors lack this practical sense (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 120), aggravating "logical" moves. As a result, the arising relations of assimilation and accommodation, which build the ground of the mental and bodily schemas stereotyping and naturalising the actors produce a principle of homophily in order to translate the macro-level dynamics.

As a result, concerning the matter of gender, the already mentioned "unfair game" unfolding within the field of managerial careers leads to an "inculcation" (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 172), which results in a masculinisation of male bodies and feminisation of female bodies appearing as somatisation of cultural arbitrary (ibidem). In return, this somatisation builds the ground for the schematising processes arising around the categories "orthodox" and "heretics", thus between becoming marginalised, or marginalise. The boundaries arising on this level of analysis are represented by the bodies and the brains of the actors (as social yet naturalised phenomena). They appear as natural, but are the result of social practices. Needless to say, again, that this process is mostly beyond the conscious. Quite the reverse, it is its appearance as self-evident, which makes the process powerful. People become marginalised without strategic marginalising intentions, and they marginalise (even themselves) due to the taken-for-grantedness of – and the inadvertently arising attempt of fostering – the social order. Mutatis mutandis, heresy in terms of ethnicity is constructed as realisation of historical practices attempting to set up and prevail a certain doxa.

Concluding the meso-level with social origin/class, Hartmann (2000) connected to the study by Bourdieu and de Saint Martin (1987) mentioned on the macro-level of analysis, and expanded it by comparing the social origin and educational trajectories of senior executives of the 100 largest German and French enterprises from 1995 to corresponding figures from the 1970s. The results revealed few changes as almost 80% of chairpersons are recruited from the social elite in both countries and both points in time. Hartmann (2000) emphasizes the importance of class-specific habitus, which works either directly as a gatekeeper in recruiting procedures as in Germany or more indirectly via the educational system as in France where the 'right smell' is developed at grandes ècoles.

But both processes – getting and becoming marginalised (and marginalise) – do not work as a kind of "dynamic faith": Neither the "why" nor the "how" of marginalisation is fixed at the beginning, but marginalisation unfolds in the course of the game, owing to the actors' possibilities of playing the game and changing the game's (never fixed nor set-out) rules. This points to the micro-level of analysis, where we will take a look at the capital involved.

Micro-Level: Playing marginalised (and marginalising)

The third relevant master concept in Bourdieus theory of practical action (1977) is capital. Located at the micro level of analysis (Özbilgin/Tatli, 2005b) the capital portfolio increases or reduces the chances of an actor within a specific field. In Bourdieus notion, capital (as already mentioned) does not just encompass economic capital, which appears first of all in the form of money, but also two other guises, namely social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition…" (Bourdieu, 1986: 51). The volume of social capital depends on the network size and the ability to mobilize these connections. It may be legitimized and institutionalized by family-, group- or class-membership or title of nobility. In management literature social capital is often prioritized as a unit of analysis over other forms (Özbilgin/Tatli, 2005b: 861).

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: embodied, objectified and institutionalized. The acquisition of embodied cultural capital in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body consumes time. The internalizing process demands time and is personalized. It remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition, like pronunciations, and has a distinctive value. Compared with economic capital the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised. In its objectified state cultural capital appears in the form of cultural products like books, paintings or machines. It can be appropriated materially, by the transmission of legal ownership, and symbolically. For the last purpose one needs the means to e.g. 'consume' a painting, which presupposes cultural capital. Cultural capital can exist as well as institutionalized, in form of academic titles and degrees. These are relatively independent of the actually embodied cultural capital but make it possible to create conversion rates between cultural and economic capital. All in all "cultural capital is the accumulated result of educational and cultural effort, undertaken either by the actor of by his/her ancestors" (Mayrhofer *et al.*, 2002: 14).

Symbolic capital refers to the combination of the basic forms of capital, which is perceived and socially recognized as legitimate within a specific field. The unique mix of economic, social and cultural capital owned by an actor is assessed by the social context. Both the capital portfolio and the value of the different forms of capital are subject to permanent change.

In contrast to human capital approaches (e.g. Melamed, 1995), hence, both the capital portfolio, as well as the accumulation strategies depend on the field within which the actor operates. The capital portfolio encompasses more than the individual capacity of an actor paying an "admission fee" that each field imposes, and (based upon that) enables playing a rational game depending on the field's structure and rules. Quite on the contrary, Bourdieu's "economy of practices" (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 118) conceptualises "investment" as "propensity to act that is born of the relation between a field and a system of dispositions adjusted to the game it proposes, a sense of the game and of its stakes that implies at once an inclination and an ability to play the game, both of which are socially and historically constituted rather than universally given" (ibidem). The relation mentioned in the citation refers to what we here have called "getting" (on the macro-level) and "becoming" (on the meso-level) marginalised (and marginalise). This double-objectified structure (field and habitus) opens up the corridor of practical possibilities (potential, strategies, action etc.) of playing the game, which is neither fair nor determined, but bounded relationally.

But other than simple games of chance like Roulette, the games of society including marginalisation follow different logics (Bourdieu, 1986: 46). Roulette offers the possibility to win a lot within a very short period of time and the winning of the previous wheel spin can be staked and lost at every new spin. Furthermore each round is perfectly independent of the previous one. In the career field instead the equality of opportunities is moderated by the game's history – the acquisition and accumulation of capital as well as the conversion rates

at a certain point in time. With a pinch of salt it might be said that the game chips are socially dovetailed (marked), but also bear the possibility of dovetailing in return.

In gender terms, this gives "doing gender" (West/Zimmerman, 1987; 2009) another twist. First, as shown by Huppatz (2009), the androcentric principle has to be related to the field focused, for the field of paid caring work translates it differently compared to the managerial career field. The former is dominated by feminine and female capital (yet its meaning in the social space – caring is associated with women – bears consequences for field-crossing trajectories, let alone that mean income will be lower than in other fields due to occupational prestige and hence, supply and demand on the labour market). The latter is arguably dominated by masculine and male capital (Eagley/Johnson, 1990; Eagly/Carley, 2007; Hofbauer, 2006).

First, that implies that "gender" as category blended with the concept of "sex" is an insufficient agenda. Consequently, several authors add the concept of gender role types (GRT) as key independent variable (see also Abele, 1994; Eckes, 2004; Schruijer, 2006; Schneidhofer *et al.*, 2009), overcoming the strict dichotomy of male/female. Including the possibility of thinking, feeling, acting, or reacting (as well as of being perceived) differently than the rest of the sex category one is associated with (Schneidhofer *et al.*, 2010: 439), these aspects of one's self-concept (Eckes, 2004) refers to the way men and women tend to describe themselves on the two dimensions masculinity and femininity (Spence et al., 1974; Spence et al., 1979), emphasizing both to a certain extent in a single person.

Second, this does not imply that women – nor non-orthodox men – are automatically marginalised, however. But the starting equipment of capital as well as conversion rate from their capital portfolio in another (like social capital, or economic capital) is unfavourable, and the investments therefore have to be higher for heretics than orthodox forces. Consequently, the chances of "playing marginalised" for women and/or feminine men are higher the longer the career game takes.

Schneidhofer et al. (2011 forthcoming) showed with a longitudinal analysis using mixed linear models (McCulloch/Searle, 2001) of two business school graduates careers in Austria, that consistent to the theory of capital, the gender pay gap develops in the course of one's trajectory, and that female or undifferentiated GRT earn less than masculine or androgynous GRT in both cohorts over time. Additionally, the income gap between women and men may has widened rather than narrowed, and masculine women of the 2000 cohort do not attain a higher proportion of the androgynous women's mean income compared to the 1990 cohort.

Correspondingly, the term "ethnic capital" already exists in the literature. Young British Pakistanis pursue higher education compared to their white peers, which Sha et al (2010) trace back to shared norms and values among British Pakistanis families.

As far as class/social origin is concerned, Bourdieu originally intended to "explain unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e. the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions" (Bourdieu, 1986: 47). Hence, within the managerial career field, upper social origin serves as valuable capital portfolio at the beginning of one's career (Meyer et al, 2005), but will arguably lose its importance in the course of the career game as far as marginalisation is concerned.

Underlying this process, the game arising is played upon the "principle of isotimy" (Bourdieu, 1990: 101). It refers to the equality in honour necessary to be an opponent on a par, and as such predisposes the possibilities of playing with the forces having hegemony over the field. Orthodox actors only play against heretics if they may win as well. But this is not the case if they play with actors not having the same honour as they do: they would lose anyway, because potentially resulting disgrace of losing does not represent any harm for the heretics (Bourdieu, 1976: 11).

As a result, the boundaries on the level of capital are constituted by the capital portfolio and the conversion rates, and the relations important are the investments and its outcomes.

Discussion: "Levels" as analytical tools and the concommitance of interpretative lenses

The title obviously is a pun derived from famous Herbert Simons bounded rationality concept (Simon, 1967). In an alleged borderless world (Ohmae, 1990) with allegedly boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994; for a "critical but appreciative" analysis, see Arnold/Cohen, 2008), marginalisation is either vanishing or – if still happening – the individual's fault; might that be the fault of the marginalising "offender" or that of the "victim". Both assumptions appear as a simplification. With recourse on Bourdieu, we here understand bounded not only with respect to individual capacity, nor structural determination, but also concerning historical, contextual and transactional contingencies (Bourdieu/Wacquant, 1992: 160). Historical, because the relations arising have to acknowledge the games played in the past, locating the principles identified in anthropological ancient times (Bourdieu, 2001). Contextual, because the boundaries emerging are a consequence of the process on three levels of analysis. Transactional, because the bounded relationality appears as natural, although it is only naturalised. Hence, while marginalisation still is happening (for gender, see e.g. Zahidi/Ibarra, 2010), it is too easy to commit marginalisation to the individuals marginalising (or to blame the marginalised) as it would be too easy to "blame the system". In fact, it is rather a threefold structural boundary in the game. Table 1 summarises the results

Theoretic Figure	Level of Analysis	Process of marginalisation	Relations	Boundaries	Principle
Field	Macro	Getting marginalised (and marginalise)	Orthodox - heretic	Paradox of doxa and symbolic violence	Androcentric principle Ethnocentric principle Sociocentric principle
Habitus	Meso	Becoming marginalised (and marginalise)	Assimilation and accomodation	Body and brain (as social yet naturalised phenomena)	Priciple of Homophily
Capital	Micro	Playing marginalised (and marginalising)	Investments and outcomes	capital portfolio and conversion rates	Principle of Isotimy

Table 1: Bounded relationality of marginalisation.

Firstly, on the macro-level of fields, marginalisation is the result of a net (or configuration) of objective relations between positions, which separates orthodox and heretic forces. Here, getting marginalised (and marginalise) takes place as the result of the attempt to preserve the powers of those who already have it – the paradox of doxa and the underlying symbolic violence mark the boundaries at the macro level. In other words: Those who make the rules, make the rules in order to keep making the rules (Friedland, 2009). This is no conspiracy, however.

Rather, and secondly, on the meso-level of habitus, marginalisation takes place as result of a social desire for homophily (Hofbauer, 2010), leading to sets of dispositions, which are predisposed to schematise and stereotypise potential threats to the current order. As a result, people "become marginalised (and marginalise)" owing to the *Zeitgeist* (Prasad *et al.*, 2008: 171) qua assimilation and accomodation, which find its representation in both mental as well as bodily schemas. These appear as "a boundary of the brain" (Bourdieu, 1992: 33), which people can not – in a very strict sense – trespass, and this boundary is made up of society as well as by psychological processes (both ontogenetically and phylogenetically).

But that is no faith, however: because thirdly, and on the level of capital, struggles around the accumulation of and investment with nowadays more important cultural capital arise, which at least open opportunities to the heretic forces in the field. This game is not fair, however, because it is based on the principle of isotimy. With other worlds, the last boundary is the capital portfolio and the conversion rates unfolding in the course of the career. Despite imperfect equality of opportunity at the beginning of the game, the world is additionally inert, with heredity, in which every moment is dependent of the previous one, and not "every soldier has a marshal's baton in his knapsack" (Bourdieu, 1986: 46). However, it is still a game (with ever-changing rules).

But this does not mean to throw out the baby with the bath water: saying that marginalisation is a consequence of the interplay of field, habitus and capital does not mean that the actors marginalising others were not to blame, or can not be held responsible for their practical actions: "Being bounded" does not imply "having no choice". Instead, the choices are itself limited to the social structure within which they arise, which makes understandable the call for the inclusion of context in careers research (Mayrhofer *et al.*, 2007). But there is no way that careers – and hence marginalisation as social yet non-natural by-product – could be conceived of as boundaryless (see also Rodrigues/Guest, 2010; Dany et al., 2011; Inkson, forthcoming) with this theoretical lense.

This paper obviously has limitations. First, this research was conducted by two middle-aged, white, male social researchers. While there are already constant calls for interdisciplinary (Mayrhofer/Schneidhofer, 2009) or multidisciplinary (Collin, 2009) agendas in careers research, here we will have to add to these voices the appeal for a transdisciplinary discourse on careers, needing relational methods (for an overview, see Özbilgin, 2006). Yet we are theory-building with a monodisciplinary background. Second, and linked to that, the model is based on empirical glimpses found in the literature. This has to be accompanied by empirical research focusing on the process of marginalization on several levels of analysis, which seems to be a daunting task.

Concluding, the bad news are, that as long as society prevails, marginalisation appears as logical consequence thereof. That has nothing to do with nature, or a natural order in a normative sense of the view. The good news: who is getting and becoming marginalised is not fixed but will be within certain boundaries up to the trajectories unfolding – and hence contingent to the relations emerging on the way.

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