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Change Agency as Performance and Embeddedness:

Exploring the possibilities and limits of Butler and Bourdieu

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Abstract: In this paper we explore the dual role of human agency in maintaining the status quo and generating change. Judith Butler and Pierre Bourdieu offer differing conceptions of change agency in relation to organisation and transformation of gender relations. Focusing on how those approaches would work, we analyse an empirical case study on a particular change process: getting women the right to vote in the Swiss cantons of Appenzell. We contribute to the current use of their theories in organisation studies in three main ways. First, we explore stability and change from the lenses of these two scholars. Second, we illustrate how change agency looks from these two distinct perspectives. Finally, we offer an empirical analysis that identifies the main elements of change agency in the two frameworks and discuss the possibilities and limitations of bringing these two approaches together to better understand change agency.

Keywords: Bourdieu, Butler, Change Agency, Embeddedness, Legitimacy, Performativity

Introduction

Change agency has often been theorized as a skill that resides within the person. This essentialist idea of agency overlooks the structural conditions of change agency and it poses an artificial separation between human agency and structural mechanisms. As a result, change agency is depicted as unidimensional, rational and acontextual whilst its political, relational and embedded qualities are ignored (Tatli and Ozbilgin, 2009). To move beyond this essentialist idea of agency vs. structure, we engage with the theories of Butler and Bourdieu. What new insights could their frameworks provide into the role of human agency in organising change? Our study reveals the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of change agency, which we define as the power and influence of actors to transform the conditions of their existence.

To understand change agency, we must first understand how the status quo is maintained, and the role that individual agents play in this process. We need to understand the forces for stability in order to identify possibilities of change and change agency. For that reason, we begin by considering Butler's and Bourdieu's crucial explanations for the persistence of the gender order as we explore their conceptions of change agency. We then interrogate the frameworks of both theorists in order to examine possibilities of change agency, which disrupts the structures, norms and relations of gender. The notions of legitimacy and embeddedness are especially important for understanding the distinctive contributions each theory can make.

We then draw on an empirical case—the societal change process that led to women gaining the right to vote in the Swiss cantons of Appenzell—to illustrate how the two alternative theories would work. The two cantons were the last geographic area in the industrialised West

where women won suffrage. Hence, the case of Appenzell offers an interesting opportunity to explore change and change agency in relation to gender norms and structure. First, as a fundamental right of citizens, voting is crucial to the further development of gender equality. Second, as the change process took place in the late 1990s, it can be considered relatively recent; many key activists are still available to give accounts of their specific perspectives (Bendix 1992; 1993).

Swiss women were granted the right to vote in 1971 at the national level, but women in Appenzell had to wait another 20 years for their full citizenship rights at the cantonal level. Only in 1989 did the male citizens of Appenzell-Ausserrhoden publicly vote to approve women's suffrage. In the Catholic and even more conservative canton of Appenzell-Innerrhoden, this process took two more years; in 1991, the Swiss national court forced the canton to change the situation in order to establish gender equality. Thus these are recent and interesting examples of change due to legal pressure. The two cases also provide insights into the legitimacy of institutions and normative pressure; in Ausserrhoden, they also illustrate an active discursive struggle, where key agents created legitimacy through active and engaging speech (Bendix 1992, 1993).

From the perspective of change agency, it is even more interesting to see how this change was enabled and facilitated. The cantons and their social spaces are very small. Innerrhoden has about 15,000 inhabitants and Ausserrhoden about 53,000. As a result, the change process mostly focused on personal communication, either in private or in the semi-private form of communities of interest. Individuals and subjective agency seemed to be highly important drivers of change in the process while public activities such as demonstrations were perceived as too provocative and hence counterproductive (Bendix 1992). Therefore, Appenzell also forms an interesting case in the strategic blending of collective and individual acts of

resistance to facilitate change. While the collective was needed to stabilise the conviction that change was necessary, individual and mainly interactional activities were needed to provide legitimacy and prevent extreme resistance.

Following our analysis of the Appenzell case, we conclude by discussing the potential benefits of bringing Bourdieu and Butler together in reconceptualising change agency, reflecting on the possibilities of disrupting gender structures, norms, practices and relations, and the relevance of legitimacy and embeddedness. Our analysis contributes to the current use of the two theorists' work in organisation studies in three main ways: we explore stability and change from their two lenses, use the case to illustrate how change agency looks from these two distinct perspectives, and then bring together some of their key insights.

Butler and Bourdieu on change agency

Those in organisation studies are growing more interested in the theoretical concepts of Butler and Bourdieu. Bourdieu's sociological theory is increasingly recognised and used in studies of work, management and organisation (e.g. O'Mahoney 2007; Phillips 2007; Slutskaya, and De Cock 2008; Tatli 2011; Townley, Beech, and McKinlay 2009). Similarly, Butler is attracting growing interest among organisational scholars in empirical research and conceptual developments (e.g. Hancock, and Tyler 2007; Kelan 2010; Kenny 2009; Nørholm 2011; Powell, Bagilhole, and Dainty 2009). However, the use of concepts and theories from these two influential scholars has remained mainly separate, establishing two different approaches to social change that focus on either the subversive or the stabilising effects of social practices.

This separation is to some extent understandable given that Butler's interest is mainly in subcultures characterised by diversity and heterogeneity, whilst Bourdieu mainly tackled

aspects of reproduction and stability. Further, as Reckwitz (2004) has shown in greater detail, the two theorists focus on distinctive and very different sets of social practices. While Butler started by analyzing drag culture and the avant garde (see for example, Butler 1990; 1993; 2004), Bourdieu mainly focused on the traditional Algerian society and the French bourgeoisie (see for example, Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 2001, 2005). As a result, they remain two preeminent scholars whose contributions to our understanding of human agency have rarely been considered together. Despite their differences, however, both scholars tackle aspects that are closely related. Elaborating on their respective perspectives on change agency, we aim to show the merits of transcending the disciplinary and epistemological divides that separated their scholarship, to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of human agency in the process of change.

Bourdieu on change agency as a situated activity and collective political action

The work of the late French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) promises to overcome the espoused duality of agency and structure through a set of concepts that account for human actions in the context of social and economic structures (Fowler 1997; Lounsbury, and Ventresca 2003; Nash 2003; Wainwright 2000). His conceptual tools can be located in relational sociology, which frames agency and structure as interlinked (Ozbilgin, and Tatli 2005). Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1998a) explored the relationship between agency and structure through a large set of concepts. He charted out the choices, chances and positions of agents in the context of their varied individual and collective resources, routines, statuses, strategies and dispositions. For example, his concept, habitus, the agent's embodiment of social structures, establishes an organic link between the individual (i.e. capitals and strategies) and structural (i.e. field and doxa) elements of human agency. For Bourdieu, one can only account for human agency by exploring the complex interplay between individuals and the field of relations in which they are located.

Bourdieu's analysis demonstrates a rather embedded sense of the world: individual agents choose actions congruent with their complex relations within their respective fields and in recognition of their varied resources. Using correspondence analysis, Bourdieu (1984, 1988) illustrates how clusters of individuals with similar forms and volumes of capital end up making similar choices. In the field of higher education, he demonstrates how actor's choices and chances can be charted out in terms of their political leanings as well as their location in the wider social and economic relations. His analysis was criticized for being deterministic: in trying to understand individual behaviour in social settings, he tended to emphasise that the logic of the field had more power than individuals' freedom of choice (Mutch 2003; Vandenberghe 1999). The embeddedness of agents means that their acts of resistance will only transform the relations of power if they can shift the logic of practice. In Bourdieu's thinking, the logic of practice can be understood through the concepts of habitus, the field, and capital; together these explain how individuals acquire certain routines and mobilise their resources in ways congruent with the logic of the field around them (Bourdieu 1990).

At first sight, this understanding of embeddedness seems to curtail the individual's possibility of resisting or opposing, actions that can transform the logic of power relations in the field. However, this is only partially true as this interpretation refers to the capacity of single individuals to be change agents rather than the capacity of political collectives. As the collective is more than the sum of the individuals who compose it and more than the sum of the members' acts of conformity and resistance, the collective creates a logic and habitus of its own, with a distinct set of strategies based on the total amount of the collective's capital.

In Bourdieu's conceptual framework, change is possible in two different forms (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). First, individuals may acquire, accumulate and mobilise different forms of

capital, i.e. material and symbolic resources at an individual's disposal, in order to change their position in the field of relations. But this only changes their location in the field; it does not change the actual field and doxa. Such change is only possible because individual agents can play the game according to the rules as they struggle to increase the total amount of capital at their disposal (Bourdieu 1987). The second type of change, which is the outcome of collective political action, is more fundamental: actors transform the meaning and legitimacy of the field of relations through changes in the doxa and logic of practice (Bourdieu 1998a, 2003).

While the first method of change can alter the lived experience of one or more individuals, it does not transform the relations of oppression and domination in the field. Thus, the second method promises more enduring changes in relations of domination and oppression—if those are the target of the change project. Bourdieu's vision of change agency is multi-faceted. At the individual level, change would occur through epistemic ruptures from frames of thinking, ruptures available in discourses of others and one's own imagination. At the level of the field, Bourdieu envisions change agency as collective action. Thus, despite his tendency to emphasise the field, Bourdieu (1998b) remained an important believer in resistance, both collective and individual.

However, some scholars criticise Bourdieu's theorisation for failing to capture change in general (Burkitt 2002; Mutch 2003) and in gender relations in particular in particular (Arnot 2002; McCall 1992; McNay 1999). However, Bourdieu does present a more dynamic theory of human agency than he is often credited for (Nash 2003) along with a political view of the struggle for gender equity and freedom from male domination. For him change agency is possible, however difficult to achieve. It is difficult because domination permeates the logic of reason and practice, and thus obscures the rationale of change agency. In his work on masculine domination Bourdieu (2001) points out the presence of both change and

permanence. Although he remains pessimistic that the habitus of the gender order will change, he also points out how women have made inroads in education, employment and social spheres, which give them real changes in their lived experiences. And he powerfully assesses the possibility of enduring change in the gender order in the final paragraph of his 2001 book, *Masculine Domination*:

Only political action that really takes account of all the effects of domination that are exerted through the objective complicity between the structures embodied in both women and men and the structures of the major institutions through which not only the masculine order but the whole social order is enacted and reproduced (starting with the state, structured around the opposition between its male ‘right hand’ and its female ‘left hand’, and the educational system, responsible for the effective reproduction of all the principles of vision and division, and itself organized around analogous oppositions) will be able, no doubt in the long term and with the aid of the contradictions inherent in the various mechanisms or institutions concerned, to contribute to the progressive withering away of masculine domination. (p. 117)

Thus, in Bourdieu’s vision, long-term change in the gender order will require political action that can overhaul the structures and institutions that perpetuate and promote that order. In addition, he links masculine domination firmly with class relations. Nevertheless, he points to political struggle for positive social change. He explains that such struggle should seek to alter gendered structures by deconstructing and reconstructing symbolic capital:

It follows that the liberation of women can come only from a collective action aimed at a symbolic struggle capable of challenging practically the immediate

agreement of embodied and objective structures, that is, from a symbolic revolution that questions the very foundations of the production and reproduction of symbolic capital and, in particular the dialectic pretention and distinction which is at the root of the production and consumption of cultural goods as signs of distinction. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 174)

Although Bourdieu does present some of the preconditions for transforming the gender order, he is relatively silent about how people can achieve such political action in contemporary political contexts that involve ongoing resistance to and backlash against gender equality. Still, his framing of change agency in the pursuit of gender equality stretches from individual actions to collective activism. Although he demonstrates that the logic of the field is resistant to change, he still sees scope for long-term change through varied forms of activism (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Butler on change: Change agency as practices of subjectivation

Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 2004) is well known for her theory of gender as performative acts: “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (1990: 25). In Butler’s theory, the subject is constructed through repetitive forms of enacting norms and thereby also reconstructs them. She explains that “construction is not opposed to agency; it is the necessary scene of agency” (Butler 1990: 147). Gender binary informs the norms of gender performances. With her notion of performativity, Butler collapses the binary of structure and agency. She theorizes that the (gendered) subject is constructed in repetitive acts that simultaneously reconstruct the socially established order. Norms are naturalised through a process of continual repetition: people making copies of copies of performances. By these subjectivation practices, the subject is both constructed and legitimised in the very same act.

In Butler's understanding, the subject is constituted by discourse—but it is not determined by discourse.

Through performing masculinity or femininity, the norm of the gender binary is established and reified and gendered subjects, men and women, come into being. Butler is following Derrida here, assuming that change means questioning or troubling the norms in place. If subjects perform their identities in slightly different ways, they may displace and change the norms, making 'trouble', here 'gender trouble'. As subversive performances challenge the binary itself, they enable people to try different forms of gender identity. This is, for instance, what drag artists do when they enact gender differently and in a somehow unexpected way: "The task is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat or, indeed, to repeat and, through a radical proliferation of gender, to displace the very gender norms that enable the repetition itself" (Butler 1990: 148). This form of parody is the central concept of gender trouble. Changing norms through subversive performances also makes it possible to practice identity in new ways.

However, a parody is never subversive by definition; it always carries the danger of reifying the hegemonic norms instead of subverting them. The parody's potential for subversion depends on its context: actors manage to subvert the norm only if they challenge the cultural hegemony or the dominant norms. Otherwise, the parody itself becomes part of the hegemony. Hence, the effectiveness of the parody relies heavily on the content and the very reception of its performance. To pick two examples from popular cinema, Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie* and Robin Williams in *Mrs. Doubtfire* are examples of "high het entertainment", and as such they do not threaten or subvert heteronormativity (Salih 2002: 66-7). Both these roles draw on the binary distinctions between male and female, masculine and feminine, gay and straight, so they conform to but do not subvert the binary. As "parodic performances operate

from within the system, not from a position outside” (Lloyd 1999: 206), subversive practices are always in danger of being domesticated by the dominant discourses. Butler (1990: 140) explains the role that context plays in outcomes of performative acts:

There are temporal and collective dimensions to these actions, and their public character is not inconsequential; indeed, the performance is effected with the strategic aim of maintaining gender within its binary frame - an aim that cannot be attributed to a subject, but, rather, must be understood to found and consolidate the subject.

Hence, a performance that aims at troubling the gender binary will only violate the norm if the audience perceives it as doing so—so change agency is not connected with the person, but with the process of subjectivation. In fact, one could even do it unintentionally. In Butler’s conception, the subject cannot be depicted as the victim of normative discourses and hence a mere discursive effect, but must be seen as an active agent within this process, one always constituting the very norms that bring the subject into being. Here, agency lies within this process of subjectivation, a two-sided process in which the individual both submits to and refers to specific discourses in order to become a subject.

To sum up, from Butler’s perspective change agency can be theorised as the subversion of (binary) norms. Binary norms can be subverted by making changes in the repetitive performances of subjectivity and thereby displacing the norms. Hence, she conceptualises change as both radical and small. Questioning taken-for-granted assumptions slowly changes the norms in place and thereby also enables new practices.

Butler and/or Bourdieu: The relevance of legitimacy and embeddedness

Both Bourdieu and Butler acknowledge the importance of legitimacy and embeddedness because only those performances and practices that are embedded in social institutions, structures and norms bear legitimacy and the power to resist being transgressed and having their meanings transformed. They both draw on the idea that subjectivity is generated through performativity and stress the importance of institutions and norms in constructing social reality (Lovell 2000). However, they focus on different aspects of these processes. Bourdieu looks at how human action is embedded in the field and doxa through habitus: the agent's embodiment of social structures (Bourdieu, and Wacquant 1992). Meanwhile, Butler focuses on repetitive acts of performativity in reproducing or deconstructing the norms (Reckwitz 2004).

As Butler (1997: 142) concisely points out in her essay on discursive agency, her understanding of legitimacy differs significantly from Bourdieu's. He assumes that "the subject who utters the performative is positioned on a map of social power in a fairly fixed way, and that this performative will or will not work depending on whether the subject who performs the utterance is already authorised to make it work by the position of social power it occupies" (Butler 1998: 122). In this perspective, legitimacy comes from the social position of the speaker, which Bourdieu (1998a) explains by considering the different kinds of capital available to the agent and hence the conventions already in place. Butler, however, would always emphasise the power of the performance itself to create its legitimacy "precisely by virtue of the break with context that it performs" (1997: 145). Butler (1997) critiques what she sees as 'conservative' in Bourdieu's approach:

His conservative account of the speech act presumes that the conventions that will authorize the performative are already in place, thus failing to account for the

‘Derridian’ break with context that utterances perform. His view fails to consider the crisis in convention that speaking the unspeakable produces, the insurrectionary ‘force’ of censored speech as it emerges into ‘official discourse’ and opens the performative to an unpredictable future. (p. 142)

According to Butler (1997), Bourdieu denies the possibility of resistance that lies within each speech act. Hence she suggests we “borrow and depart from Bourdieu’s view of the speech act as a rite of institution to show that there are invocations of speech that are insurrectionary acts” (Butler 1997: 145). Further, she says, Bourdieu “fails to take account of the way in which social positions are themselves constructed through a more tacit operation of performativity” (Butler 1998: 122). In Austin’s terms, Bourdieu is interested in illocutionary acts while Butler tackles the perlocutionary. The difference between these two forms of speech acts is their source of legitimacy. The illocutionary act needs some “sovereign power of speech to bring into being what it declares”; meanwhile, “perlocution depends on an external reality and, hence, operates on the condition of non-sovereign power” (Butler 2010: 151). Bourdieu elaborates on the illocutionary act, the one legitimised by the social relations and institutions in place in the field, but Butler is interested in the perlocutionary act, in which the speaker creates his or her own legitimacy while speaking. The legitimacy of the illocutionary act is produced in the institutional conditions that are – following Bourdieu – outside discourse.

As Villa (2011) has recently pointed out, Butler and Bourdieu differ here in their understanding of the power of the discursive. While Butler sees the discursive as productive for the social (and the social does not exist without the discourses that bring it into being), Bourdieu would differentiate between these two. Bourdieu acknowledges the role that discourse plays in reproducing and legitimizing relations of power and domination (Bourdieu,

Passeron, and Martin 1994). Yet, he asserts that the discursive practices and speech acts are but one dimension of social life, and they only gain power when they are legitimized through their link to material resources, i.e. capitals, or through their embeddedness in structural mechanisms, i.e. the logic of the field (Bourdieu 2000). Thus Bourdieu would assume that only those whose backgrounds are legitimized will have the power to speak and hence have change agency, while Butler focuses instead on how a specific speech act can be potentially tailored in a given situation to mimic the legitimized position and thereby create a copy of it. On the contrary, as it is “clearly possible to speak with authority *without* being authorized to speak” (Butler 1998: 123), Butler is interested, instead, in showing how the authorized speech act fails and hence is a potential source of resistance. In her perspective, the social and the discursive are co-constitutive, so people create their legitimacy as they speak.

Also looking at embeddedness, we can find similarities and differences in Butler’s and Bourdieu’s respective understandings. Bourdieu (1977) emphasizes the habitus as the organic mechanism through which agents are embedded in the social field where they are located. The habitus is understood “as a kind of regularized activity that conforms to the ‘objective’ demands of a given field” (Butler 1998: 115). Also here, Butler emphasizes the embeddedness of the performance and the performative power of habitus that is “itself formed through the mimetic and participatory acting in accord with the objective field” (Butler 1998: 117). The norms that produce the habitus are at the same time reproduced through it. Thus they provide us with different analytical perspectives analyzing change agency.

Summing up, both theorists see legitimacy as an important concept for understanding change agency, but their perspectives differ in two ways. First, Butler emphasizes the perlocutionary power of speech acts and focuses on how people construct legitimacy, which is generally fragile and situative. Legitimacy is produced within a specific situation or ritual. Hence, she

emphasizes both the situative character of legitimacy and its embeddedness. Bourdieu, on the other hand, highlights the biographical temporality of embeddedness within the field. His concept of habitus, which is strongly related to the embeddedness of agency in structures, is comparably static as it assumes that the social and the discursive are in different spheres. With this epistemological twist he produces the stability of the field. Looking at change, Bourdieu provides us a tool for investigating the symbolic power at work in a specific field and time, while Butler, with her notion of parody, explains how one can change what Bourdieu calls doxa. When people subvert the dominant understanding in place by displacing it, they can create new meanings. In the next section, we use both theoretical approaches for our empirical analysis of change agency; we focus specifically on how legitimacy is produced from these two distinctive perspectives.

Using Butler and Bourdieu to understand change agency: The case of women's right to vote in Appenzell

In this section, using an empirical example, we engage in greater detail with Bourdieu and Butler and the potential to integrate both perspectives to understand different dimensions and facets of the processes of change agency. We analyse aspects of the political struggle for the women's right to vote in the Swiss cantons of Appenzell as a change process, one which both Bourdieu and Butler can help us to better understand. While supporters of women's suffrage depicted it as a human right, the opponents aimed to defend other traditions: what they perceived as the natural gender order, the independent Appenzell identity, and the *Landsgemeinde*, the annual meeting at which all voters publicly place their votes (Mock 1999, Bendix 1993). Supporting women's suffrage was perceived as a severe challenge to these strong, normative, taken-for-granted assumptions, and hence as a provocation that called for resistance. Nevertheless, change happened and resulted in an important change in doxa: While

suffrage had been severely challenged and debated for decades, it became taken for granted within just a few years.

Developing legitimacy in this change process required a balancing act between being perceived as coming from *within* or from *outside* (author's name, 2009). Given that only two possible subject positions were possible within the context of the change process—*insider* and *outsider*, *opposing* or *supporting* suffrage—societal change was framed either as ‘naturally’ emerging from *within* or being ‘artificially’ imposed from the *outside*. This binary framing led to change interventions being perceived as either provocative or conformist—and therefore both sides strategically deployed the *insider* and *outsider* positions. Whether one could become an effective change agent by developing a legitimate voice very much depended on whether one was perceived as coming from the inside and hence accumulating and utilising different forms of capital. But change had to come from outside. Hence, the women's struggle for suffrage involved manipulating the insider and outsider positions that allowed them to construct powerful positions for women who campaigned as insiders from the region. We now explore these issues further by applying both Butler's and Bourdieu's perspectives on agency, embeddedness and legitimacy.

Methodology

Our case study uses both primary and secondary data. We generated the primary data through eight in-depth interviews with individuals who acted as change agents in the process, and drew secondary data from publicly available documents and literature. While we used the documents mainly for contextual information about the change process in both cantons, the interviews focused explicitly on the im/possibilities of individuals acting as change agents. Interviews followed a semi-structured interview guideline based on Witzel's (2012) problem-centered interview. The interview reconstructed the change process and its crucial milestones

from the interviewees' distinctive perspectives, their relevant rationales, discourses, and activities throughout the change process, their personal motivation for getting involved, and their retrospective evaluation of whether interventions succeeded.

The interviews have been conducted by this paper's first author who consulted documents on the Appenzell case and followed up further leads from interviewees to identify interview partners. The eight interview partners were selected according to three criteria. First, they held heterogeneous positions within the change process: one was a member of parliament, one initiated the national court case, and several, both men and women, were active in various political groups, including the special interest group for gender equality. The other two criteria were geography (five individuals from the canton of Ausserrhoden, three from Innerrhoden), and gender (2 men, 6 women). All interview partners have been contacted by email or telephone. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Table 1: Interview partners

Table 1: Interview partners		
Pseudonym	Canton	Position
1 Alfred Gantenbein	Ausserrhoden	Supporter of women's right to vote in several informal groups and events
2 Bernhard Alder	Ausserrhoden	Member of the government
3 Esther Spörry	Ausserrhoden	Supporter of women's rights to vote in several informal groups and events
4 Barbara Steiner	Ausserrhoden	Member of the "Special interest group for gender equality" ¹
5 Maria Balmer ²	Ausserrhoden	Member of the "Special interest group for gender equality"
6 Elisabeth Manser	Innerrhoden	Initiated the constitutional complaint
7 Susanne Eugster	Innerrhoden	Member of the "action committee for the women's right to vote in Innerrhoden"
8 Regula Rüttimann	Innerrhoden	Signed the constitutional complaint in 1990

¹ "Interessensgemeinschaft für politische Gleichberechtigung der Frauen im Kanton Appenzell-Ausserrhoden"

² This interview's recording was lost due to technical problems. However, a report was produced directly after the interview and incorporated to the analysis on content level.

Interviews were conducted in Swiss German dialect; the passages we present here were translated by the first author. S/he transcribed them using a simplified version of the Jefferson code system, introduced to the software package Atlas.ti and coded according to the research questions (Wood and Kroger 2000). In the first analytical step, the first author analyzed the transcripts, looking for accounts that explained change and resistance throughout the change process. S/he concentrated on three queries: What activities did they judge to be successful, and counterproductive? When and how did activists facilitate change? And how were the dominant position of the opponents and the subordinate position of the supporters constructed and legitimized? Through this analytical step we identified different subject positions and their respective effects on legitimacy: Coming from inside was seen as a legitimate position, but coming from outside was associated with changing the traditional values and routines and hence perceived as lacking legitimacy (author's name, 2009).

What initiated the second analytical step was our discovery that actors who gained legitimacy were able to facilitate and balance distinctive subject positions. Further analyzing several examples of how legitimacy was developed within the tension between inside and outside, we expanded our analysis using Butler's and Bourdieu's perspectives on legitimacy and embeddedness and how they emerged in the empirical data.

Analysis

In exploring the change processes in the cantons of Appenzell, we were mainly interested in examples of change agency from a perspective of subjectivation practices, embeddedness and legitimacy. Butler focuses on the subversive aspects and on how performative acts can subvert norms. Bourdieu provides concepts to explain how one obtains a powerful position. Especially relevant here are the concepts of different forms of capital and legitimacy.

In Appenzell, a tight and very closed social space, the outsiders' perspective was indispensable for fostering change. Indeed, the interviewees mainly attributed change agency to individuals coming from the outside as they could act more courageously than those inside. An illustration is the initiation of the national court case for the women's suffrage in Appenzell-Innerrhoden. As activists looked for legal advice, not one attorney from Appenzell-Innerrhoden was willing to collaborate; so they had to go to St. Gallen, a city that is geographically nearby (19km) but was considered 'outside', as it is in a different canton.

Somehow it was funny; they could not find one attorney in Innerrhoden to take action. There are several, but none of them would take up the complaint. They all said 'no chance, give that up.' And then they had to go to St. Gallen, and the more distance from Appenzell, the more attorneys they found who were ready to take action. You can also see that the legal profession is part of the social relations and nobody wanted to take up opposition to anybody else. (Susanne Eugster)

Being perceived as coming from the inside was an important source of social, cultural and symbolic capital; it enabled the participants in the movement to gain a powerful position which was also seen as legitimate. A good example of the relevance of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of different forms of capital is the experience of one interviewee. She had only lived in the canton for a couple of years but was mainly perceived as an 'insider'. However, as soon as she openly supported the cause of suffrage, she was seen as an outsider and thus lost legitimacy. Without her former legitimacy, she could not translate the social and cultural capital at her disposal into symbolic capital, which corresponds to power, prestige and status in this particular field of social relations. Having an opinion which challenged the established order resulted in her being positioned as coming from outside. Without the social, cultural and symbolic capital attributed to the insider she simply could not challenge the norms and act in a subversive way as she was not seen as a legitimate player, to use Bourdieu's (1987) metaphor of game playing.

A similar example is Elisabeth Manser, who initiated the constitutional complaint. Although she had lived in the city of Appenzell for some years, she actually grew up in Herisau, a small city geographically nearby (15km) but outside the border of Innerrhoden. In this example, coming from the outside is connected with having the ability to stand up for women's suffrage, being provocative and hence capable of speaking from an illegitimate position:

Going to the national court was the most provocative that has happened and it was provocative enough. This was this Elisabeth Manser! She was up to something like this! And she was capable of doing it, that's my personal theory, because she was not from Innerrhoden, she was originally from Herisau and from a middle-class, liberal family, as far as I know. Well, her brother is an artist. And she was able to stand up, yes. She didn't have all these inner barriers that these people from there have. (Susanne Eugster)

While being perceived as from the 'inside' was important to gain a powerful voice, coming from the 'outside' proved highly relevant for being able to subvert the norms in place. Hence, Elisabeth Manser's ability to balance this binary opposition of outsider and insider was crucial to her constructing change agency in this context. Using the Bourdieuan repertoires, we can see that obtaining legitimacy is a matter of symbolic capital and social status that constitutes habitus. In that sense, simply being an insider generates a position from which agents can claim the legitimate right to speak their demands. They can translate the cultural capital they have generated through their knowledge of being insiders into symbolic capital, which gives them the power to speak and be heard. As a result, legitimacy lies not in *what* claim is made but in *who* makes it. Legitimacy is interpreted as being developed in illocutionary acts determined by the actor's position in the field. Consequently, from a perspective of legitimacy and capitals, the strong binary between outside and inside, between supporters and opponents, only stabilises the norms already in place. We can also interpret this from Butler's perspective, in which legitimacy is a perlocutionary act one produces while speaking: every scene should also enable the actors to subvert the pre-established subject positions of insiders

and outsiders, supporters and opponents and provide some means to subvert and challenge the norms in place.

Drawing on Butler's idea that change agency occurs through subjectivation practices, we offer a different example of developing legitimacy, by looking at a major change agent in Appenzell-Ausserrhoden, Ms. Elisabeth Pletscher (Strebl & Zlatti, 2005). Though she was not from a rural background and had spent almost all her working life in Zürich—and hence outside Appenzell—Ms. Pletscher would put on her traditional Appenzell dress and speak in the regional dialect in order to perform the legitimacy that would grant her a powerful position to speak. Performing like an insider but uttering an opinion that was typically attributed to the outsider, she developed discursive agency through what Butler would call subjectivation. Thus she was able to mobilise the social and cultural capital of being from Appenzell to establish herself as a legitimate voice. Here, we see Bourdieu's idea of capital as something that can be generated in the situation, something fluid and flexible. Elisabeth Pletscher's performance of the insider habitus shows how legitimacy is at the same time something that is situatively produced and that cannot be separated from the subject position of the speaker.

Both dimensions of change agency seem to be relevant in the Appenzell case: while creating new contexts and disrupting the old, they overcome falsely gendered assumptions and make innovation possible. As our examples of Appenzell Innerrhoden show, legitimacy was developed through social and cultural capital and hence through institutions and structures already in place. Women and attorneys coming from the outside brought in the symbolic capital needed to develop change agency. Initiating the constitutional complaint, they called at the national court—one of the institutions in place—in order to gain legitimacy. In Appenzell Ausserrhoden, activists succeeded in performing discursive change agency. Engaging in and

fostering the public debate on the issue, they became change agents by pointing out the norms they aimed to transform.

Hence, as Butler emphasizes, habitus and legitimacy are not only performative and hence produced through discourse; they are also performed and constitutive for the norms or doxa in place. When we take into account the fact that performances are situated, we see that a specific performance must be timely. Change interventions should be tailor-made for a specific audience, because the norms they target would also change over time. For instance, arguing for women's suffrage is not particularly courageous if it has already been granted. Provocations carry the power to disrupt, but they also carry the danger of being constructed as 'the outsider view', through which they can be externalised, devalued and delegitimised.

Discussion and conclusion

We have illustrated how change and change agency look through the lenses of Bourdieu and Butler, examining how these two influential theorists think about the reproduction of the status quo and possibilities for change in the binary norms or fields. Now we return to our initial question: What insights can we gain into change agency by considering these two scholars together? Accordingly, we conclude by asking how they may help us to understand change agency more completely and how we can overcome the gaps and limitations in each approach. Table 2 summarises our interpretation of their theories in relation to sources of the status quo, change agency, and the location of and possibilities for change.

Table 2: Bourdieu's and Butler's conception of change agency

	Source of Change agency	Location of change	Persistence of status quo	Possibilities for change
Bourdieu	Collective – political action/resistance	Field	Embeddedness in and embodiment of social structures through habitus.	Collective agency to challenge the doxa and to gain access to different forms of capital.
Butler	Repetitive performative acts	Binary norms	Performance as reaffirming the norm.	Performance as subversive acts.

In the ways that both Butler and Bourdieu frame change agency, it is possible to identify a multi-level effort that seeks to transform individual relationships and objective structures. While Butler focuses on the practices of subjectivation and the performative construction of legitimacy as well as their potential to subvert norms, Bourdieu refers to symbolic value and the field of relations in which symbolic capital is produced and reproduced. However, the difference in their focus generates very different pictures of change and change agency. In this difference, we argue, lies the value of treating these two theorists together.

In Butler’s conception, performative acts are the source of change agency; they have the potential to subvert the binary norms as actors recite them imperfectly. However, not all performative practices automatically lead to change; more often than not they reproduce the pre-constructed binary norms as people enact them repeatedly. Still, Butler sees a wide scope for inspired performances that can subvert the norms. As our analysis has shown, if these performances are not to be domesticated by the dominant discourses, their change potential depends a great deal on their claim for legitimacy. Subverting the norm means subverting the

expectations people have about particular identity categories. That is why actors can perform as subjects only if they are recognised as belonging to a certain category, but they can then subvert this process of being categorised.

From Bourdieu's perspective, however, Butler leaves two key questions unanswered. First, what is the source of inspired performances? Second, who is capable of them? Dispossessed and voiceless individuals do not necessarily own the means to challenge the system; nor do their performances have the power and legitimacy to subvert the dominant norms. While Butler's perspective allows us to see how the marginalized might develop legitimacy through practices of subjectivation, she fails to analyze the situational relevance of power and privilege that leads to overconfidence about the power and agency of the marginalised. Those individuals who are in a position to effect change are generally also those who benefit from the status quo.

Nevertheless, Butler's conception allows for change agency in some exceptional contexts, when individuals go against the grain and disrupt routines. Bourdieu fails to offer an explanation for this process. From Butler's perspective, what Bourdieu has not sufficiently theorised is the possibilities of resisting and generating agency from the margins. While Butler refers to subjectivation as a source of change and to the simultaneous danger of subversion being domesticated by the dominant discourses, Bourdieu shows how the status quo is maintained and how actors might also resist it, through the idea that different forms of capital lead to legitimacy. Change agency is possible only if the change agent has access to those forms of capital that others see as legitimate. Thus Bourdieu was more interested in how actors who are contextually embedded in their respective fields of relations, with their varied forms of resources (different forms of capital) would constrain or widen their scope for agentic choice. Agents develop change agency through their position in the field, and

accumulate different forms of capital as a result of playing the game according to the dominant rules. However, as we mentioned above, Bourdieu does not account for the obvious possibility of developing legitimacy, which Butler does, with her conceptualization of perlocutionary acts. Further, Bourdieu's (1990, 2000) concept of habitus, as an embodiment of the structures and logic of the field, suggests that social behaviour is fairly permanent, as marginal acts are not likely to disrupt internalised assumptions and established routines. Indeed, according to Bourdieu, epistemic ruptures are rare.

Bourdieu's concepts have the power to explain change agency as an illocutionary act at the level of collective action and resistance; Bourdieu (2001) believed firmly that structures must be changed if actors are to tackle masculine domination in the gender ordering of social life. Thus, he argued that real social change requires political activism targeting the structures of the field of relations. Thus, collective agency has the potential and capacity to challenge the doxic relations and introduce heterodoxy in the field.

Butler, on the other hand, is useful in understanding how performances develop the speaker's power to disturb and deconstruct the hegemonic norms – and how legitimacy is produced through these very same performances. From this perspective, however, one cannot define the success of a subversive repetition in advance, so strategic interventions are harder to achieve. In that sense, we need to understand both the quality (how legitimacy is produced in subversive acts) and the quantity (how often and by how many people) of subversive performances as we search for human agents' capacity to change the established order.

However, what each theorist fails to explain is the source of inspiration for change. For Butler, as we said above, they are subversive performances, and for Bourdieu they are the sources of ruptures in habitus that enable individuals to resist the doxa. Both authors appear

to be preoccupied with ambitious route maps for changing the forces that continue to be visible in contemporary societies. Bourdieu provides little explanation of how and why one can achieve such ruptures in habitus; those he does define are difficult to use (Burkitt 2002) as they underplay the influence of individuals' vested interests in retaining the status quo and in our case, the gender order. Although Bourdieu clearly defines the direction of change he desires—transforming structures of domination and oppression—he fails to describe the devices and processes people can use to mobilise the required political activism.

The concept of heterodoxy offers one possible answer about the conditions that give individuals the potential to effect change even though the social order is embodied through habitus, which is layered in the body, learned through socialisation, and therefore difficult to change (Bourdieu 1984). The simultaneous existence of orthodoxy and heterodoxy suggests that any given field is occupied by individuals, each with a different habitus. Furthermore, habitus might lead to change if it is placed into a different context (or field) and gains legitimacy through collective agency. In addition, as McLeod (2005) argues, the correspondence between habitus and field, i.e. the fact that habitus is embedded in the field, varies according to the context. Therefore, any analysis of change and change agency must firmly integrate spatial and historical conditions; it must also explore what a given habitus does and does not allow an individual to do at specific points in time in a given social field.

In summary, Bourdieu helps us to understand what Butler neglects in her accounts: the context of performances, which limits and obscures the subversive capacity of performativity. By locating individuals in the field based on the size and scope of their endowments (capital), he shows us how much context matters in accounting for agents' capacity to change. Through the concepts of masculine domination and the interrelatedness of field and habitus he shows us how practices of domination resist any assumptions of change. We must understand

the logic and rules of domination if we are to identify the spaces for heterodoxy and resistance. Hence, Bourdieu's concept of doxa is comparable to the binary norms in Butler's framework, which are subverted by inspired performative practices. Doxa, according to Bourdieu (1984) is the common-sense understanding, the basic assumptions of the everyday world; for change to be possible people must challenge and transform it. Although Bourdieu mainly deals with stability and persistence, and with the difficulties of change, he believes the potential for change is always present if the heterodoxic would gain voice over the orthodoxic through political action.

On the other hand, where Bourdieu's theory fails to account for the change potential of performative acts, Butler's conception allows for a space where people can disrupt routines and habitus through everyday acts of subjectivation. More importantly, through these two significantly different conceptions of the human agency to change, we can understand that there are different facades and types of both change and change agency. Bringing them together facilitates a double focus: we can see how legitimacy is constructed as both structure and agency and how, at the same time, norms are confirmed and subverted. Change may take the form of performances that deconstruct the binary norms of gender relations, and may also draw on the well-established institutionalized forms of collective resistance by political movements that explicitly aim to alter the doxa and field of power so they can overhaul various elements of masculine domination.

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