Habitus-Analysis: a method to analyze cognitive operators of practical logic

by

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Contribution to the Congress
Beyond Bourdieu – Habitus, Capital & Social Stratification
University of Copenhagen – December 1st.-2nd. 2009

Universität Bielefeld
Theologie

CIRRuS
Center for the interdisciplinary Research on Religion *and* Society

Abstract:

It is well known that Pierre Bourdieu did not develop a qualitative method – comparable with the construct of the social space (La Distinction) – allowing the analysis of habitus. The present paper sketches an outline of such a model, based upon field research on the Pentecostal movement during wartime in Guatemala (1985) and validated with Pentecostals in many occasions during 1995 to 2003 in Latin America. The method is based upon the theories of habitus and practical logic. It provides techniques for the analysis of qualitative research material and for the reconstruction of the actor's habitus and (religious) identity as a network of dispositions. First, the model is transformative and shows how religious actors cope with experiences of uncertainty or crisis and develop from there cognitive patterns of perception, judgment and action as well as identities and strategies. Second, the comparison of two such models shows how differential coping with uncertainty develops out of the mere difference between given social positions and, accordingly, different kinds of crisis experience – although both groups are working with the same inventory of religious symbols. Finally, the combination of habitus-analysis with a model of the social space of religious styles allows interpreting the habitus within the social relations of power.

After a development during the last 20 years, mostly in Latin America, the method is being tested and formalized since 2006 in different projects at the University of Bielefeld, Germany.[1]

It is well known that Bourdieu did not develop a method for qualitative research on the subjective side of human praxis. Instead, his empirical studies on habitus, practical logic – on meaning, so to speak – rely much on traditional structuralist binarism. (Bourdieu 1977, 1980) Although the concept of "habitus" is widely used by researches based on Bourdieu's theories – yet there is very few intent to operationalize the concept in a method for qualitative empirical research.[2] Especially, the concept still lacks a way of operationalizing the *specific*

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[1] This contribution was elaborated in the context of the Center for the Interdisciplinary Research on Religion and Society (CIRRuS). For an account of projects and publications see: http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/%28en%29/theologie/forschung/religionsforschung/forschung/index.html (especially "Publications" and "Open Access".

[2] Indeed, there is quite a lot of literature discussing the concept of habitus on a theoretical level. But the author of these lines found only a few intents to deepen the understanding in specific methodology. Diaz-Bone (2000), e.g., locates conventional discourse analysis within the broader

dimensions of the habitus – perception, judgment and action – as well as their transformative relations by a method for empirical research. This is precisely what the present contribution is going to outline.

The descriptive model at the center of our considerations was developed in the context of a qualitative field study on Pentecostalism in Guatemala and Nicaragua, during approximately two and a half years in 1983, 1985 and 1986.[3] For the present paper it is enough to concentrate on two religiously and socially contrasting samples: Neo-Pentecostals in the modernizing upper middle class and Classical Pentecostals in the traditional lower class of Guatemala (Schäfer 2006). Thus, Guatemalan Pentecostals will serve to illustrate the model in the following. According to the intimate connection between habitus and field or social space – that does not simply concede a "cultural turn" to enter into analysis of pure meaning – I will combine the model for habitus-analysis with one of the social space. So I will present two interconnecting formal models based upon Bourdieu's theory: the *space of religious styles* and *the praxeological square and network*. First, I will outline some brief considerations on my reading of Bourdieu. Second, I will exemplify the use of the models with some data on Pentecostalism; third and fourth, I will add some notes on the more specific methodological and theoretical background of the model of habitus.

1. Some annotations on Bourdieu

For my approach it is most important that Bourdieu relates social structures, their perception and action in a way that vanquishes the separation of what he calls "social physics" of Durkheim and "idealist semiology" of Garfinkel (Bourdieu 1984: 483). For the

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context of Bourdieu's theory of habitus. A methodological approach to analyze the habitus of children by visual material is taken by Helmut Bremer and Christel Teiwes-Kügler (2007); they analyze collages according to "habitus-hermeneutics". Similarly, Burkard Michel and Jürgen Wittpoth (2006) present a methodological approach to the analysis of photographs. Kellner (2007) uses the concept of habitus as a theoretical frame for an ethnological study of narrations, but without much consequence for the method of narration analysis. Additionally, the beginning debates of a group – coordinated by Thomas Alkemeyer and Michael Vester whom the author is communicating with – on "habitus hermeneutics" is worth mentioning here.

[3] …producing 195 guided interviews, 100 taped sermons, some 120 protocols of religious services and, of course, a field diary for observations. For fuller accounts of this research see Schäfer 1992a, 1992b, 2003; for the current situation see Schäfer 2009a; for the state of the art see Schäfer & Tovar 2009.

sake of a clear conceptual distinction and better mutual relation – but precisely *not* for separation – I distinguish between "logic of practice" and "practical logic": Logic of practice says "this is how it works around here" whereas practical logic tells "this is how we do it". Thus, the logic of practice connotes very much the models of social space and field; practical logic is related to the dispositions of the actors. Habitus links both, as far as it is intimately combined with the social positions of the actors and their specific opportunities in the fields of action. The logic of practice is understood as condition of operation and principle of structuring the practical logic; and practical logic enables the actors to perceive the logics of practice, to judge and to act. Consequently practical logic structures identities and strategies of the actors and, hence, again the logic of practice. It is precisely this interaction between logic of practice and practical logic that overcomes the separation of "social physics" and "social semiology". It is important to note that things, institutions and practices exert a semiotic force and effect; and that signs exert a pragmatic force and effect on institutions and practices. Therefore, in respect to the practical logic of given actors and the logic of a given practice, things, institutions, practices and signs can be seen as *operators* of such praxis. Look at, e.g., a sentence like "We are right in the middle of the end times". This is not simply a religious sign or the designation of a real state of affairs. More than anything else, such a phrase is a practical operator that generates specific ways of perception, judgment and action, that is: a structuring activity *within* and *on* the logics of practice or simply: praxis.

So, by the way, the terminological distinction between "practical logic" and "logic of practice" simply refers to the subjective and objective side of "praxis". Conceiving "praxis" like this, I intend to underscore the roots of Bourdieu's understanding of the term in the young Marx (*Theses against Feuerbach*) and, finally, in the Aristotelian concept of "*bios*".[4]

However, the operators of practical logic come to be relevant for the collective identities and strategies of the actors. Operators of practical logic are "embedded" or "stored" within the habitus of the actors as dispositions. The concept of disposition – a clue for Bourdieu himself talking about the habitus (Bourdieu 1980) – underscores the readiness (predisposition, inclination, preference) of actors for certain (and not other) perceptions,

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[4] So it remains obvious that we do not refer to the juxtaposition of "theory" (in the sense of intellectual vision) and "practice" (in the sense of acting). In my understanding it even might be better to speak of "logic of practice*s*" in plural to avoid any identification of "practice" with "praxis".

judgments and actions. Dispositions relate to a field of praxis not as an image but rather as an instrument that executes certain operations as this is necessary or wanted and that, thus, interferes into the field. Having a disposition relies very much on the physical and affective energy of an actor – quite similar to a spiral or elastic spring. It is the concept of disposition that links cognition closely to sensorial human praxis (as Karl Marx would have it). As the concept of disposition stresses the readiness to perceive, to judge and to act of real, living human beings (instead of universal structures of the spirit, as Claude Levi-Strauss would postulate) it underscores as well that the habitus are changing and modifying according to the fluctuations (*conjuncture*) of the conditions in fields and social space.

Briefly: dispositions are incorporated operators of practical logic that are linked to one another by logical relations and in the form of a network. (This is the operational basis to conceive of identity as a network, too.) But here, the issue at stake is another one. It is the modeling of precisely such a network of operators as a result of the qualitative empirical study of collective actors – in our case Pentecostals in Guatemala during the counter insurgency-war in the 1980ies.

A model of operators of a given practical logic should meet the following requirements:

We can conceive of the operators of a practical logic as a logic combination of terms which are…
- rich in cognitive content,
- structured and
- generative.

Moreover they have to possess the attributes of…
- orientating and
- confining (thus structuring and generating) perception, judgment and action.

Thus, they are the deep structures of those processes that generate knowledge and action. Moreover, they are directly related to experience and they are relevant for the identities and strategies of (individual and collective) actors. A model of such operators should be able to represent the operative connections of practical logic as follows: It should name the *basic cognitive distinctions* (as e.g. holy versus profane) that operate to construct a specific field of praxis; and it should represent the transformations between experience and interpretation that generate meaning. Consequently the model should be structural and generative at the same time. As the model links experience and interpretation, the demand of the actors for

meaning should be represented in its connection to the generation of meaning. Finally, as to address judgment explicitly, the *axiological function* of the operators should be taken into account.

Such a model can be constructed as a *network* that links operators related to different fields of praxis and forms a large "cognitive map" of an (individual or cognitive) actor. It should be possible to distinguish such different domains that are in relation to different fields of praxis. Moreover, it should be possible to distinguish central schemes of operators from marginal (or less important) ones.

Thus, it should be possible to define, by reconstructive analysis, for any given actor a central formula for the generation of meaning out of experience, and to visualize the variations of this process. Finally, the model should be able to show how the operators of practical logic are being used for the constitution of identities and strategies of the actors.

As the model focuses on the transformation of experience into meaning and meaning into experience, it simulates in a certain sense the close connection between habitus, field and social structure. Nevertheless, the model of practical operators is not enough to reconstruct the objective position of the actors at stake, neither in fields nor in the social space. Therefore we complement the method by a second model: the social space, according to Bourdieu (1984). (In this article we will not enter into the construction of field models.) This model facilitates to locate the actors at stake in their positions relative to the distribution of economic and cultural capital in a given society. It is only by taking such an objective context of praxis into account that the identities and strategies of the actors can be understood as active forces in a given logic of praxis, that is in struggles for power and recognition, in inequality, enmity, alliances etc.[5]

As I unfold the models in the following, I will begin with the model of the social space. As the actors I have studied are religious, the model is interpreted as a social space of religious
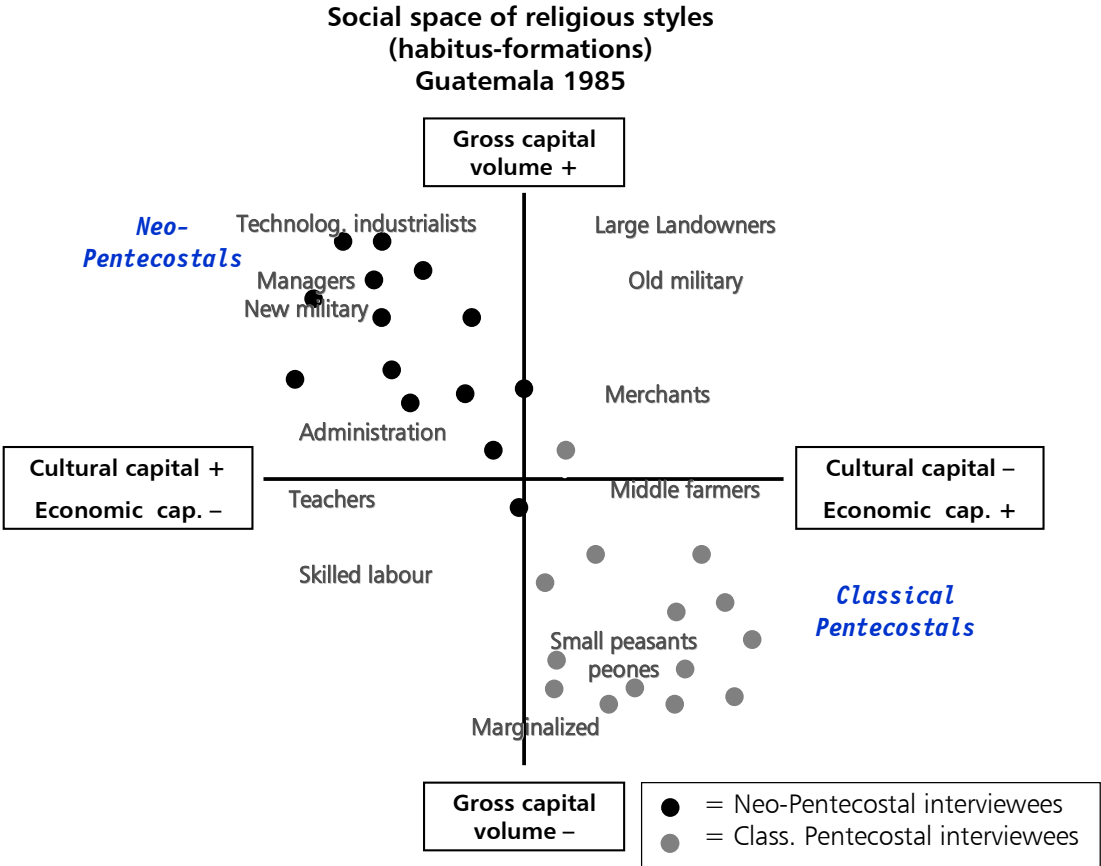
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[5] At this point, some theoretical considerations would be necessary about the heuristic function of models, the problems of the relation between logics and semantics, of formal logic and non-logical praxis, the opportunities and pitfalls of homology construction etc. But this would definitely go beyond the scope of this article.

styles. Then I exemplify the model of the network of dispositions with Guatemalan Pentecostals. And finally I give an outline of theoretical and methodological aspects of the basic model in habitus-anaylsis: the praxeological square.

2. The space of religious styles: contrasting positions

As in Bourdieu, constructing the social space is not more than an intermediate, objectivistic step to understanding human praxis within its social conditionings. So, the model responds to the need of describing the "class position" of religious actors as the condition out of which their *habitus* and, thus, their preferences generate. It makes clear what level and kind of social power, expectations, constraints, opportunities etc. the different religious actors are associated with.

Social space of religious styles
(habitus-formations)
Guatemala 1985

| Gross capital volume + |

Neo-Pentecostals Technolog. industrialists   Large Landowners

Managers   Old military
New military

| Cultural capital +   Administration   Cultural capital – |
| Economic cap. –   Teachers   Middle farmers   Economic cap. + |

Merchants

Skilled labour   Classical Pentecostals

Small peasants peones

Marginalized

| Gross capital volume – | ● = Neo-Pentecostal interviewees
                                    ● = Class. Pentecostal interviewees

The theoretical space is constructed according to Bourdieu (1984). It is modeled as a coordinate system by the implementation of two different forms of capital: economic (income) and cultural (education). The vertical axis consists of the aggregation of both forms

of capital; actors with a high amount of both forms of capital are at the top, the others below. The horizontal axis consists of the two forms of capital differentiated over against one another; actors with relatively more economic than cultural capital are on the right, and those with relatively more cultural than economic capital are on the left.[6] Thus, in Guatemala, big landowners are positioned in the upper right against industrialists and managers in the upper left; and small peasants are stuck in the lower right against skilled labor in the lower left etc.

According to basic socio structural data (income and education) the interviewees of the two sub-samples can be located relatively well within the model. They are distributed according to the strong polarization of Guatemalan society during the years of economic crisis and counterinsurgency warfare:[7] some in the modernizing upper middle class, others in the traditional lower class. So much for the objective positioning.

In relation to religious style, I detected the following as I approached to analyze the habitus of the actors (we will see this analysis further on): According to their social positions, the religious *habitus* of the actors – their dispositions and preferences – were *very* different,[8] although all of them used a common inventory of typical Pentecostal beliefs. Social positions

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[6] Having implemented Bourdieu's model of the social space in the 1980ies,in a more ethnographical way, we are now developing a precisely scaled model for quantitative research in our research team. In order to achieve broad international compatibility we reduced the indicators to the most necessary. Economic capital is conceived on the basis of income (equivalence income a.s.f.); cultural capital is conceived as formal education and is scaled according to the *International Standard Classification of Education* (ISCED by UNESCO). Of course it may be that social relations in given societies follow other criteria of structuring than the ones of economic and cultural capital (e.g. seniority). And some might say that in traditional societies, tribes, or post-war societies (like Bosnia-Herzegovina) social capital is of more importance than economic. If that is so, one might want to use the relevant form of capital to construct a similar model. However, the research of our team at Bielefeld University (on social space: Leif Seibert and Patrick Hahne [Bosnia-Herzegovina], Jens Köhrsen [Argentina], and Kurt Salentin [as guest specialist for international quantitative research]) indicates that there are many good reasons to adhere to a simple way of measuring economic and cultural capital and to construct a very simple model of distribution. This provides a clear basis for the most important task: the scholarly *interpretation* of these data.
[7] About this distribution of Classical Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals is much more to say. For macro developments see Schäfer 1992a, 1992b; for the meso- and micro-level cf. Schäfer 2006.
[8] It is important to realize that we are not talking about institutional affiliation, but about habitus-formations. These are much more important for religious and social praxis of believers than their affiliation. Steigenga (2007: 267) for example has very good statistical data on the fact that the political behaviour of evangelicals is much more determined by their beliefs than by their denominational affiliation.

thus appeared as religious habitus formations, too. In the present article, for sake of brevity, we call these groupings of actors simply Neo-Pentecostals and Classical Pentecostals. The first is located in the modernizing upper middle class (upper left), the latter in the traditional lower class (lower right). Summing up, we can see that religious styles are distributed in society according to their correspondence with certain social positions and with their constraints, opportunities, grievances and so forth.

Now, the analysis of religious *habitus*, using our second model, allows specifying with very fine detail the cognitive dispositions and practical logic of these actors – and thus "understanding" the religious "meaning" (Max Weber) that the actors ascribe to their practices in the context of their social position.

3. The praxeological network: contrasting dispositions of Pentecostals in Guatemala

While the space of religious styles informs about social *positions* of religious actors, the praxeological square and network inform about their religious *dis*positions. We now exemplify our model by the contrasting dispositions of middle class Neo-Pentecostals and lower class Pentecostals in Guatemala about 1985.[9] We first focus on Neo-Pentecostals and explain the basic model of the praxeological square and its extension into a network of dispositions; then we go on with the Classical Pentecostals, focusing on the basic model of the square only, since this is sufficient to show the contrast between the two habitus formations. The models below result from an analysis of interviews according to our method of habitus-analysis (see below).

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[9] This finding is important since it shows strong internal differences within what is often treated as a homogeneous religious movement. In fact, the Pentecostal movement in Guatemala was quite uniform in terms of "doctrine" until the early eighties, and even after that, different strands of the movement made use of a common repertoire of religious symbols. However, they have constructed different habitus out of these symbols, according to their social position, their habitus of class, their interest, their opportunities and their constraints.

Praxeological square: Neopentecostals – modernizing upper middle class

Quest of power decided

Level of interpretation

Power of God in the Holy Spirit

Action of demons

Level of experience

Empowered Individuals

Threat to extension of upper middle class power

Power threatended

→ Identity
→ Strategy
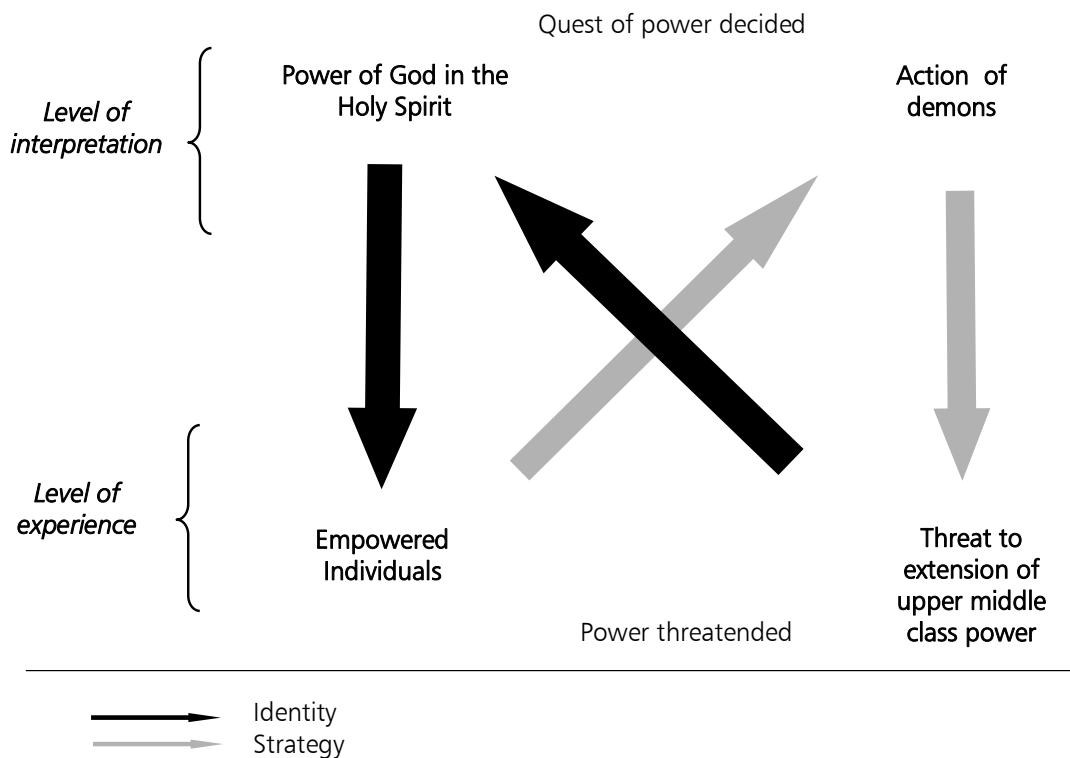
A brief look at the Neo-Pentecostals in the upper-middle class shows a religious praxis centered on the quest of social power (see axes): on the level of experience "power is threatened", while on the level of religious interpretation the "quest of power is decided". The actors experience a threat to their social position of upper middle class (through the guerrilla movement, paramilitary forces, economic crisis and a loss of control over their personal lives). This is being answered by the Neo-Pentecostal Church promising the power of the Holy Spirit onto the believers. Thus, the Neo-Pentecostal faith constitutes the new religious identity of spiritually empowered individuals. These individuals, finally, are endowed with the capacity to combat the originators of the experienced threat: the demons. Thus, power turns out to be the central pattern for identity and exorcism the central strategic pattern.

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   X          X          X          X          X         Teufel                Teufel              Einige
                                                                                                   Denomin.
   ~          ~          ~          ~          ~           ~                     ~                    ~
   X          X          X                               Devil        God      Devil               Einfluss
                                                                                                   d. Teufels

   X    |     X    |     X    |     X    |     X    |      |          |         |          |          |
                                                         Violence   Christian  Violence            Kulturlose
        X          X          X          X            of right    military   of left           Protestanten

   ~          ~          ~          ~          ~          ~          ~          ~          ~          ~
Chr. anti-   Decay of  North atlant. Latinity  Social power Cultural  Evangelism  Indig.    Catholic    Poor
soc.boom     Nation    Capitalism              of Neopent.  Catholic.            culture   Charismatics Protestants

Gods         Latin     Protest.    Latin cult.  God's      God far    Power      God far   [ Holy      Haeretic
Future       Mentality Reformation heritage    Power-action away      Of God     away       Spirit ]   poverty
   ~          ~          ~          ~            ~          ~          ~          ~
Gods         Tradicion. Spirit in  Adverse     Power of    Demons     Supernat.  Specific   Power of   Deseases
victory      Pentec.   culture     powers      the Spirit             Powers     Demons     Spirit

Mirac. power Unorderly Extasis    Probl. of    Empowered   Loss of    Pastoral   Rooted     Minister   The sick
of Neopent.  spirituality in church chr. Life   Individuals controll   Authority  conflicts

   ~          ~          ~          ~            ~          ~          ~          ~          ~          ~
Soc. Power  [ritualistic Spirit.   Moral       Soc. Influen. Threatening Pol. repres. Pol. struggle Soc. res- Contradiction
of Neopent.  Piety ]    life       Decay       of Neopent.  soc. probl. of Neopent.  right/left   ponsablity Poor/rich

            [false     Esch. David. Adverse    God as       Devil      Gods power Conflict   Politics of Poor and
             Church]   Restauration Powers     power basis             in Neopent. parties   neop. members Rich
   ~          ~          ~          ~            ~          ~          ~          ~          ~          ~
Dominion of  Suffering Foes of God Gods action  Devil      Neop. Org. Devil in   Neop. Org.
Antichrist   Neopent.  in Guate.   in prosperity            a. members pol. advers. a. memebers

System of   Survival   Attacks on  Economic    Economic    Political  Violence   Social
Antichrist  in suffering Neopent.  Prosperity  Problems    Evangelism            evangelism
   ~                               ~            ~          ~
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The basic model of the square will extend into a network as the analysis of interviews (and other material, if desired) proceeds. Then, in the Neo-Pentecostal sample, it can be seen how the actors use the central strategic scheme of exorcism in different fields of praxis. The scheme is applied to lesser personal problems being the individual Christian his own exorcist. It also addresses grave personality distortions with a special minister as exorcist. It can also be applied to military conflict, with "Christian military" as the exorcist and guerrillas or paramilitary forces as the demons – finally legitimating even Napalm bombings on Indian villages. Further, the network model renders evident, how power strategies combine with promises of prosperity and with disdain for the poor, as well as with the idea of eradicating Latin style corruption in order to implant North-Atlantic religious reformation and democracy, and so forth.

With reference to the interplay between experience and interpretation, position and disposition, the Neo-Pentecostal example shows how religious meaning transforms the major grievance of the actors – the perceived threat to their social position – into a religious

strategy of power. The actors produce, concomitantly, a specific religious identity *and* corresponding strategies – turning religious meaning quite practical.

The network facilitates analyzing religious identity politics as they where displayed by the interview quote at the beginning of this article. It shows how practical metaphors – as "exorcism" or "healing" – translate meaning and action from one field of praxis into others: from personal well-being to economy, to politics and even to military action.[10] The instrument of the network shows that religious identity politics anchor intimately in the religious convictions of the particular actors. This also means that for religious convictions, in one way or the other, social and political living conditions always matter.
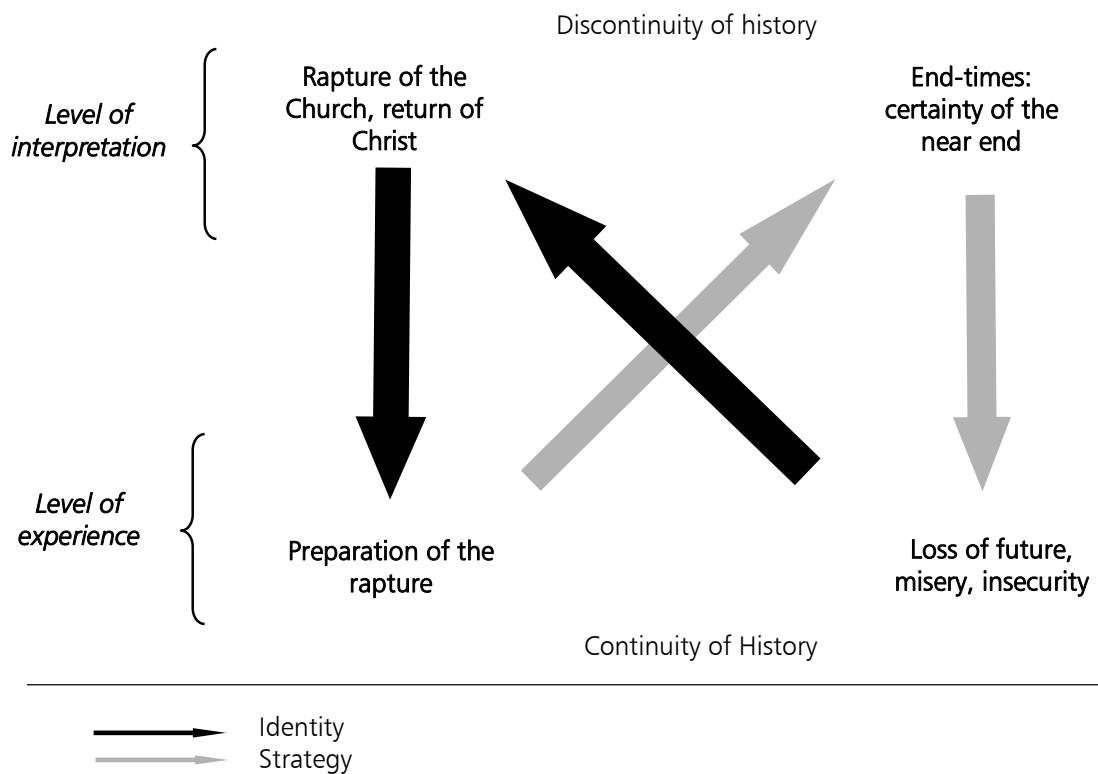
This is also the case with Classical Pentecostals, who most vigorously affirmed to be "a-political". Their social position simply breeds different religious dispositions.

In the traditional fractions of the lower class we find Classical Pentecostal praxis build around the quest for survival ("continuity of history"). People feel that they lack any possibility to shape their future, due to poverty and fierce military repression ("loss of future" etc.). They counteract this situation with the promise of being removed in rapture from this world during the near second coming of Christ. This hope results in their new identity as a church in "preparation for the rapture". From this position, the explanation for their loss of opportunities becomes evident: during the apocalypse everything necessarily changes for the worse. In such a situation, the most viable strategy is the following: a clear break with political and social action and the withdrawal into the church – exactly the strategy that, under repression and misery, allows for survival through in-group solidarity. Thus, the religious interpretation of history ("rupture of history") turns out to be a rationale and a strategy for an experiential continuity of history – which practically means: survival. It is this strategic pattern that Guatemalan lower class Pentecostals displayed in almost any social relationship – until these believers changed their beliefs during the peace process and the beginning democratization.

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[10] Now the whole background of social connotation resounds as one interviewee says: "Actually I am busy with finding as many fellow Guatemalans as possible in order to make the nation transform by inner transformation of each Guatemalan." Interview 59/87, December 1985 and February 1986.

Praxeological square: classical Pentecostalism – traditional lower class

Discontinuity of history

Level of interpretation

Rapture of the Church, return of Christ

End-times: certainty of the near end

Level of experience

Preparation of the rapture

Loss of future, misery, insecurity

Continuity of History

———▶ Identity
———▶ Strategy

After this short flashlight on empirical findings we can distinguish a habitus of charismatic dominion over the world in the upper middle class from a habitus of apocalyptic escape from the world in the traditional lower class. Hopefully three things have become evident.

- First, religious identities, identity politics and strategies vary according to the social positions of the actors, that is, according to their specific grievances, opportunities and constraints.

- Second, strategies and identities as well as preferences and social positions are not that utterly different as the aforementioned theory gap makes believe.

- Third, qualitative modeling on the basis of Bourdieu's praxeology makes sense for the study of collective (and individual) identities and strategies.

After exemplifying the method, I now turn to the methodological and theoretical aspects of the models.

4. The square: cognition, identity and strategy

I hope that the empirical observations could already generate some plausibility for my opinion that these models help to relieve our theory-grievances about the class dependency of preferences, the gap between identity and strategy approaches and about the importance of listening to the actors. However let me spend some more lines on the models as such.

The model of the *space of religious styles*, I think, is almost self-explanatory. In any case, it is a simple adaptation of Bourdieu's (1984) basic model in *La distinction* for religious praxis. So I leave the readers for now with the recommendation to simply compare the model above with the one developed by Bourdieu.

The model of a *praxeological network*, on the other hand, needs some explanation by its author. Obviously the network of practical operators is an extension of the basic *praxeological square*. Both are, in terms of theory, developed out of Bourdieu's notion of practical logic.[11] Methodically they are intended to serve for reconstructing practical dispositions of interviewees. The model of the praxeological square is a sociological transformation of the "semiological square" of the French structuralists Algirdas Julien Greimas and François Rastier (Greimas 1966, Greimas & Rastier 1970).

The analytical model of the square, for social research, has to fulfill certain demands. First, a formal instrument, in itself not operating with presupposed religious content, allows for observing, if religion is at all important for the actors and, additionally, lets the religious preferences of the actors emerge as the clue for understanding their praxis. Second, the instrument does not interfere too much with the actors' narratives of their religious praxis in the context of open interviews. Third, it facilitates the combination of interview analysis with observations and other data leading to the reconstruction and interpretation of the actors' praxis. A formal model, nevertheless, should not adhere simply to structuralist binarism, to quasi-metaphysical concepts of "symbolic forms" or to the idea of "symbol systems". Instead, it should show how people generate practical sense as a sense for their praxis (Bourdieu). So, fourth, a model should enable researchers to structure the processes by

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[11] See Bourdieu 1980 (above all, the chapter on the "demon of analogy").

which actors generate a sense for their praxis. And fifth, since we search to understand alien praxis in its social context, the instrument should be action-related *and* provide a way to relate the findings to the surrounding social structure; it should be a model for analyzing praxis in the Aristotelian (concept of *bios*) and Marxian (*Theses against Feuerbach*) sense of the word. Thus the model presented here is based on the presupposition that in order to understand alien praxis, it is necessary to establish formal, action-oriented distinctions to guide the observation, not contents oriented ones.

The semiotic square according to Greimas/Rastrier

Greimas and Rastier developed their model of a "semiotic square" out of a medieval combination of the basic logical relations in Aristotelian logic. Three basic relations have been used during history precisely to structure the transformations in logical syllogism: implication, contrariness and contradiction. These basic relations are culturally universal, since in any culture people know the relations of causality (rain implies a wet street), of difference (green versus blue) and of mutual exclusion (light versus darkness).[12] During late

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[12] There is a discussion whether the Aristotelian law of non-contradiction is valid for Asian logic, since "A" can allegedly also be "B" according to Asian logic. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account whether we are talking about "A" being "B" in a certain aspect, perspective or context. In such a case, the difference between "European" and "Asian" ways of thinking are no longer as grave. Darkness can be light for a European Mystic as well; however, this kind of religious experience makes

Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, these relations were organized into the so-called syllogistic square. This model was adapted by Gremias and Rastier (1970) to analyze "deep structures of the semantic universe". The square – as the two French structuralists use it – describes the constraints according to which meaning is being produced. The square is made up of terms (A, B, Non-A and Non-B) which are linked to one another by three relations: contrariness (A to B and Non-A to Non-B), implication (A to Non-B and B to Non-A) and contradiction (A to Non-A and B to Non-B). The S-axis (contrary) is "neutral", so that the terms have an "either-or" relation. The S̲-axis (sub-contrary) is "complex", so that the terms have an "as well as" relation. Finally, the relations of implication are named deixeis. The first deixis (A and Non-B) is defined as positive; the second (B and Non-A) as negative. Finally, the transverse relations (A to Non-A, B to Non-B)[13], the "schemata", are contradictory. For the deep structures of the semantic universe, the model shows that meaning is being constituted by difference and logical transformation. To put it simply: to go from "active" to "passive", logic has to pass over "non-active". Greimas and Rastier use the model to describe the "semantic universe" of gender relations in France. Thus, they distinguish, on the positive deixis, "matrimonial (prescribed)" and "normal (not forbidden)" relations as "allowed" from the relations on the negative deixis as "excluded": "abnormal (forbidden)" and "non-matrimonial (not prescribed)". The model suits for understanding the logical underpinnings of *meaning* systems. But it is not suitable for understanding the *social* processes of "making sense" of one's praxis.

In order to use the model for describing such social processes it has to be transformed from conceptual logic to propositional and – most important – a level of experience has to be distinguished from a level of interpretation (or meaning ascription). Under these conditions the model can be used sociologically in order to analyze meaningful social action.

With reference to our initial questions on theory and method we will here briefly focus on two aspects of the model: first, the cognitive transformations that operate between the experiences of social relations and the ascription of meaning to them; and second, the relation between identity and strategy.
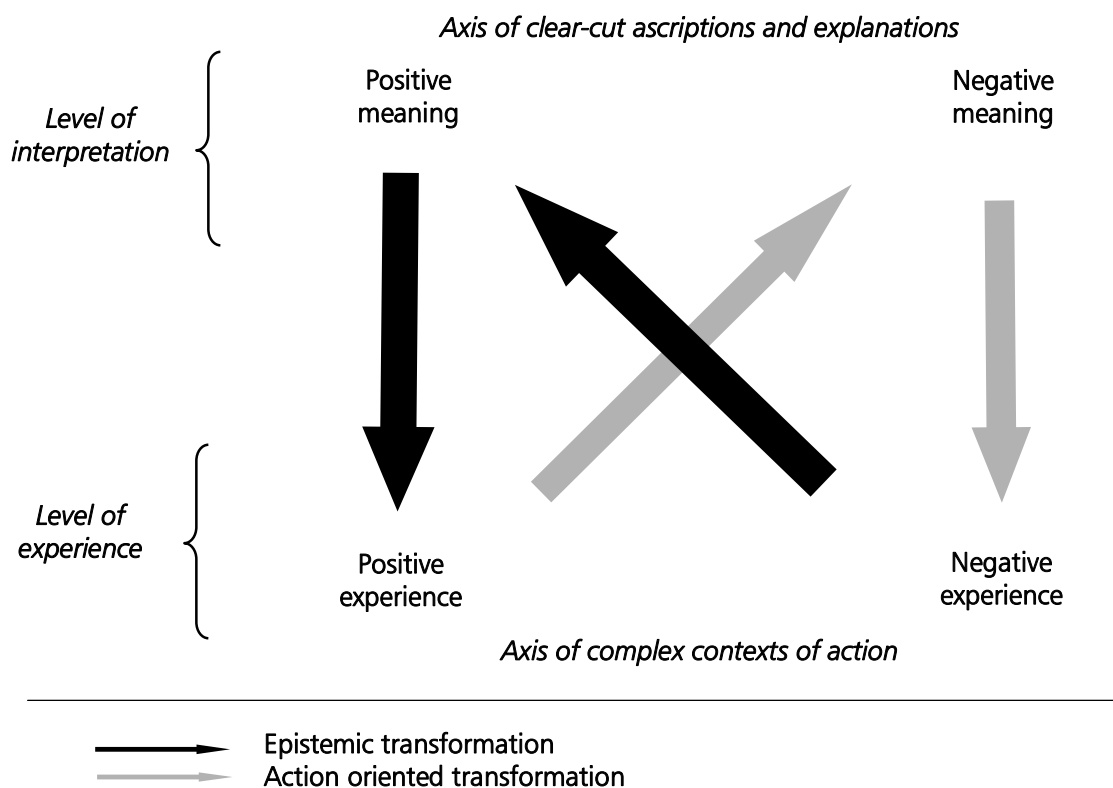
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sense only within the framework that the *normal* or *general* relation between light and darkness is one of mutual exclusion.

[13] Later, in this article, Non-A will be referred to as "A̲" and Non-B as "B̲".

Praxeological square: cognitive transformations

Axis of clear-cut ascriptions and explanations

Level of interpretation

Positive meaning

Negative meaning

Level of experience

Positive experience

Negative experience

Axis of complex contexts of action

→ Epistemic transformation
→ Action oriented transformation

Looking at the cognitive operations that relate experience and their interpretation, the model shows that the basic logical operations flow between positive and negative experiences and corresponding meaning ascriptions. They carry out two transformations: the epistemic and the action oriented (expressed by the black and grey arrows respectively).

The epistemic transformation (black arrows) operates under the axiomatic dichotomy between "positive" and "negative meaning", which is to say that clear-cut ascriptions and explanations interpret complex contexts of action and experience, e.g. by ascribing reasons for existence. In this way, the model helps to describe how experience, from its first moment, is being understood not only according to habitual schemes of evaluation but also according to perceived opportunities and constraints. Correspondingly, the *action-oriented* transformation (grey arrows) helps to describe how concepts of action are being molded according to the forms of perception and evaluation of experience, and not only by

opportunities and constraints of the field. In a formal sense: the processes of structuring experience and designing action can be understood as homological.

These transformations constantly relate the complex and fuzzy context of action with more or less clear cut categories of interpretation. It is these transformations where meaning arises. Meaning, thus, is not simply a reflection of social structures or something alike; it is a constant transformation of qualified experience (negatively and positively) into judgment and action. Meaning is involved in action. And for this reason, action itself and the change of opportunities and constraints have direct effects on meaning. Social relations and meaning ascription, therefore, should be and can be described together. We can then see that perceived opportunities and constraints as well as grievances and self positioning of the actors are simply part of *one and the same* set of cognitive dispositions.[14] In terms of social movement theory this implies the following: The term for "negative experience" can be understood as perceived crisis or as grievances, since social movements, according to New Social Movement theory, react to such events. The term of "reasons for positive experience" can be understood as perceived opportunities, and the term of "reasons for negative experience" as perceived constraints, according to Resource Mobilization theory. Correspondingly, the model allows for a systematic empirical integration of identity and strategy-oriented approaches.

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[14] This means that, for example, the term for "negative experience" can be understood as perceived crisis or grievances, since social movements, according to New Social Movement theory, react to such events. The term of "reasons for positive experience" can be understood as perceived opportunities, and the term of "reasons for negative experience" as perceived constraints, according to Resource Mobilization theory.

Praxeological square: generation of identity and strategy

Axis of cognitive elaboration of experience

Solutions, alliances

Structural conditions, adversaries

Level of interpretation

Level of experience

Position of the movement, base for strategies

Articulated Problems, grievances

Axis of field-orientated elaboration of cognition
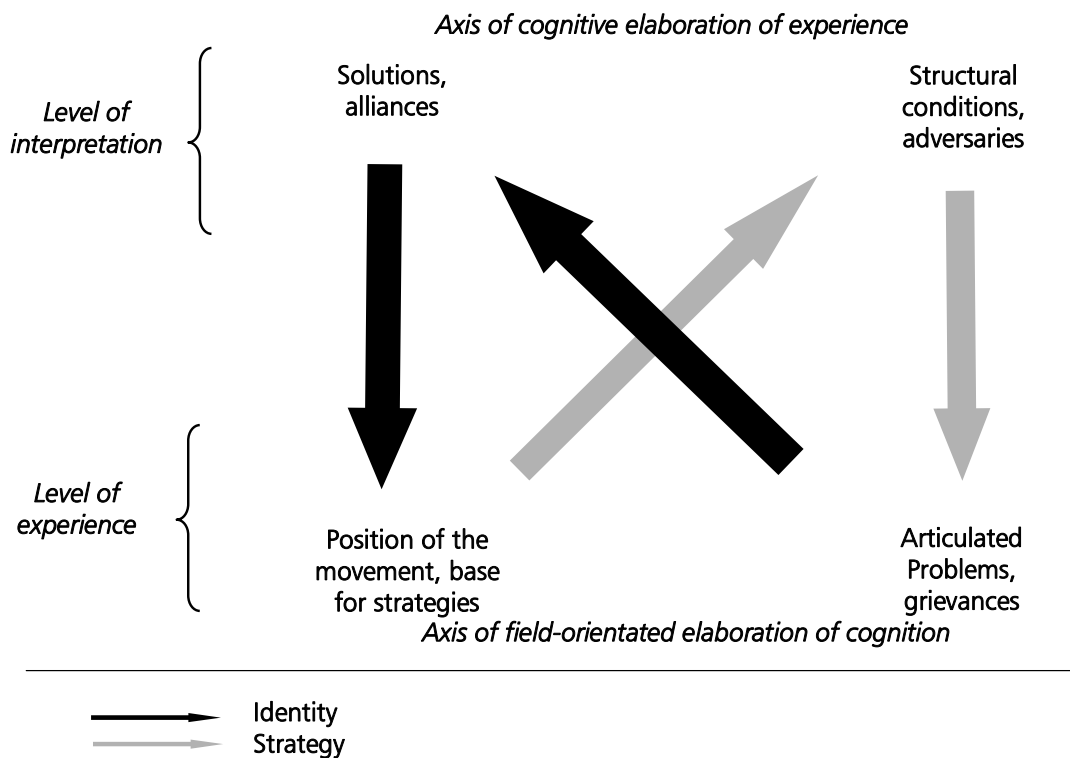
→ Identity
→ Strategy

Looking, second, at identity and strategy, the model can be read as a process in which actors – in our case religious movements – position themselves within their social context. (Collective) actors articulate grievances, imagine and formulate solutions, and affirm their position, e.g. as an "empowered" religious movement. The process of interpretation thus allows for a "cognitive elaboration of experience" in order to find a position in the field of action and an *identity* as a social actor. Moving further from this position of the model, the actors are being described as developing *strategies* to cope with the "structural conditions" and "adversaries" that cause their "grievances" – while "solutions" and "adversaries" model the notions of opportunities and constraints. The model thus articulates dispositions of perception and judgment as conditioning the design of strategies. It does not exclude the possibility of strategic calculus – but it excludes the illusion that calculi are free from any (habitual) disposition.

For both perspectives – the one on cognition as well as the one on identity and strategy – the model allows to structure the logic of the transformational processes of meaning ascription to experience and action, be it valued positively or negatively. In both perspectives, the model distinguishes a level (or, according to Greimas, an "axis") of

experience from a level (or "axis") of interpretation. The distinction between these levels is important for understanding the transformation which takes place by ascribing meaning to experience and action. Meaning – ideas, "symbolic systems" etc. – is by no means a simple "mirror of nature" (Rorty 1979) or "reality". Meaning is itself an *operator* of human praxis. It does not simply represent states of praxis, but, by virtue of being "used" by humans for ascription or attribution, it becomes "instrumental" (both in a Wittgensteinian sense). This is how meaning comes to terms by the process of interpretation of experience designed in our model. Moreover, the distinction between the two levels (or "axes") in the model leads to a further observation. In late Antiquity and the Middle-Ages, the model was used principally for propositional logic. This usage points to an important difference between the two axes, the contrary and sub-contrary. While one (in our case the "interpretation") affirms and negates "universally", the other one (in our case "experience") affirms and negates "partially". In terms of Greimas, the first is "neutral", the second "complex". In our sociological use of the model, this means that the terms of interpretation of experience represent a "clear cut" meaning ascribed to fuzzy experience. As the actors ascribe – according to their habitus, social position and interest – meaning to experience, they generate clear concepts of experienced social processes and structures that help them to shape their perceptions, judgments and actions. This is the case with any interpretation. Religious praxis, however, often counts with a stark difference between experience and interpretational terms. This is, precisely, the reason for its social power.[15]

Finally, the model of the square can be extended to a *network of operators*. The square itself is already the result of a wider analysis of research material. This examination discloses the syntagmatic and paradigmatic connections of signs and the hierarchy of meaning within the texts. Thus, it allows for constructing a wide network of interlinked and homologous transformative squares. Such an extension of the basic model helps to describe the broader structure of the network of operators that make up the practical logic of a given collective (or individual) actor. Of course, such a network is not completely conclusive, has blank spaces, and open ends – just as the practical logic of humans is not entirely coherent, does not know of everything and is open to change and development.

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[15] The specific dynamics of *religious* practical logic cannot be discussed in this paper; see Schäfer 2004, 2009b.

The *actor* itself can be understood to be *individual and collective*. This is, because of the insight that any individual's habitus is to a certain degree homologous to its class habitus and to the habitus of the religious movement the individuals belongs to. As for the method, that is to say that one can analyze a collective set of interviews together or analyze individual interviews and compare or superpose them later, correspondingly to one's research interest. According to theory, in any case, habitus are to a certain extent always individual *and* collective. This means that the network, finally, can be read as a model of dispositions of habitus, i.e. of a "structured and structuring" generator of praxis (Bourdieu). In this sense, it represents the empirical and methodological basis for a theory of "identity as a network" (Schäfer 2005) – of course anchored as well in the model of social space.

Conclusion

Finally, I hope that the reference to Bourdieuian sociology and the model of a praxeological network are of some use to cope with the theoretical and methodical challenges present to the research in identities and strategies of social and religious movements. The models do not call for many pre-conditions. We simply presuppose that religion and social action is praxis and we try to construct a model, as formal and common as possible, for the interviewees to "fill in" with those contents that are relevant to *their* praxis. We do not presuppose more than that…

- first, every person has experiences which he or she values positively and other experiences which he or she values negatively;
- second, every person interprets such experiences in some way, regardless of the specific contents of signs or symbols he or she may apply to do so;
- third, every person lives within a social context, whatever it may be.

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