

Identity Politics and the Political Field: A Theoretical Approach to Modelling a ‘Field of Identity Politics’

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1. Introduction

Identity politics based on ethnic or religious identification, cultural habits or nationality are becoming increasingly important when it comes to the mobilization of movements, electorate, e-mail protests, transnational cooperation, and migrants’ networks. Countries are promised spiritual and political “healing” by religious presidential candidates, presidents are being elected because of their ethnic bloodline or religious creed, wars are being waged to achieve ethnic or religious “cleansing,” and actors establish transnational cooperation simply on the basis of belonging to the same religious denomination or the same ethnic “people.” According to a strong line of research, “identity politics” is the way in which social movements—ethnic, religious, gender-related or otherwise culturally based—weave transnational relations and become involved in politics to expand their identity claims. Such identity politics imply the scientific task—as Christian Büschges and Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka put it (12)—of capturing the practical logics of:

- a. the “change in semantics and models of argumentation and legitimation,”
- b. putting identity based action “on the political agenda,”
- c. the “main actors and media as well as the actors’ strategies of reinterpreting the political realm” and of positioning themselves within it.

Given that for identity politics symbolic operations and relations of recognition are as important as material resources and power “quota,” it is helpful to approach them within a framework of a social theory capable of “understanding” (“*Verstehen*,” Max Weber) actors and their actions in their socio-structural framework.

Pierre Bourdieu’s social theory provides such an approach. As identity politics spawn their special dynamics, it seems to be worthwhile to ask if Bourdieu’s concept of “field” allows capturing these dynamics and constructing a “field of identity politics.” In this essay I will focus on this question and suggest a combination of three models as an approach to the analysis of identity politics and as a step toward the construction of a field of identity politics. These models are models in the strict sense of the word. They help to organize and structure observational data, each under a clearly defined but therefore very limited aspect. A model has to be economical and frugal; it cannot explain all relevant aspects of social praxis at once. The aspects that each model contributes to the understanding of social praxis can be combined in their

interpretation. Before outlining the models, however, the approach of our team at Bielefeld University requires a brief clarification of four basic terms: “field,” “identity,” “politics,” and “identity politics.”

2. The Basic Terms

2.1. *Field*

When a German hears the word “Feld” (field), the association of a soccer field, a stadium, is often evoked. In that context, the “field” is clearly defined by lines on the grass, goal posts, corner flags, and so forth; it is surrounded by a huge concrete structure, gates, watchmen etc. This kind of field appears to be a “system”—maybe of Luhmannian nature—rather than a “field” according to Pierre Bourdieu.

To form an idea of a field according to Bourdieu, remember your youth: a small street in your neighborhood or a meadow behind the grocery store, some boys, maybe some girls, too; a ball tossed on the ground and everybody running after it, knowing intimately the *nomos*—the rules—of the game: “get the ball and shoot a goal,” and sharing the belief (the *doxa*) of all players that the game is worthwhile. Everybody *invests* the force of his or her body into the game according to its best *sense for the game*, pursuing the *interest* to manage the ball. Quickly, the ball is kicked back and forth, two teams begin to gather. Somebody sets down a stone, another one a sweater, and there is a goalpost; and then shortly afterwards, a second goal is created, with another goalkeeper. The *dimensions* of the game are taking shape. The individual *interest* transforms into the *common* interest to help the team win by scoring goals. Over time, *differences* in velocity and skill (the *means of production*) as well as in the previously acquired *capital* (experience and reputation gained in former games) will generate the *different positions* of the players and the teams. Some are experienced and strong players, *arrivée* in the field, some are unskilled *newcomers*. And finally, one team will win. And maybe a few days later the team will compete against another neighborhood team. This is how a field emerges.

This example illustrates some basic facts about Bourdieu’s theory. First, the field theory is actor-oriented, but not individualistic. It does not comprise “fields” as fixed structures or even systems.¹ If we want to work with it, it makes sense to begin with the actors, their interests, their dispositions, their sense of the game, their *doxa* and their capital, in order to understand the *nomos* (the regulating principle) of a certain game.

Second, fields are not preexistent or independent of social activity. They are scientific constructions to better understand social praxis. There *is* no political or economic field with essentially fixed attributes. Praxis itself is fuzzy; economic, religious,

¹ Cf. Bourdieu/Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* 102, where Bourdieu stresses the differences between his theory of fields and Luhmann’s Systems Theory.

political, ethnic, gender-related, and other interests intermix over and over again. A model provides two benefits: it helps to describe regularities and, even more importantly, it constructs a theoretical framework for the object of study. A theoretical model of a field, thus, establishes artificial boundaries which turn the fuzzy movements of praxis into something describable and which serve as common criteria of description—a benefit for a large group of scholars trying to shed light on “identity politics.”

Third, Bourdieu’s concepts of “field,” “space,” and “habitus” are not simply metaphors even though they are often used as such in literature. Look at Bourdieu’s *Distinction* for the term of “social space,” at *The Rules of Art* for “field,” or at *Outline of a Theory of Practice* for “habitus”—you won’t find metaphors used for modelling social praxis but instead scientific terms. The metaphorical usage—for whatever reasons, maybe often simply for a “Bourdieu light”-feeling—gives up the benefits of a rather precise scientific vocabulary.

Fourth, Bourdieu’s concepts of “field” and “habitus” are intimately interconnected, not least by *doxa* as their common link. This means that the objectivistic perspective on the relations between actors in a constructed field can easily be related to these actors’ practical logic and their dispositions; ultimately, to their identity. Thus, there is a chance to understand precisely the *cultural* production of the actors as identity based strategies that contribute to the emergence of what we sociologically capture as the *political field* and might even, in the future, be able to model as a *field of identity politics*.

2.2. Identity

In the context of identity, a German thinks, most probably, first of a “normal” German. The ordinary “man on the street” might not catch the observer’s eye. Nevertheless, that man has a *habitus* and an identity: stereotypically, one might think that he grew up in a grey neighborhood (perhaps even without soccer), had no real conflict with his father, received a mediocre education at school, and his greatest achievement was getting a boring job. His *habitus*—as Bourdieu would call it—of mediocrity simply evolved as it did. Still, he experiences his own convictions in his day-by-day praxis as individual, very much his own; he would not consider the ascriptions to him that others may make as delimiting his identity. On the other hand, foreigners thinking about German identity will probably imagine a typical German in a different way. They might find those “typical Germans” at the “Oktoberfest” (*October festival*) in Munich, dressed in traditional Bavarian attire. These “traditional Germans,” in turn, know about the ascriptions foreigners make and, in consequence, might expose their otherness. Even though the identities of these actors are based in their *habitus*, too, the difference to the epitome of the mediocre person previously mentioned is that due to their relations to foreigners and their ascriptions these actors tend to highlight certain traits of their *habitus*—according to the special field condition of the October festival—creating a cultural identity that can be useful, for example, in business.

This little stroll through German landscapes showed that identities have two aspects, as Frederik Barth has put it in his later work:² marked difference against others which defines the group as “us” against “them” (form) *and* certain cognitive, affective and in many cases even bodily traits common to the members of a given collective (content). Identity is constructed neither through cognitive contents alone, nor by simply distinguishing “us” from “them.” To understand an actor’s identity, the mutual influence between contents—e.g. convictions—and difference (or boundaries) is the clue. Experiences of distinctions and differences are basic in any process of growing up, as Piaget reminds us. But these notions become part of our cognitive dispositions *as* cognitive content. As such they will guide future experiences of difference; and—at the same time—they will be re-modified by such experiences; then they will put forth, again, further perception, judgment and action. This is how Bourdieu (in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* and *Distinction*) characterizes *habitus* as a set of dispositions and as operating in the actor’s *practical logic*. A concept of identity can be construed on this base, though Bourdieu himself did not elaborate on this particular issue. The actor—for instance, the Bavarian at the “Oktoberfest”—experiences in the encounter with his “life world”—family, neighbors, competitors, foreigners and so forth—that some of his cultural dispositions slip into the focus of his own practical attention more than others.³ Thus, going a small step beyond Bourdieu, we can define identity as such dispositions of the actor’s *habitus* that are explicitly (“consciously”) practiced by the actor and perceived by others. Consequently, we can think of identities as loosely woven, flexible, ever changing but, at the same time, practically coherent networks of dispositions (cf. Schäfer, “Network Identity;” *Theorie*).

The network model of identity possesses the following characteristics: First, it allows for a better understanding of “hybridity” and “creolization,” of “fluid,” “patchwork” or “multiphrenic” identities. Second, such a model enables the researcher to interpret—disregarding specific individual and/or collective actors—discourses, works of art, film, literature, music, religious rites, ethnic outfits or other cultural products as elements (strong or weak, central or peripheral) of the cognitive, emotional and bodily identity-networks of the given actors. Third, the researcher can also understand those cultural products as representational signs and symbols, as practical instruments of an actor’s strategies (cf. Wittgenstein) and, finally, as elements of the actor’s self-descrip-

² In his classic study on identity (*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*) Barth opposes older essentialist theories of identity through a concept focused in difference (‘boundaries’). Later on (in “Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity”), he stated that cognitive content is needed in order to construct identities.

³ This focus related not only to “consciousness;” that term—through the opposition of conscious (rational, clear) vs. unconscious (or subconscious: irrational?, unclear)—prevents understanding an important characteristic of *habitus* and practical logic, which is: both are operating implicitly and explicitly—as Bourdieu says—at the same time (cf. Schäfer, *Zur Theorie von kollektiver Identität und Habitus* 273, 344; and Schäfer, *Identität als Netzwerk*).

tion in terms of identity. These aspects of a *habitus*-based theory of identity must be distinguished analytically.

It is important for the quest of identity politics that the network model of identity is closely combined with Bourdieu's models of social space and of fields. Thus, it allows modelling a close linkage between the identities of actors and the conditions in which they act, the field.

In more detail, this means the following: First, it is possible to use the study of almost every cultural product and practice—from movies and novels, to religious rites and interviews—to describe the networks of dispositions that shape a given (collective or individual) actor's identity. Thus, the researcher can grasp the identities at stake according to their contents and their specific ways of tracing boundaries. In other words: this step highlights the *subjective* aspect of identity politics. The following steps model the *objective* conditions of identity politics. Second, on the basis of some general demographic data (e.g., income and education) the actors can be located within the framework of their social space—the most general model to describe the distribution of social and objective possibilities for action. Third, a more specific positioning of the actors can be achieved by locating them in a model of the political field, showing the opportunities for generating political effect that emerge from the investment of identity capital (e.g. ethnic music, religious campaigns etc.). Fourth, the embodied capabilities and the recognized cultural products of a given actor can be conceived of as political capital enabling certain political strategies. The distinction of different types of strategies, thus, allows for a differential view of the political field according to the dimensions of market-oriented policies versus identity policies.

This combination of micro-, meso- and macro-level approaches helps to maintain a close link between (subjective) identities and (objective) conditions of action. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that a given cultural identity in the daily routines is different from the same identity in a political contention. Cultural identities have to be publicly mobilized and thus become more specific, more focused, more pronounced in order to operate in identity politics.

2.3. *Politics*

When Germans think of politics they might have splendid dreams or nightmares—in any case, they usually think of an established, formal, procedural and highly structured democratic system. A class of political specialists make up an old and autonomous political field, upon which laypeople exert a certain, albeit minimal, influence on election day. For official politics the formal “vestment” by an office is most important; Bourdieu speaks of *investiture*. With identity politics, however, different actors from civil society can appear on the political scene: the Neo-Nazi mobilization is one example.

Approaching cultural identity politics in the Americas at present means dealing with a great number of new actors in the political field, in addition to established ones,

such as the Catholic Church: ethnic movements, migrants' organizations, Protestant (mostly Pentecostal) churches, women's organizations etc. These groups enter the political field as actors, albeit with still quite "fluid," unstable and changing identities when compared to long-standing official actors. The new movements and their representatives exert a measurable effect on official politics, as can be seen, for example, in the election of indigenous presidents. They can be legitimately dealt with as actors in the political field, employing the specific political style of "identity politics." As long as they employ peaceful means, movement actors achieve their political aims by mobilizing people for those aims. This means that they rely on reputation, in the double sense of the term: they need to be known and to be appreciated. Reputation is one of the dimensions of the political field, according to Bourdieu. This means, for now, that we can construct the political field according to established criteria and deal with the specificities of identity politics within that framework.

2.4. *Identity Politics*

The literature on identity politics is rapidly increasing. This essay will focus briefly on two issues which have recently inspired research.

First, the distinction between "identity politics" and "interest politics" (cf., e.g., Goldstein/Rayner; Rothman/Olson) helps to separate different political strategies—*not* goals. It can be useful for a heuristic model to locate and describe different styles of political strategies. Nevertheless, we need to make a small terminological adjustment. The term "interest" is too broad if it is not limited to the framework of rational choice. In general, "interest" refers to identity-based styles of politics, since these are interested in fostering the position of their specific group of reference. The authors listed above refer to "interest" in a much more specific sense, however. They use "interest" for (negotiable) material goods, which are distinct from (not negotiable) identity. Thus, the term "interest" is limited—as I will define it below—to market opportunities. On the one hand "interest," in this sense, is focused on "having," while identity is focused on "being." On the other hand, I suggest that the term "interest" should not be used only in this limited sense. For the time being, I will therefore use the term "interest" as "material interest" in order to distinguish it from identity politics.

Second, the use of signs, symbols, art, religious rituals etc. is an important issue in the research of cultural identity politics. The most important effect of signs (and therefore of meaning) in identity politics relies on the specific social *use* of signs and meaning. Signs—according to a Wittgensteinian and a Pragmatic understanding—are not simply representations. They are tools that exert an effect in human praxis because practices have a dimension of meaning and exert "symbolic" effects on actors. Signs and practices, thus, can acquire the function of "practical metaphors" (Bourdieu). A metaphor, in literary studies, is conceived of as linking different levels ("realms," "domains") of meaning. For a Bourdieu-style sociology—and in identity politics—practical metaphors connect different fields of praxis. Thus, they contribute to the con-

version of capital between different fields. For example, religious metaphors (“healing the nation,” “spiritual warfare”) can convert the exclusively *religious* reputation of a certain movement or of an individual into a reputation in the political field, fostering, e.g., an electoral campaign. Thus, practical metaphors are important instruments for the mobilization of cultural (religious, ethnic etc.) actors in favor of a certain political goal. Inversely, this means for the study of discourse, literature, film, rites etc. that from the perspective of identity politics these artifacts and practices are most interesting in their function as practical metaphors; in other words: as operators of power within the constellations of the political field.

A third point I would like to make here might seem to be a little anachronistic in post-post-modern times—in neoliberal times, maybe it is not. The point is that “money makes the world go round,” or more precisely: money and the knowledge of its use. As for understanding identity politics and politics in general, it is important to know where in the overall space of social power a given political actor is located. It matters whether a collective actor is poor and lacks technological knowledge or if he or she is middle class and intellectual. Therefore, as already mentioned above, a promising objectivistic step of analysis is to pinpoint the relevant actors (according to some basic demographic data) in a model of the social space.

3. The Social Space of Political Styles

The following model is easy to explain. It is very similar to Bourdieu’s model of the social space developed in *La distinction*. I have adapted this model during the nineteen-eighties to religious actors, obtaining a “social space of religious styles.” Our research team at Bielefeld University has developed a means of statistical measurement of economic and cultural capital. In a similar way, this model can be applied to political actors, for whom it would show a “social space of political styles.” To exemplify this, in the following I will draw on my research data from Guatemala and on Andrea Althoff’s⁴ excellent dissertation on ethnicity and religion in Guatemala.

The vertical axis of the model (fig. 1) represents the aggregation of economic and cultural capital (simply measured by income and education).⁵ Positions in the upper scales enjoy much of both, income and (formal) education. The horizontal axis represents the two forms of capital in opposition to one another (plotted A against B). On the right, there is *relatively* more economic capital than cultural capital; on the left it is the other way round. This means that the positions that have the same level on the

⁴ Andrea Althoff, *Divided by Faith and Ethnicity: Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Race in Guatemala*. Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014.

⁵ The original idea in Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* is that the vertical axis represents *all* of the capital accumulated by given actors. But this is too complex to measure, even for Bourdieu. An economical design with only income and education as the forms of capital employed is easier to handle and facilitates international comparison.

vertical scale can be differentiated, on the horizontal scale, according to the *structure* (or: composition) of their capital. This marks important differences between social positions that—through a simple distinction between rich and poor—might be estimated as equal. The idea is quickly evident if one examines the different professional groupings in the model: e.g., “industrialists” compared to “large landowners” or “small peasants” compared to “industrial labor.” This structure is a frame to pinpoint the relevant actors of identity politics according to their position within the general distribution of capital in society. This is possible because any “identity movement”—like any other social actor—possesses a certain amount of economic and cultural capital. This capital can be measured (or estimated) and thus serve to locate the movement in question in relation to other social actors within the model of the social space.

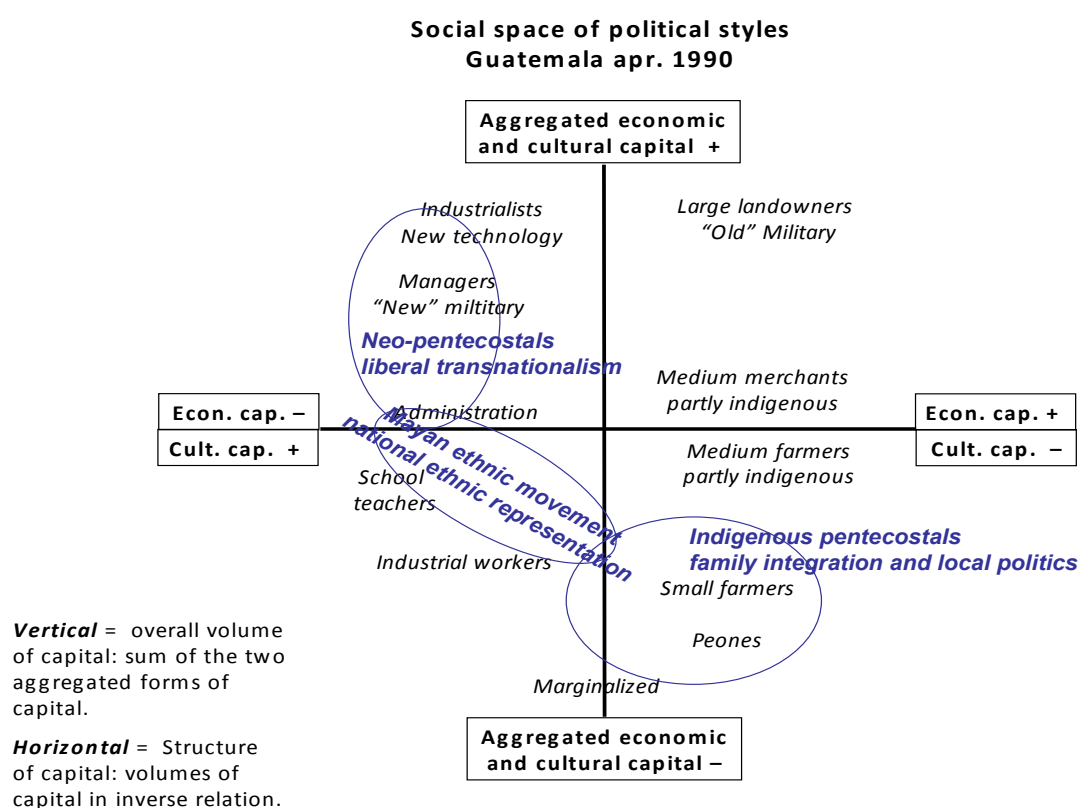


Figure 1: The Social Space of Political Styles

In our graph (fig. 1) we limit ourselves to three significant Guatemalan actors: indigenous Pentecostals, Maya intellectuals, and Neo-Pentecostals⁶ (cf. Althoff). Later on, I will give more details on their praxis. Now, their location in the social space is of

⁶ The concept of “Neo-Pentecostalism” refers to a certain section of the Pentecostal movement. It split from “classical” Pentecostalism in the U.S.A. during the 1950s, expanded to established Protestant and Catholic churches and developed a large number of independent “ministries.” Its most important distinction from “classical” Pentecostalism is that from its beginning it has been a middle and upper middle class movement with more action-oriented religious beliefs and with quite clear-cut conservative social and political strategies.

primary interest. We see that the indigenous Pentecostals are associated with a low social position with relatively little cultural capital: the small traditional peasantry. The Maya intellectuals appear to be a movement of the middle class. And, finally, the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals are located in the upwardly mobile, educated upper middle class. Any of these clusters practices a certain style of identity politics, of course related to the overall size and structure of capital it disposes of: the indigenous Pentecostals are oriented locally and in their immediate ‘life world’ (Schütz); the Mayan intellectuals have ethnically defined goals for the nation and dispose of some transnational linkage; the Neo-Pentecostals are religiously anti-ethnic and pursue nationalistic and Western civilizational goals. The model of the “social space of identity politics” makes it possible to estimate how any of these styles are linked to an objective position within the distribution of overall social power. In other words, it shows to what extent a certain identity movement can also be interpreted as a “class movement.” The position of an actor in the social space (“class”) exerts an important influence upon his or her possibilities to pursue his or her identity goals effectively and mobilize the public accordingly. But the position in the social space is not the only external condition needed for effective identity politics. The relations of power are likewise very important in the field of (identity) politics.

4. Tools for Field Construction

In order to construct a *model* of a field—the political field in general or the field of identity politics—it is necessary at this point to sketch some theoretical baselines. Our group of researchers draws upon the approach put forth by Bourdieu in *The Rules of Art*.⁷ But we designed the model in a more abstract way in order to be able to measure more easily and to avoid reification.⁸ Leif Seibert was first in developing such a model for the religious field. We draw here upon his general observations on constructing field models.

Additionally, it is helpful to establish some orientation on the use of Bourdieu’s vocabulary concerning the theory of fields in general. Bourdieu employs a certain set of categories in order to construct multiple aspects of the struggle that takes place in diverse fields of social praxis. He uses some of these categories in a constant and stable way; other concepts undergo changes or are being used less frequently. This method corresponds to Bourdieu’s idea of theory as a toolkit for empirical research. It

⁷ Cf. *The Rules of Art* and “The Field of Cultural Production or the Economic World Reversed.” See footnote 1 for our research process.

⁸ A term like “sub-field” suggests that a field is a given entity in reality, a part of which can be conceived of as a second, subordinated entity. Bourdieu himself, with a constructivist impetus, argues very strongly against reification of models; but he triggers this misunderstanding by using terms like “sub-field.” The positioning of the field of art within the field of power (cf. “The Field of Cultural Production or the Economic World Reversed” 319) can also be misunderstood in an essentialist way.

is this understanding—and not scholastics—that taught our team to use a list of terms as a box of heuristic tools for the construction of the field. We “distilled” such a list from Bourdieu’s writings by elaborating definitions of the most important categories and determining their equivalents in different fields.⁹ The categories are intended to facilitate empirical observation and to provide further possibilities for conceptualizing identity politics according to the Bourdieu’s framework. The following terms were the most significant to us:

Nomos means the central objective principle of praxis of a certain field. In the capitalist economic field this would be “profit,” “l’art pour l’art” in the field of arts, and “domination” in politics.

Doxa are the subjective aspects that actors derive from the *nomos*. Thus, *doxa* refer(s) to a *habitus* that corresponds to the given field. In the field of arts it would be “beauty,” in politics the self-ascribed “right to dominate” and in economy it would be the right to “make profit.” In relation to the *doxa* of a field, actors can position themselves in different ways. They can be orthodox and maintain a position of power in the field (e.g., the “priest”), codifying and enforcing a conservative interpretation of *doxa*; they also can be heterodox and in opposition (e.g., the “prophet”), mobilizing against orthodoxy; and, finally, they can be *allodox* (e.g., the “sorcerer”) and exert in a subordinate position some *doxa*-like practices on the margin of the field, without an explicit interest in dominating the field.

Actors in a field are those groups and individuals whose action exerts an effect on the field according to its *nomos*. Actors are specialists in the respective mode of production and compete with other specialists in the field for favorable positions within the field. Bystanders are not actors; but the public can be mobilized and enter the field with temporary (a revolt) or with lasting (a revolution) effects. In economy, actors are investors, in politics they are all spokespersons, and in religion typical actors are the priest, the prophet and the sorcerer. They act according to their sense of the game.

⁹ Bourdieu “The Field of Cultural Production or the Economic World Reversed,” *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, “How Can ‘Free-floating Intellectuals’ Be Set Free?,” “Some Properties of Fields,” “The Linguistic Market,” “Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field,” “The New Capital,” *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, “Pour une science des œuvres,” “The Intellectual Field: A World Apart,” *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, “Conférence: Le champ politique,” *Distinction: A social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, “Espace social et champ politique,” “Monopolisation politique et révolutions symboliques,” “A Lecture on the Lecture,” Bourdieu and Fritsch, “Entretien: Pierre Bourdieu avec Philippe Fritsch.” Bourdieu’s *Homo academicus* (chapter 3) shows how Bourdieu works very freely and interchangeably with the notions of “field” and “space” and that both terms always are understood according to power relations. We did not include this chapter into our analysis, but take it as a warning not to “sclerotify” Bourdieu’s tools into something like orthodoxy.

Sense of the game is the ability to understand and feel what the game is about and how it works, based on *habitus* and, thus, experiences in the field. This dispositional calibration of the actor and the field can be called the sense of business in economy, the aesthetic sense in the arts, the sense (or feeling) for power in politics and the sense for the holy or sacred in religion.

Resources are mobilized according to the sense of the game and the states of fluctuations (*conjuncture*) of the field. Resources are material, cognitive, bodily or other goods at the disposition of given actors that can be mobilized for the struggles in the field. The economic resource is money, an artistic resource might be originality (“genius,” according to Kant), and political resources are political knowledge and spare time.

Stakes are resources actually used, invested goods that are put at risk and that can be lost in the game. They are at the same time subjective and objective. In economy, investments are a stake. In politics, a stake is often an “*idée force*,” a basic distinction with the power to mobilize masses: the rich against the poor, the French against the Africans etc. If it does not work, it is lost. Subjectively, the actor is affected since he ties to his stakes his own *illusion*, the emotional and cognitive involvement in the game.

Means of production are what the actors can use in a specific field in order to produce. In economy, these are skills and investment goods; in politics, competence, mandate and broadcasting.

The *product* is the result of the processes of production and exchange in a field. In economy, these are commodities; in the arts, the individual work of art, and in politics, the statements.

Capital is the result of field-specific production, which is best suited to be reinvested in further accumulation. In economy this is, simply, money; in the arts it seems to be the reputation that stems from a successful work of art; in politics, most probably, it is prestige. Capital circulates in the processes of production and exchange within a given field.

Exchange in a field converts the specific products of the field into relative values according to the distinct worth of the products for varied actors in the field (thus, generating exchangeable value). The processes of exchange in the diverse fields of praxis are not limited to economic modes of exchange, but also include ritualized (gifts) and symbolic (honor) modes. In economics, exchange takes place as trade and acquisition; in the arts, as trade, exposition and reputation; in politics, as representation and delegation within the framework of political institutions and of institutionalized public (voters).

Profit is the surplus value produced by any investment (work, investment goods etc.),¹⁰ and it is put at stake in the production and exchange of a specific field. In the

¹⁰ As far as we can see, Bourdieu’s concept of “profit” is not as specific as the one used by Marx, who defines profit as the surplus generated by human labour as opposed to investment goods.

economic field, this is, again, money; in the arts, it is reputation; and in politics, it is the mobilization of approval and thus, in the long run, a stronger domination of the field.

Dimensions of a field—as we have seen above—can be constructed according to the two abstract terms of achievement and autonomy. *Achievement* refers to the establishment of actors in the field and of the field itself. In economy, we take achievement to mean wealth; in the arts, Bourdieu identifies it as consecration (subjective) and as the academies, i.e., as institutions (objective); in politics, achievement equals political office (“investiture”). *Autonomy* refers to the degree to which an actor is free of compromise from outside in a given field and acts according to the field’s premises (its *nomos*). For the field of the arts, Bourdieu defines autonomy as being guided by the principle of “l’art pour l’art” and *compromise* as being guided by economic interests and the public. For politics, we define autonomy as the integrity of a political actor in correspondence with his/her reputation among the public.

The *state of fluctuation* (“*conjuncture*”) of a field is a conditioning factor for almost all processes in the field. It influences the chances of production and exchange and is defined as the state of power relations between the different actors of the field in a given situation in time. The *conjuncture* depends on internal as well as on external factors. For the economy, we identify it as the conditions for investments; for the arts, it is the changing fashions; for the political field, we define it as the current debates and election campaigns.

Compromise means external influences on the field contrary to its *nomos*, distorting its internal relations of power and its dynamics of reproduction. In the economy, this is morals and politics regulating the logic of the free market forces; in the arts, Bourdieu defines it as commerce; and in politics, compromise mostly occurs through scandals and corruption.

External relations of a field relate the specialists (who make up the field), first, to the relevant “lay people” and, second, to other fields relevant for the reproduction of the field in question. The external relation to lay people is important for politics and religion, since these specialists depend very much on their capacity to mobilize people. This is especially the case under conditions of democracy and a relatively free “religious market”—while dictatorship integrates the military into politics and official religions involve politics. In the economy, typical external relations are law and professional education; in the field of arts, external relations include taste, patronage, and political change; in politics, some typical external relations are elections, journalistic coverage and polls.

The external relations of the political field are particularly important for identity politics, since these are developing on the “public fringe” of the field. They employ different means of production in order to politicize cultural products. Thus, they become a symbolic means of political mobilization and of exerting effects on the power relations of the political field. It is important to note that the strategies of identity politics are tied up with cultural *habitus* and the corresponding practical logics. They transform cultural products creatively into political statements. Thus they create and

foster unorthodox political actors who employ identity as their specific resource in politics.

5. Identity Politics in the Political Field

Our research group has invested some time into constructing what might be called a *specific* “field of identity politics.” However, in the meantime we have become somewhat reluctant to do so for two reasons. First, we feel that we need some more empirical research on the dynamics of identity politics to determine the specific dimensions, capital, exchange processes etc. of this field. Second, we think that, for now, a recommendable approach to such empirical data is understanding identity politics as a specific way of doing politics in distinction to other forms. As we neither want to use the term “field” only in a metaphorical way nor invent something like a “subfield” of politics, we simply opt for constructing general models of the political field and the relevant strategies while taking into account the actors and dynamics of identity politics. For the time being, we base this decision on the following consideration: the political significance of identity relies on the fact that it is a kind of *politics*. Hence specificity can best be understood when identity politics are shown in their practical difference(s) to other kinds of politics.

The intentions of our model of the political field are quite similar to those of the social space model. It relates actors to one another. But as a model of a *field*, it relates actors according to the special conditions of that specific game, in our case the political one.¹¹ This is to say that the actors of identity politics appear within the power relations of general politics. In order to understand the *specific* kinds of logic that facilitate the mobilization through identity issues better, our second model—the model of political strategies—allows to specify what can be visualized in the model of the political field. Thus, the model of strategies—interest versus identity—will be, for now, the last step of our deliberations. We hope, however, that these models mark helpful steps towards a construction of a model for a field of identity politics.

In the political field, like in a soccer game, actors invest their skills and assets in order to achieve a dominant position. From this position¹² they dominate society through political means. In order to participate in the political game, it is necessary to become politically mobilized and exert an effect on other political actors. Doing so means participation in the field. Actors without political effects are not part of the field. The *nomos* of the field is that actors *struggle for dominance*. The term

¹¹ In methodological terms, it relates the actors to the *dimensions* of the model and, in consequence, to one another according to the specific perspective of the model.

¹² We distinguish between “power” and “domination/dominance” in the way proposed by Weber (*Economy and Society*). “Power” means the ability to impose one’s will on others and is associated with force, while “domination” means power based on recognition by the dominated.

“domination” (and derivatives) is understood as the recognized ability of a given actor to impose his/her will on other actors.¹³ The belief of the actors—their *doxa* that enables them to participate in the game—is that they feel entitled to dominate the field.

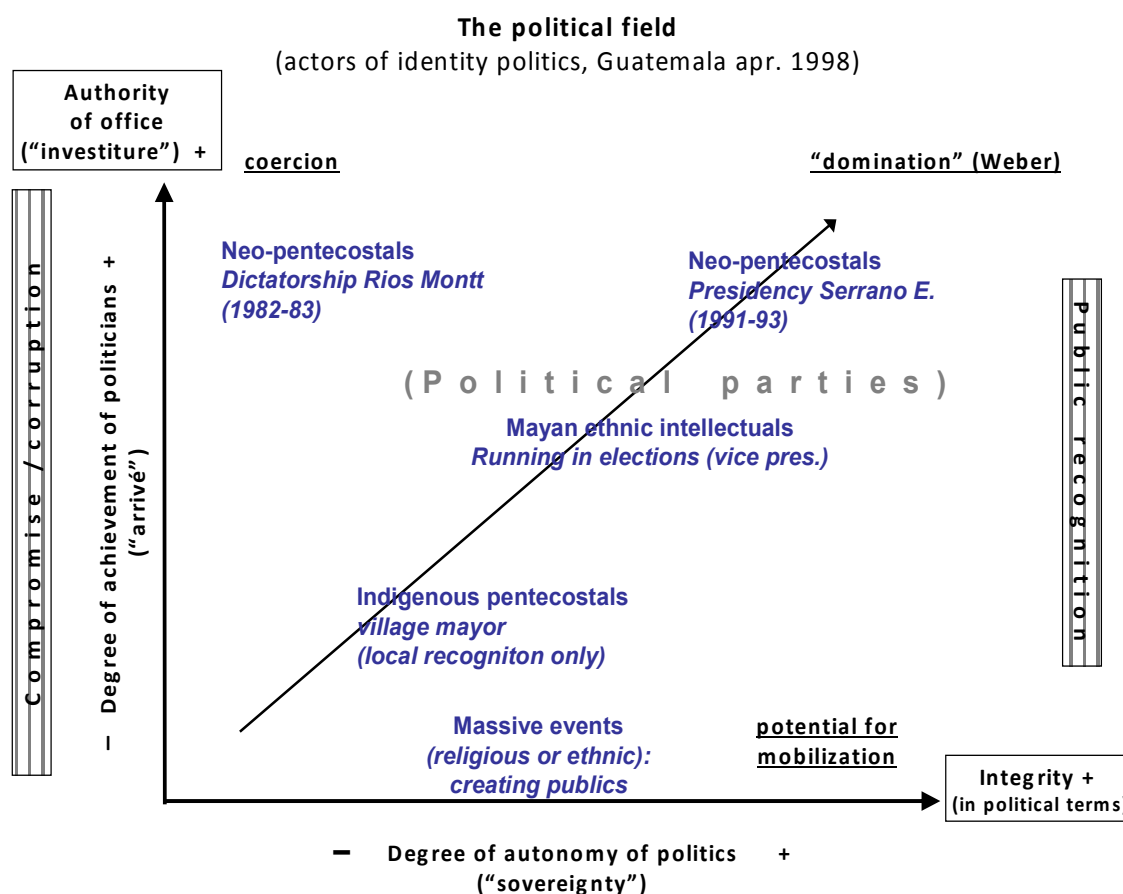


Figure 2: The Political Field

As we hope to capture some important aspects of these relations in a model, we first have to name the *dimensions* of the field at stake.

Bourdieu proposes to construct the field of art according to two dimensions that find analogies in his writings on politics and seem useful to us for constructing a model of the political field, too:

1. the degree of achievement (or success, "être arrivé") of the participating actors in the field;
2. the degree of autonomy against compromising influences from outside the field; that is to say, the degree of sovereignty to obey exclusively the *nomos* of the field—in our case the struggle for dominance.

Following Bourdieu except for a small alteration, we project the scale for *achievement* vertically and the scale for *autonomy* horizontally.¹⁴

¹³ Here we differ from Bourdieu, who locates the *nomos* of the political field in the struggle for *power*. As we distinguish between *power* and *domination*, we can associate these different concepts with different degrees of autonomy among political actors; see below.

Then we identify “autonomy” *within* the political field as equivalent to integrity and (professional) reputation. In this sense, an autonomous politician is one who can act independently on the basis of his or her reputation. This concept correlates positively (and not negatively as in Bourdieu’s model of the field of art) with “public reputation.” The two axes describe the dimensions of the field.

Dimensions of a field describe the frame within which the struggles for the field’s profit take place. The two formal criteria introduced by Bourdieu to trace the dimensions of the field of art are useful for the construction of other fields, as well.¹⁴ The dimension of *achievement* reflects the degree of establishment of a given actor within the field and, ultimately, the degree of establishment and stability of the field itself. *Achievement* connotes practice and the existence of a field-specific order: long-standing actors versus novices, and—to a certain degree co-dependently—a strong institutionalization in old fields versus weak institutions in new fields. In our model of the political field, we code achievement as the authority of political office (*investiture*). The dimension of *autonomy* or—inversely—*compromise* reflects the degree to which an actor acts according to the *nomos* of the field or is compromised or corrupted by external factors. For the field of the arts, Bourdieu defines the *autonomy* of an actor as being guided by the principle of “*l’art pour l’art*” and *compromise* as being guided by economic interests and the public. In the field of politics under democratic conditions (or at least aspirations), the role of the public is different: the public contributes to the legitimacy and efficacy of domination by recognizing it. Therefore, we decided to follow the route that Leif Seibert traced for the religious field: we construct the axis of autonomy “positively,” that is, focused on the integrity of an actor in correspondence with public reputation.

This mode of construction is based on the decision to introduce some differentiation into the concept of *political power*. Bourdieu’s term of *power* is a generic one that encompasses domination (or dominance) and coercion (or force). According to Max Weber, however, *power* is defined as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (53).

The concept of *domination* is more specific in the sense that it presupposes a consent with the relation of dominance that “implies a minimum of voluntary compliance, that is, an *interest* (based on ulterior motives or genuine acceptance) in

¹⁴ We do not reproduce the negative correlation between public reputation and reputation within the field of the arts. The artistic field, as analyzed by Bourdieu, obeys the logic of *l’art pour l’art* and keeps its distance from the tastes of the “man on the street.” Now, constructing the political field in the same way would systematically establish a negative correlation between the logics of politics and public reputation. This is problematic under conditions of a widespread plausibility of democratic order or, at least, of some kind of popular representation.

¹⁵ On the construction of the religious field, cf. Seibert, “Glaubwürdigkeit als religiöses Vermögen.”

obedience” (Weber 212). Consent is important, since it allows both to conceive of cultural production in an intimate relation to the maintaining of political power and to challenge it (thus calling to mind Antonio Gramsci’s concepts of ‘hegemony’ and ‘historical bloc’). From the concept of *domination by consent* we can draw a line to the other end of the continuum: *power by means of coercion or force*. Where there is no chance to base power relations on consent, coercion by menace or the implementation of violence replace consent. (In Gramsci, for this reason, coercive regimes represent a crisis of hegemony.) This means for our model that we are more specific on the *nomos* of the field and on its profit. We implement the concept of *domination* instead of the concept of *power* and define the *nomos* as a *struggle for dominance*, while we take *profit* to signify simply *domination*.

The degrees of authority through integrity, on the one hand, and authority of office, on the other hand, mark the *social coordinates* within which the *actors* (any kind of spokespersons) mobilize their resources (spare time and knowledge) to *produce* statements or opinions according to the *states of fluctuations (conjunctures)* of the field (ongoing debates, elections, demonstrations, revolts etc.) and put them as mobilizing ideas (*idées forces*, semantic distinctions with the power to convince) at stake in the struggle for the *profit* of the field, which is *political domination*.

Domination, then, is the best position in the field and correlates with high achievement and high political autonomy of the respective actors—although it is by definition dependent on public reputation.

Coercion is a technique in political relations; combined with high achievement, it is understood as a sign of heteronomy of the respective actors. In the case of military dictatorship, for example, the group in power is not able to manage a “crisis of hegemony” (Gramsci) through political means and, therefore, recurs to military force—compromising the political field and their own autonomy and integrity. Consequently, the *diagonal* between the axes (see arrow in fig. 2) represents the *increase of domination* over the field as a result of successfully participating in its struggles. The dominant position in the field (upper right corner) is the one that combines high office with high reputation within the field. High institutional power with low reputation (the upper left corner) makes use of *coercion* without social consent, thus relying very much on repression, the military, and capital. Positions of low achievement are situated near the bottom line of the model. They can also be differentiated according to their autonomy (or integrity). Thus, the strongest potential for mobilization and creating new movement actors in the political field is located in the lower right corner. This potential depends on the ability of political actors to mobilize non-political actors (the public) for politically relevant action and thus to enter the political field. The public recognition of an actor and his or her goals operates on the fringe of the field and allows fostering the actor’s position in the field. Inversely, the political field is also prone to being compromised by corruption, violence etc. This is to say that *external factors* are quite important for the development of the political field. We therefore establish two external factors: public recognition works according to the logic of the

field and shapes domination by conveying legitimacy to the government or by changing the government through political means. Compromise—in many cases corruption—interferes into the political field through non-political means and alters the relations of power.

To return to our Guatemalan example: Indigenous Pentecostals have a certain power of mobilization and conviction, but only on the local level. Sometimes they gain the political office of a village mayor. Mayan ethnic intellectuals (e.g. Rigoberta Menchú or Vitalino Similox) mobilize the public for national politics and have run for political office. They act on the level of national political parties. Twice the Neo-Pentecostal religious transnational project gained the highest office in government: once through the dictatorship of Efraín Ríos Montt (1982-83) and once through the electoral victory of Jorge Serrano Elías (1991-93). The former, as a dictator, never had much public support; the latter lost his initial support as he compromised his integrity through corruption. It is important to note that in Latin America and the USA the political field is stable enough for parties to function as institutional “filters” between mass mobilization and public office. It is this potential to unite ethnic and partisan mobilization that makes, in Bolivia, the case of Evo Morales unique.

The influence of external factors on the political field reflects the systemic *compromise* of democracy by pre-election promises: often those who make the biggest promises get elected (says Plato). Nevertheless, the conversion of public *recognition* into political mobilization and then into political capital (prestige) is the way in which identity issues manifest themselves in the political field. It is the “public fringe” of the political field (the right and the lower rims of the model in fig. 2) where social movements and especially identity movements act. Newcomers enter the field from the “fringe” and introduce changes. Hence, the processes of converting different symbolic and social *currencies* into political capital are among the most important objectives of research on identity politics. Having determined the position of a given actor within the field, we can study the effects exerted by, for example, transnational ties, media ownership, communication skills, or the implementation or invention of identity-shaping symbols in literature, film, music, pictorial and performing arts have on the position of the actor in the political field. In other words, we can study how and to what extent identity-oriented practices are able to redefine the relevant content in the political field and to strengthen the ability of a given actor to achieve a dominant position.

This task reminds us that any position in the political field is not only a specific point within the objective relations of power, but conveys a certain *habitus* of the corresponding actors. Field and *habitus* are co-dependent—but not in the essentialist and reifying way in which the concept of *habitus* is frequently misunderstood. A *habitus*—as an open, minimally structured set of cognitive, affective and bodily dispositions for perception, judgment and action—spawns strategies of discourse and action. Those strategies follow a practical logic and can be found in all the cultural practices and products of a given actor. The Neo-Pentecostal project of transnational

neoliberal religious identity politics, for example, is anchored in religious convictions such as these: indigenous religion and indigenous people are possessed by demons; Neo-Pentecostals are the only legitimate representatives of God and His Spirit; God grants material prosperity to honest believers; the nation has to be healed by exorcism; the North Atlantic Protestant model of culture is the most appropriate for Guatemala. This leads to dropping Napalm bombs on Indian villages and to treating alcoholics by casting out demons, dismissing social policies by stating that poor people do not worship the right God.

The model shows that Neo-Pentecostal identity politics at some point (1991, in the case of Serrano) achieved an optimal position on the political field. But it does not show to what extent identity strategies have contributed to it. Another model has to locate the actors according to the type and combination of their strategies.

6. Identity Strategies

The concept of “identity strategies” seems to be an oxymoron—at least if it is understood on the background of the long-standing antithesis between social theories of macro-structure and micro-action, such as Marxist structuralism (e.g., Althusser) vs. Rational Choice theory (e.g., Homans). In the theory of social and religious movements this juxtaposition of approaches corresponds to a more specific antithesis: the “New Social Movements Theory” (NSM), identity-oriented and of European origin (e.g., Melcucci) vs. the “Resource Mobilization Theory” (RMT), strategy-oriented and of U.S. American origin (e.g., Zald).¹⁶ Up to a certain point, this distinction is homologous to the one between culture- and class-oriented movements¹⁷ discussed in the context of the indigenous revival in the Americas since the seventies¹⁸ or to the distinction between “identity politics” and “interest politics” in the frame of research on

¹⁶ Cf. a classic appraisal in Cohen, “Strategy or Identity” and an overview of the most important authors in Rucht, *Research on Social Movements*.

¹⁷ Cf. Eder et al, *Collective Identities in Action* and Eder, “Die Zukunft sozialer Bewegungen zwischen Identitätspolitik und politischem Unternehmertum.”

¹⁸ It is important to note that one of the most influential events at the start of the internationally noticeable indigenous movement was an initiative of the World Council of Churches, Geneva—a very important ecumenical body for worldwide issues of justice and peace, whose knowledgeable interventions in public affairs are notoriously ignored by the social sciences. The event was the 1971 Barbados Conference of Indigenous and Church leaders and anthropologists, originally criticizing the Christian missionary movement. For the Barbados I Document, cf. Bonfil, “Barbados”; for the WCC participation see “World Council of Churches: *Indigenous People*,” for background, cf. Bonfil, *Indianidad y decolonización en América Latina* (historical) and Speiser, “Indigene Völker und internationale Zusammenarbeit” (recent); for the new role of religion in identity politics, see Cleary/Steigenga, *Resurgent Voices in Latin America*. For social science and other publications from the perspective of the indigenous movement on the web, see <http://www.abayala.org/index.php>.

creating peace (Rothman/Olson), well aware that the logics of “interest politics” are more compatible with Rational Choice.

We cannot discuss this issue here. For us it is important to note that the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu bridges the gap between the schools of theory intentionally and effectively, since it is interested in both actors *and* structures. Using Bourdieu’s framework in a proper way, identity and strategy can be conceived of as two faces of the same coin. His theory integrates the opposition between “structure versus action” as well as the one between “value-oriented action versus rational action” (Weber) into one frame and facilitates the development of corresponding methods. Finally, in social movement studies, the approaches regarding mobilization as provoked by grievances and opportunities respectively can also be integrated in this theoretical framework, thus enabling us to interpret data in both ways. It is this integration which makes it possible to distinguish different types of action or strategies within one coherent framework without separating them. Thus, we can adopt the distinction between, on the one hand, class- or interest-oriented strategies and, on the other, culture- or identity-oriented strategies in order to project both within one model. This allows locating strategies of given actors within a field of strategic alternatives according to their proximity to the pole of “culture” or “class;” in other words, of “being” and “having” or of identity and material goals.

However, we should be clear about the fact that this model does not focus on political positions and the capital of given actors (as the former did), but on the strategies the actors employ. Whether these strategies lead to achievements, may be discussed in comparison with the models of the political field and of the social space of political styles. No model shows everything at the same time; models simply support the interpretative task of social sciences.

According to the distinction between strategies located in culture or in class we construct the *model* with a “class” axis and a “status” axis.¹⁹ The vertical axis represents the focus of a given strategy on market opportunities and, thus, on (economic) achievement, while the horizontal axis represents the focus of a strategy on the affirmation of the actor’s particular identity and, thus, on his (cultural) autonomy. In terms of political strategies, the axes represent different types of how actors render their goals plausible to a wider public (in order to gain political capital). Accordingly, the vertical axis represents arguments oriented in interest and of an inclusive kind. (“We have an interest in participating in political decisions and as co-citizens we have a right to do so.”) The horizontal axis represents the use of identity-oriented and exclusivist arguments. (“Because we are indigenous people, who have been oppressed for a long time, we have the right to special conditions of participation.”) The two axes permit the construction of a two-dimensional model.

¹⁹ Those two axes cannot quite be said to reflect the theories of Weber and Marx: both of them take both axes into account. One could think, drawing on Hegel and Marx, of the class axis as representing the actors “in themselves” and the status axis as representing the actors “for themselves.”

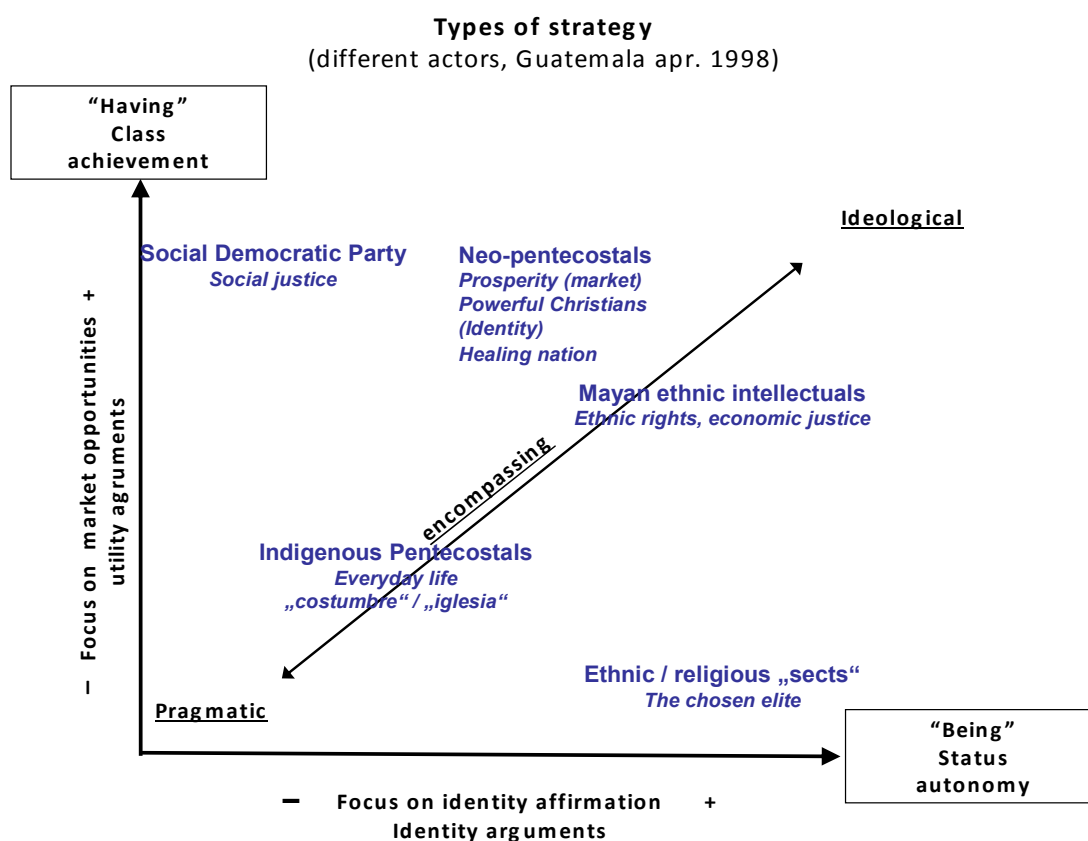


Figure 3: Types of Strategy

It can be asked, however, why we do not simply establish a linear continuum between “class” and “status” and conceive of these two strategic focuses as inversely co-variant: while class orientation increases, status orientation decreases. This could be done. But a two-dimensional model facilitates more interpretative depth. There are at least two benefits. First, if we conceive of the increase of either orientation (class and identity) along with the increase of intensity of the corresponding conviction, the diagonal between zero and maximum of both (lower left to upper right, fig. 3) shows the “ideological load” of certain strategies (high position) versus a pragmatic openness of strategies (low position). If it has a high ideological load, a strategy is fought vigorously and is hard to change; with a low one, pragmatic adaptation is easier. Second, a strategy located near the diagonal can be understood as rather inclusive, since it combines elements of status and class orientation.

As we cannot yet provide scales for measuring these values,²⁰ it is all the more important to establish a set of criteria to distinguish between the two types of strategies and to estimate a proper location for any actor/strategy observed within the model:

First, it is a good idea to define both identity and interest politics as *means* to achieve an objective. Second, the *objective* itself might broadly be defined as maxi-

²⁰ In case of the model of the religious field used in Bosnia-Herzegovina, we have such scales and already used the model successfully in a survey.

mum control over public goods such as, e.g., the access to natural, economic and social resources as well as social reputation, political representation and influence, secure livelihood and so forth. In relation to the political field only, the goal is, of course, dominance. Third, identity-oriented strategies tend to lead to arguments (ethnic, religious or gender-related) that foster the interests of a defined group and operate through the exclusion of others. Strategies oriented in mere material goals tend to employ arguments (without necessarily following universalist interests!) that include as many actors as possible under the umbrella of their interest. Fourth, since identity-based strategies put the selfhood of the actor at stake, they are harder to negotiate and tend to combine with more violent conflicts (such as ethnic cleansing) than strategies open to market opportunities. Fifth, identity politics bear more risk than interest politics. Thus, mobilization is more probable as a last resort if actors do not see any other possibilities of participating in the political game.

We finally return to the example of the Guatemalan actors (fig. 3). Let me first mark two ideal-typical extreme positions in the model: the completely class-oriented Social Democratic Party and, on the other extreme, the ethnic or religious sect conceiving of itself as the chosen people. Applying the model to the ethnic religious actors analyzed by Andrea Althoff, we can see that Neo-Pentecostals and Mayan intellectuals both use encompassing strategies. The movements affirm both status and class orientation strongly on the level of national politics, with the Mayan intellectuals focusing somewhat more on identity and the Neo-Pentecostals emphasizing market opportunities. The indigenous Pentecostals seem to combine interest and identity strategies as well, but with a much lower ideological profile and with more pragmatic flexibility in their communities.

7. Combining the Views

No one model can explain everything. Thus, each of our three heuristic models adopts only one perspective on a complex and multi-faceted social praxis. The first step back from reduction to complexity is to interpret the positions of the actors in all three models simultaneously. I will briefly sketch this step, using the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostal example.

In the *strategy model* (fig. 3) we can see that Neo-Pentecostals operate with a peculiar mix of identity- and class-oriented strategies that are highly ideological and socially exposed. They combine two strategy types employing the promise of individual prosperity as the mobilizing symbol, which also marks the neoliberal bias of the movement. At the same time, the realization of prosperity is said to be dependent on the power that the Spirit of God subjectively infuses into each true believer—and *only* into believers. In comparison to the Mayan intellectuals' strategy, the Neo-Pentecostal one is less dependent on objective (ethnic) belonging and therefore easier to project onto universalistic strategies of market opportunity—while nevertheless being based on religious identity. Moreover, its neoliberal focus on individual prosperity at least in

the 1990s coincides more with the overall societal trend towards individual progress. During the 1980s, the overall project of Neo-Pentecostal identity politics was symbolized by the discursive operator of “spiritual warfare” of the saints against the demons of guerrilla, indigenous revolt, labor unions, Marxism etc., which was projected onto official politics. Later on, during the 90s, in Neo-Pentecostalism the symbol of “healing”—anchored in the ritual practice of faith healing—became more important and was projected onto politics as the program of “healing the nation.”²¹ The religious symbols of “spiritual warfare” and “healing” thus function strategically as practical metaphors to translate religious content into political discourse and into the capacity of mobilization—a process of semiotic and capital conversion on the “public fringe” of the political field. Those strategies, based upon social metaphoric operations, seem to me very important in understanding the role of cultural production for political mobilization within the frame of a theory of identity politics.

Through social metaphoric conversion the symbols of “spiritual warfare” and of “healing” find their way as a mobilizing discourse into the power constellations of the *political field* (fig. 2). Both are associated right away with a position of achievement above the barrier of political parties. During the 1980s, the “spiritual warfare” scheme colluded with the legitimizing discourse of a dictatorial counterinsurgency regime. The idea of exorcising political enemies, thus, gave a special connotation of Christian identity politics to counterinsurgency measures—especially as they hit “devilish Indians” and “atheist Marxists.” Ten years later, the idea of healing a wounded nation through Christian faith and truth accompanied the election campaign of Jorge Serrano Elias and part of his time in office—until the corruption affairs and dictatorial measures began. In any case, Neo-Pentecostal identity politics in the political field of Guatemala can be seen as quite closely related to positions of relatively high political achievement and, thus, not all too dependent on public mobilization.

Finally, a short glimpse at the model of the *social space of political styles* (fig. 1) shows that Neo-Pentecostals, during the 80s and 90s, had their social base in the modernizing sectors of the upper middle class. This observation allows us to interpret the strategies of the movement and its position in the field of politics as specific to a social class with sufficient resources (money, education, time and transnational connections) for political action and sufficiently good perspectives for overcoming the crisis and at least maintaining its position as a class. The symbols of Neo-Pentecostal identity politics—“spiritual warfare” and “healing the nation”—thus appear as semantic instruments of social power-broking and as linkages in an intimate combination between identity politics and class politics in an upwardly mobile and quite powerful social position.

Finally, the combination of the three models—space, field, and strategies—can guide a careful comparative interpretation of identity-based politics within the wider frame of political power-broking and social structure. The objectivistic description of actors and strategies provides a framework for an in-depth analysis of the actor’s

²¹ On the use of this and other symbols in actual religious identity politics in Latin America, cf. Cleary/Steigenga, *Resurgent Voices in Latin America*.

identities (as briefly referred to in the chapter on identity). This can be done through a “habitus analysis”²² applied to discourse, film, the press, rites etc. of the collective actors involved. It shows the deep operational schemes behind the actors’ practical logic. The models of space, field and strategies then, in turn, help to understand the objective conditions within which the identity-based operations achieve their special meaning—thus completing a meaningful analysis of identity politics.

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