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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Hill, I. (2018) **How did you get up and running?**

Taking a Bourdieuan Perspective towards a Framework for Negotiating Strategic Fit

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Abstract

This article suggests a theoretical framework for illustrating significant iterative processes that need to be strategically managed when entering a new field or changing a social position within a field. Applying a process-relational perspective the framework theoretically underpins what propels individuals to change their behavior conceptualized as constructing a strategic fit between personal structure and fields. Using Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capitals as a lens the analysis reveals how capital transformations eventually can lead to a social construction of this temporary strategic fit. The article argues that the performance of habitus expresses temporary field specific social positioning as a social materialization of macrostructures (gender, age, class, etc.). This suggested framework is applied to conceptualizing how nascent entrepreneurs successfully negotiate entrepreneurial processes; it is concerned with a small aspect: how to physically start a business (its registration and the start of trading). In this context, the article unpacks how the transformation of capitals mediates nascent entrepreneurs' social positioning. This article contributes to the growing "social turn" research situating entrepreneurial processes within social relations and context and the emerging Entrepreneurship as Practice field. It offers practical implications for business support and research directions.

Keywords: Bourdieu; capitals transformation; nascent entrepreneurship; social positioning; process-relational approach; strategic fit.

Corresponding author Email irh2018@yahoo.com

Introduction

The overall aim of this article is to reveal how a context related change in action comes about through introducing a new theoretical framework rooted in practice theory (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990; Geiger 2009). This framework captures significant iterative social processes conceptualized as strategic negotiation processes transforming capitals. These transformation processes lead to establishing, maintaining and changing temporary social positionings in fields, which are expressed through context specific habitus. The framework is applied to the ways adult nascent entrepreneurs negotiate the processes leading to physically starting a business (the latter is measured as the actual registration of a business and the start of trading; from now on these two will be conflated to “start-up”) focusing on the second step in the new venture creation process (see Figure 1). This action of physically starting a business is theoretically illustrated through constructing a temporary strategic fit. Thus, this article discusses how nascent entrepreneurs negotiate the processes leading to business start-up. It illuminates how individuals draw on social macrostructures and how these macrostructures materialise in shaping behaviour at the micro-level in daily entrepreneurial activities, situating the research in the emerging field of Entrepreneurship as Practice (De Clercq and Voronov 2009; Johannisson 2011; Keating, Geiger, and McLoughlin 2014; McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014; Watson 2013). This article makes a theoretical contribution to the “social turn” research literature within this field, assuming that all entrepreneurial processes are context dependent and constituted through social and cultural processes (Anderson 2016; Florida 2002; Greenman 2013; Korsgaard and Anderson 2011; McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014; Welter 2011). The theoretical framework suggested

here includes mental and overt processes in the research (Schjoedt 2017; Bird and Schjoedt 2017; Bird, Schjoedt, and Baum 2012).

<Insert Figure 1 here>

The application of the theoretical framework to nascent entrepreneurship presented here is motivated by the fact that even after more than 25 years of nascent entrepreneurship research (Reynolds 2015, 2016) still so many engaging in nascent entrepreneurial activities do not pursue a start-up (only three per cent of all those who answered a UK survey in 2014 having thought about starting a business actually started a new venture; 43% of those having thought about it actually started nascent entrepreneurial activities, [RBS 2014]; this proportion is indicative of findings in industrialised countries).

How these few nascent entrepreneurs strategically manage the processes to pursue a successful start-up realisation has not been given sufficient attention. The understanding of these pre-start-up activities is important for providing insights others (such as some of the above mentioned 43 %) can utilise, thus growing the overall number of individuals successfully engaging in start-up. Increasing this number of start-up realisations increases the likelihood of more successful small businesses; in turn, more successful small businesses likely means more jobs, which are linked to increased tax income for governments, overall contributing to a growing and more sustainable economy.

The findings of this analysis presented here in a framework help to identify relevant patterns in behaviour for new venture creation, which could be supporting the development and increase of these behaviours potentially leading to business practice improvement and more successful start-ups.

The article proceeds as follows: the next section critically reviews Bourdieu's often misquoted original thoughts on capitals, habitus, personal structure, social position and field (Bourdieu 1986, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), while the subsequent sections critically discuss applications of **this – his is better -** approach in entrepreneurship research for underpinning entrepreneurial processes. Introducing the new theoretical framework follows this discussion. This framework is first explored in terms of its general value before the application to nascent entrepreneurship research illustrates its usefulness. The discussion critically explores the framework's added value before its contributions to theory and business support practice are outlined. The last section offers different research agendas before the article concludes.

Bourdieu's praxeology – personal structure, habitus, field and capital transformations

This section explains my critical reading of Bourdieu's concepts of personal structure, field, habitus, social position and capitals (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), which are the essential underlying concepts for the suggested theoretical framework introduced in this article. Drawing on his research is in line with recent discussions in the nascent entrepreneurship literature on the necessity to discuss cultural capital and habitus alongside social capital (Karatas-Özkan 2011; Light and Dana 2013; Tatli et al. 2014; Vershinina, Barrett, and Meyer 2011) to explain entrepreneurial behaviour and processes (Drakopoulou et al. 2016).

The value of his work lies in integrating contexts through the concepts of *habitus*, *social position*, *capitals* and *field* in a unique way different to other authors. Personal structure, put simply, is the set of accumulated skills, experiences, knowledge, traits, attitudes, dispositions (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The critical review of the other

concepts starts with discussing the conceptualisation of capitals before moving on to field, social position and habitus.

Bourdieu's capitals approach

The term “capital” denotes a variety of resources that gain different relevance in specific contexts. Capitals can be conceptualized as everything tangible and intangible that can be exchanged, from material goods to invisible ones, such as recommendations. At the core of my reading of Bourdieu's capitals approach (1977, 1986, 1990) is the notion that economic capital as the essential means for interactions within the economic system of capitalism can be transformed into three other forms of capital: social, cultural and symbolic capitals with different value and impact following Karatas-Özkan (2011).

Economic capital is a label for all forms of economic and financial assets (including cash, shares, land, buildings, technology and machinery). Relatively quickly, economic capital can be used for resourcing processes, acquiring other capitals and transforming one of the other three either into another type or into more economic capital. For example, economic capital can be used to buy access rights to exclusive membership clubs to meet potential buyers or to gain intellectual property rights.

Social capital often refers to intangible resources and their aggregated value held by the relationships within a group or network, such as contacts and information. Social capital is generally field specific as relationships within one field might hold no value in another. The transactions between individuals are made with the purpose of profit maximization and creating some benefit for the social group. The benefits of maintaining social capital can include formally

institutionally guaranteed rights (for example through membership) or feelings of gratitude or obligation, the latter often through favours gained in the past that can be called upon when needed.

The mastery of a variety of field specific practices then differentiates full members from non-members. Often, as a consequence, social capital is not evenly distributed to all group members, but norms specify the extent of access to group resources (Bourdieu 1986, 1990). The reproduction and maintenance of social capital requires an on-going series of exchanges reaffirming the own group position and within a field the group's position, group membership and the group's usefulness. Maintaining relationships requires time and effort, indirectly or directly the investment of economic capital. Drawing directly on relationships reproduces and can change the group's power relations and thus boundaries. For some exchanges, group members act as custodians of group boundaries and legitimate acceptable and unacceptable exchanges between field agents and agents in other fields. The profitability of these efforts of gathering, building and maintaining social capital increases with the size of the economic and social capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990).

Cultural capital refers to explicit and tacit culture related knowledge and know-how. Its structure and quality influence agents' social opportunities in fields (Bourdieu 1986, 1990); Bourdieu distinguishes several forms of cultural capital. *Objectified cultural capital* denotes tangible assets, which signify high cultural value, often having a high price – original paintings, for example. Their display in offices indicates social status and wealth and enhances the owners' economic value. The ability to communicate appropriately about the cultural objects indicates a certain amount of education (part of *institutionalised cultural capital*), adding to the speaker's status. The *institutionalised cultural capital* summarizes formalized acquisition of skills,

knowledge and status, mastery of language (including accent and idioms), cultural behaviour and social codes. Obvious measures include qualifications and memberships with access regulations. The value of this capital form generally increases with levels of educational qualification, as more formal education will usually allow members to make more money over their lifetime.

Embodied cultural capital denotes the kind of tacit knowledge and insight held by individual group members and groups (mostly semi-consciously). This capital form can be illustrated by clothing styles or colors worn for special occasions, which vary between cultures, for example, the use of white clothing for celebrating joyous events in some cultures and sad ones in others. Tastes, manners and behaviour in specific situations embody cultural capital and symbolise often a class-related social position in society.

Symbolic capital Bourdieu argues (1986, 1990) signifies status and gains most value at the intersection of status and class. It has the power of legitimizing people and actions within a field through (re-)establishing power relationships and status. Gaining a Nobel Prize is a well known example. Objects are given meaning with the purpose of highlighting and displaying a newly gained status and belonging to a social class, for example owning a well bred horse. Symbolic capital is field specific and has positioning power in fields, as agents with a high amount of social capital can impose their views and field interpretations on others, for example, who gets promoted. It can be increased through fulfilling social obligations; the latter is also building and maintaining social capital. For example, professionals who are well networked with influential powerful people to advance their career might have higher social capital but little symbolic capital by themselves. While symbolic capital alone does not have resourcefulness, it can assist in gaining access to social capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990). Thus, those

individuals with higher quality of social capital have easier access to and scope for developing symbolic capital that is adding value.

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of field, social position and habitus

Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus assist uniquely in deconstructing how individuals draw successfully on the external environment while negotiating the journey to start-up (Bourdieu 1986, 1990). From now on the notion of external environment is subsumed under context, a term better encompassing the macrostructures as well as physical external environment (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014). Bourdieu's notion of society (encompassing economy) is of a network of social relations, which produce social positions for individuals within different fields. The concept of "field" (defined as smaller sets of social relations) assists in explaining dynamics between people, institutions and groups of people in society with different capitals and powers (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Bourdieu 1986, 1990). The label "field" of interactions denotes that there are distinct and separate and sometimes overlapping spheres of social relations and interactions; everyone is part of several fields and will have some fields in common with others. The concept of field is more precise than contexts and identifies an arena with power relations and structuring forces that shape field members' behaviours in as much as they shape field structures.

The field power relations structure the social relations and allocation of social positions. These power relations constitute and are constituted by access to field specific capitals (for the purpose of this article we limit the concept to covering the resources needed to execute actions, such as money, information, educational qualifications). Consequently, social positions enable and constrain certain interactions between field members and interactions with institutions;

possible or perceived choices for actions are inscribed into the social positions. Similarly, what actions are regarded as socially permissible in life and business, applied here to the permission for starting a business, are an integral part of the social relations a social position is embedded into.

The example of ball team sports neatly illustrates the relationships of field structure and field members. In ball sports players have a clearly allocated position within the playing field and team; this field position comes with a list of instructions on what to do and how to interact with the own team members in as much as those of the opposing team. As a consequence, their behaviours become predictable to some extent, based on the well-known and shared instructions and “nature” of the positions they play. **In the same way agents or field members constitute** fields through relating to the rules while concurrently the rules of the field regulate the social positions and thus behaviours of agents. An example in business is the role of a supplier - on top of contractually defined instructions and behaviour, ways of behaving and actions are “naturally” defined by their position as supplier relative to the client or customer.

The repetitive behaviours easily predictable due to the field position and known as successful are called practices. Their execution within a field makes them signifiers of a social position so that other field members are able to identify the position an individual holds. Some social agents in a field with differing resources and personal structures can change the expected behaviour of a social position and its interaction with other field members and might extend the social space for this position in terms of behaviour, power and place in the hierarchy. “Other” behaviours less predictable by the social position are shaped by the unique personal structure of each individual (personal traits, personal history, choices made and their consequences, dispositions, tastes and preferences, education, social class, race, ethnic belonging, age, etc.).

Following practices and adding other behaviour uniquely position an individual in relation to the structure of the fields and other field members. At the same time, personal structures also act as a filter shaping the social construction of available limitations and possibilities of behaviours for negotiation processes of social positions.

The notion of “field-instructions” on how individuals behave leads to the concept of habitus, a set of dispositions for strategic relations management and actual behaviours (Bourdieu 1986, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). To be successful in field specific networks, a disposition has to be acquired that allows the member to acquire and maintain this field specific relationship management competence. Thus, habitus draws on all cognitive, social, emotional and somatic structures in particular fields to perform belonging. Its performance enables successful interaction in a field through accepting an allocation of one or more social field positions. This acceptance happens partially through internalizing some of the external structures and partially through simply performing expected behavior associated with a particular social position fully or partially through habitus, even if the associated external structures have not been internalised. The personal structures generate behaviours that meet the expectations of the fields for a social position through developing a habitus to function and gain individually defined success. Eventually, a partial understanding of the field and social power relations is gained. This success is different for every field member, not only because of the unique personal structure but also because of the varying partial understanding of the field. This partial field understanding underlies the explanation put forward here to explain why only some individuals start a new venture. The next sections critically review applications of Bourdieu’s concepts and research findings offering relevant background for the new suggested theoretical framework. As this framework bridges structure and agency when explaining entrepreneurial activities, the review

starts with discussing entrepreneurship research shedding light on structure followed by that on agency.

Applications of practice theory and capitals in (nascent) entrepreneurship research

Process theories and practice theory based theoretical applications in entrepreneurship research

Research in entrepreneurship has tended to be either on the structure or on the agency side, for example, applying Giddens' work (1990, 1993), and rather little on linking structure and agency in their impact on human behavior, for example when starting and growing businesses (but see for example Lee and Jones 2015 bridging the two). Structure oriented research on entrepreneurship is well established (see for example Baker, Gedajlovic, and Lubatkin 2005; Estrin, Mickiewicz, and Stephan 2013). Indicative of this type of research more recently is a focus on researching the entrepreneurial eco-system (see Spigel 2017; Stam 2015) and regional and/or national conditions and their impact on start-up behavior, such as business support offered (including funding) or business support policy.

Agency focused research on nascent entrepreneurship has tended to look at the subjective view of starting a new venture. For example, based on a social constructivist paradigm (Bouchikhi 1993; Martin and Sugarman 1996; Chell 2000; Lindgren and Packendorff 2009 for a review) and with a critical realist and/or phenomenological epistemological approach (Aldrich and Martinez 2002; Pittaway 2005; Lindgren and Packendorff 2009; Karatas-Özkan et al. 2014; Tatli et al. 2014) subjectivist-agency research suggests methodologies that go beyond panel studies (Reynolds 2016; Schjoedt 2017) and generate insights into how individual entrepreneurs construct meaning and make sense when engaging in business activities, including pre-start-up activities. This type of research has predominantly applied qualitative methodologies (with

methods such as participant observation, ethnography, life-history interviews, Chell 2000; Lindgren and Packendorff 2009, for an example see Strüder 2003). Entrepreneurship research applying social constructivism (see Lindgren and Packendorff 2009 for a review and conceptual discussion) has added insights on the ongoing construction of knowledge that is shared and transformed with and by communities of practice. At the same time this research has helped to capture the complexity of realities, adding to our understanding of the constructed nature of realities and knowledge pertaining to running businesses, and focusing our attention towards process-oriented empirical inquiry.

Entrepreneurship research in general, and nascent entrepreneurship research in particular, has been dominated by a functionalist economic rationalist approach to explaining entrepreneurial behaviour and processes (see, Baker and Nelson 2005; Karatas-Özkan et al. 2014; Lee and Jones 2015; Pittaway 2005; Stinchfield, Nelson, and Wood 2013; Tatli et al. 2014; Wood and McKinley 2010; Reynolds 2016). For decision-making, classic economic rationality assumes all information and all possible solutions are gathered and evaluated; subsequently, under economic reasoning one option perceived to be likely the most effective is chosen and implemented (Pittaway 2005; Stinchfield, Nelson, and Wood 2013).

If such a rational approach is applied to nascent entrepreneurship, one would assume a logic process of setting goals, developing mindsets, identifying and developing opportunities and gathering appropriate resources (see for example Aldrich and Baker 1997; Aldrich and Martinez 2001; Baker and Nelson 2005; Baron 1998; Wood and McKinley 2010). However, during the last 15 to 20 years alternative paradigms have gained prominence in entrepreneurship research, influenced by disciplines such as psychology and sociology and management research (by

authors such as Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990; Geiger 2009; Giddens 1990, 1993; Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 2005, 2006).

The academic discovery of the bricolage approach applied by entrepreneurs (Stinchfield, Nelson, and Wood 2013; Mueller, Volery, and von Siemens 2012) is an example of this subjectivist-agency research. Findings illustrate that entrepreneurs use available resources at a certain point in time and do not necessarily engage in acquiring others; thus, they are not aiming at resource optimisation for goal achievement. The implications of this finding are indicative of the practical reality of “what entrepreneurs do” (Keating, Geiger, and McLoughlin 2014; Lindren and Packendorff 2009; Shane 2003; Sarasvathy 2003, 2004; Stinchfield, Nelson, and Wood 2013; Mueller, Volery and von Siemens 2012). Research on these common entrepreneurial activities could shed further light on the routines and behavior that permeate entrepreneurial processes and add insight into how nascent entrepreneurs draw on aspects of the external environment to negotiate entrepreneurial processes successfully. What is missing in this type of research are insights on patterns of behaviours that allow new start-ups and their advisers to support the new venture creation process in more effective ways.

Process theory applications in the early days (Steyaert 2007; Hjorth, Holt, and Steyaert 2015; Leyden and Link 2015) conceptualised new venture creation, for example, as a development model with clear stages and a sequential linear process all start-ups had to go through (Greiner 1972). This conceptualization was rightly criticized for being too general and abstract and unable to explain what nascent entrepreneurs actually did (Downing 2005; Fletcher 2006; Frank and Lueger 1997; Steyaert 2007). Similarly, application of evolutionary process theories have not been able to add value to our understanding of how individuals create new ventures (Aldrich 1999; Aldrich and Martinez 2001; Moroz and Hindle 2012; Steyaert 2007).

These and other process theories neglected to integrate the subject of the processes into the analysis (Steyaert 2007), thus falling short of explaining entrepreneurial processes sufficiently. Solutions suggested included multi-level approaches (Davidsson and Wiklund 2001; Karatas-Özkan 2011; Steyaert 2007); however, these solutions are not yet fully differentiating the various levels clearly and convincingly.

Relational perspectives, based on the sociological theory of relationalism (Mische 2011), focus on human beings as fundamental elements in relationship networks motivated by the ongoing need to shape the relationships as part of personal and life development. This perspective assumes self only exists in relation to other human beings (Emirbayer 1997; Mische 2011; Tatli et al. 2014). This type of research has added value in providing insights into the significance of social relations for entrepreneurship. These perspectives still have to be applied more frequently and in a focused way to nascent entrepreneurial processes in order to provide insights business support practitioners and entrepreneurs can use. Process-relational perspectives go further then and suggest bridging the dualism of structure versus agency and offer an approach that conceptualizes entrepreneurial processes as social relations and interactions, focusing on interdependencies between structure and agency (Karatas-Özkan and Chell 2010; Karatas-Özkan 2011; Kyriakidou and Özbilgin 2006; Tatli et al. 2014). This type of research is based on epistemological assumptions of the existence of a physical world outside of the individual. Research analyses all social phenomena relating to this physical world as evolving through social relations and interactions. Based on this paradigm nascent entrepreneurship research could map and unpack how individuals draw on context during their development of nascent entrepreneurial processes leading to business start-up. Findings from this kind of

research would add value to fully mapping and explaining how new ventures are created allowing developments of business start up support.

The following sections critically review applications of Bourdieu's (1986, 1990) capitals approach before developing an argument for how the further analysis of conversion of capitals and positioning add value to explaining nascent entrepreneurial processes leading to start-up realisation through offering a theoretical framework.

<Insert Table 1 here >

Applications of capitals in (nascent) entrepreneurship research

Despite the fact that the research area of nascent entrepreneurship is still dominated by an economic rationale and positivist approaches (see Karatas- Özkan et al. 2014; Reynolds 2016 for a review of mainly this type of literature), a small but increasing body of studies is drawing on Bourdieu's capitals concepts (1977, 1986, 1990) and habitus (Özbilgin and Tatli 2005; Drori, Honig, and Ginsberg 2006; Karatas-Özkan 2011; Light and Dana 2013; Patel and Conklin 2009) for explaining new venture creation (for example De Clercq and Honig 2011; Karatas- Özkan 2011; Light and Dana 2013; Vershinina, Barrett, and Meyer 2011) and entrepreneurial behaviour. Their findings offer different economic (and other) rationales and how entrepreneurial processes work.

While social capital has been discussed frequently in the last decade (see, Table 1 for an annotated selection of relevant articles sorted by capital types), its use and definitions vary and are ambiguous at best. Some authors have discussed it in a critical manner (Anderson and Miller 2003) whereas others have treated social capital as being nearly equal to social networks (Casson

and Deguista 2007). Sometimes, researchers even bring the notion of human capital into the mix (Davidsson and Honig 2003). Other capitals have been much less identified and integrated into the explanation of entrepreneurial processes, such as cultural capital with similarly different and sometimes contrasting meanings, and even less often symbolic capital (see Table 1), again with differing meanings and conceptualisations.

Light and Dana's (2013) research, for example, explains the low engagement and self-employment realisations within the Alaskan Alutiiq communities through the notions of norms for "appropriate" income generation activities the community holds as part of their cultural capital. They point out the negative effect of the norms held by co-ethnic networks on engaging in nascent activities and start-up realisation. Yet, their analysis stops too short by not analyzing the dynamic structuring nature of cultural beliefs and practices, which are limiting social positions available to community members. Similarly, De Clercq and Honig (2011) explain the integration of disadvantaged persons into the entrepreneurship field drawing on symbolic, economic, social and human capital. They argue that these disadvantaged entrepreneurs need more cultural capital in order to be able to meet the socially prescribed expectations towards start-ups in the entrepreneurial field, whereas symbolic capital allows them to change and challenge these expectations of the entrepreneurial field. Their research, however, assumes there is "one" field, which this research here cannot support.

Entrepreneurship research has applied mainly the concept of social capital (see for example, Ansari, Munir and Gregg 2012; Galbraith, Rodriguez, and Stiles 2007; Gedajlovic et al. 2013; McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014), yet often in a de-politicised way. Recently, researchers attempted to establish a social capital theory as a "foundational theory of entrepreneurship" (Gedajlovic et al. 2013, 455) to advance entrepreneurship further as an

independent field of study. The value of their conceptualization lies in differentiating context further (by spatial aspects, time, practice and change) and spelling out the mutual dependency of individuals and the “collective” they are part of. The meaning and content of “collective” (Gedajlovic et al. 2013), however, remains unclear and thus difficult to operationalize in research. Arguably, Bourdieu’s (1986, 1990) concept of “field” better indicates boundaries of socially structured networks.

Conceptualisations of social capital based on Putnam’s (2002) and Coleman’s (1988) works discuss the ability to access resources through social relationships, for example, Payne et al. (2011) regard social capital as endowed rather than earned and indicate that it is rooted in cultural traits. In this context the findings on bonding social capital are situated (addressing strong ties, Granovetter 1973; Jack, Drakopoulou, and Anderson 2004) with a focus on cohesion within small groups and obligations for giving back. Similarly, the notion of bridging social capital, or weak ties, discussing the collaboration with diverse previously unconnected groups (Coleman 1988; Fukuyama 2001; Putnam 2002) follows a functional approach of relationships (Jack, Drakopoulo, and Anderson 2004).

A recent research example by Kreiser, Patel and Fiet (2013) conceptualises relationships as containers focusing on capabilities of entrepreneurial intensity (Morris and Sexton 1996), an individual’s commitment in regards to venture forming, and social competence (the application of social skills for effective interaction with others). These authors see both entrepreneurial intensity and social competence as moderating variables on changes in social capital and its impact on firm gestation. Based on quantitative data from the PSED¹ I study, they suggest founders could use these two personal capabilities in a focused way to get the most out of the

¹ Panel study of entrepreneurial dynamics number I, data collection was finished in 2008.

relationships they have for start-up realisation. However, those findings do not consider how social macrostructures (age, gender, class etc.) influence effective interaction. The authors seem to assume that the relationship quantity and quality and their resourcefulness can be measured.

Most often, the notion of social capital discussed in entrepreneurship research is very similar to that of network research and draws on findings of this important research area (Chell and Baines 2000; Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Hoang and Yi 2015; Nahapiet 2009; Sullivan and Ford 2014). Early findings focus on the impact of networks on entrepreneurial outcomes or how networks develop over the stages of business development (Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Jack 2010). More recent research explores patterns of relationships and analyses the impact of characteristics of entrepreneurs and teams on entrepreneurial outcomes, and researching competence and skills (see Hoang and Yi 2015, Jack et al. 2010). In doing so, this above research is transferring the functionalist approach in the majority of network research to social capital research. These findings do not offer much insight for explaining entrepreneurial daily activities.

Even the process view of social networks (see for example Lamine et al. 2015) is not really going beyond the “container view” of social networks. These above research findings conceptualise the notion of a relationship as a container of a number of contacts with different amounts and quality of information, contacts and resources (capital, goods and services people hold). This above view contends that relationship content quality varies by nature and over time. This effect of this notion of social capital is a reduction of social capital’s complexity to a notion of accumulated networks and contacts someone holds (summing up non-financial social assets). My critique is that a focus on functional views of social capital and networks neglects the

underpinning economically enabling and constraining impact of capitals as mediating forces for positioning nascent entrepreneurs in fields.

The notion of convertibility of capitals based on Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) approach has rarely been applied to nascent entrepreneurship (but see Karatas-Özkan 2011; Vershinina, Barrett, and Meyer 2011). This kind of research can reveal the detail of entrepreneurial processes and offer a dynamic view of how nascent entrepreneurs draw on context and are resourcing their venture. Vershinina, Barrett and Meyer (2011) applied Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) capitals approach to explaining the nascent entrepreneurial activities of Polish entrepreneurs in Leicester, UK. However, their conceptualization has a slightly static view of context. "Static" refers to the conceptualisation of context as stable and independent of the individual. The relevance of how these Polish entrepreneurs drew on macrostructures, in particular ethnic belonging, has not been addressed, however.

Most relevant preceding research by Karatas-Özkan (2011) and Karatas-Özkan and Chell (2010) has inspired this new theoretical framework suggested here. Their work applies the four capitals types in a process- relational framework for illustrating entrepreneurial processes and draws on Bourdieu's (1990) capitals approach based on two case studies and under 10 individuals in the creative industries sector. The authors construct analytically micro- and meso-relational levels; capitals are held at the micro-level of the individual whereas entrepreneurial habitus is being situated at the meso-level. Karatas-Özkan and Chell (2010) and Karatas-Özkan (2011) suggest a multi-layered and process-relational framework of nascent entrepreneurship including macrostructures (which are insufficiently integrated) based on a notion of relational learning. They conceptualize new venture creation processes as transformative, integrating life experiences (Anderson 2005; Karatas-Özkan 2011; Karatas-Özkan and Chell 2010; Steyaert

2007), dispositions, and Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) capitals. Nascent entrepreneurship is seen as a context dependent enactment of two interrelated processes of entrepreneurial learning and becoming. The transformation of capitals is in this view at the core of entrepreneurial learning (Karatas-Özkan and Chell 2010). Their research finds that the entrepreneurial process of new venture creation is leading to creating only one entrepreneurial habitus, constructing entrepreneuring as an "other" form of being (Keating, Geiger, and McLoughlin 2014). Implicitly, their approach assumes a more powerful influence of context than necessary. Similarly, they locate capitals on the micro-level of the individual being "owned" by it, which McKeever, Anderson and Jack (2014) do not agree with.

The following framework addresses these limitations (assumption of one field and one habitus only; little or no detail on how entrepreneurial processes happen and what entrepreneurial practices are developed) in order to offer a more comprehensive and detailed underpinning of complex entrepreneurial processes. The framework is applied to starting a business and unpacks the ways in which individual nascent entrepreneurs construct a strategic fit leading to business start-up realisation. The most important processes are converting different forms of field specific capitals on an on-going basis. These transcendental and transformative conversion processes then enhance nascent entrepreneurs' positioning power, field specific status and strategic behaviour. Capitals and personal structure are enacted through the performance of various instances of field-specific habitus'. This article argues individuals pursue start-up if they are able to construct a sense of strategic fit between personal structure and fields. The benefits of my suggested approach for would-be entrepreneurs and business advisers alike are to be able to get more quickly to market if assets are transformed and acquired to develop social positionings in a focused strategic way.

The next section is divided into the general explanation of the theoretical approach for the framework leading to its application to nascent entrepreneurship and strategic management of entrepreneurial processes.

<Insert Figure 2 here >

Theoretical framework for strategic management of entrepreneurial processes leading to start-up

Theoretical approach and rationale

The critical review of entrepreneurship research illustrated that to provide practice relevant research findings (Welter et al. 2017) entrepreneurship research needs to offer sufficiently detailed explanations of how entrepreneurial processes are negotiated leading to a physical start-up. Similarly, we need deeper understanding of how nascent entrepreneurs draw on macrostructures in order to go through with a start-up realization, here conceptualized as a function of having socially constructed a strategic fit. And we need to add insight on the positioning effect of social relations within fields.

This new framework in Figure 2 is rooted in the process-relational paradigm (Karatas-Özkan and Chell 2010; Karatas-Özkan 2011; Lee and Jones 2015; Tatli et al. 2014) and Bourdieu's practice theory (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990; Nicolini 2009). It regards social relations as the core underlying elements of human existence and business. Figure 2 offers a snapshot of iterative entrepreneurial processes underlying the conceptualization of achieving a strategic fit. These processes are mostly sub- or semi-conscious negotiation and transformation processes that allow successful functioning in a particular field (following the behavioural

approach Bird and Schjoedt, 2017; Schjoedt 2017). The illustrated processes underlie many attempts to gain new or additional social positionings in a field, change and adaptation processes to enter new fields and a significant change to a field specific social positioning an individual attempts. Possible applications include starting employment with a new employer, taking up a management position in an organization where someone was previously being an employee or physically starting a new venture. The latter situation is the application chosen in this article for illustrating the framework's value.

Figure 2 moves the focus to the configuration of personal and field structure dependent on time and context labeled as strategic fit. This article here takes Bourdieu's (1977, 1986, 1990) understanding of personal structure, habitus, field and social capital as a starting point and then goes one step further than previous entrepreneurship research and focuses on field specific social positionings of the individual conceptualised as an outcome of ongoing capital transformations. This approach defines positioning (see Figure 2) as a social materialisation of the socially constructed strategic match between personal, field structure and macro-structures. These positionings are expressed through performances of field specific habitus at a specific point in time.

Consequently, the framework assumes the existence of an external environment and structures outside of individuals, subsumed under "context" (building on Chalmers and Shaw 2015), which subsumes social macrostructures. Individuals bring context to life through drawing on it in their daily activities; thus, the individual does not socially constructed everything. However, individuals select **what or which? aspects of** context they relate to through drawing on social relations and macro-structures in their habitus performances. Each individual selects aspects of context as relevant and socially constructs what is needed to match the identified field

requirements to function successfully within this field. And this selection process signifies the different (partial) field understanding nascent entrepreneurs develop. Performances of field belonging constitute and re-construct, facilitate and enact the on-going macro-level and field structures and related discourses and their temporary representations in institutions. Field structure can be conceptualised as a representation of macro-social structures while simultaneously being regulated by further field specific additional structures and rules. Habitus is then the device through which field belonging and the social positioning is performed, integrating those personal structure aspects that fit the entrepreneurial field and social positioning. Habitus constitutes a social materialization of macro- and field structures. The use of “positioning” indicates the need for ongoing maintenance of those field positions and the temporary nature of these processes. Habitus performances are conceptualized as temporary outcomes of the interplay of entrepreneurial fields, capitals transformations and personal structure. This framework extends the one habitus notion (Karatas-Özkan 2011), to a number of habitus’ enactments in different social positionings, which are temporary in nature and context dependent.

Similarly, I maintain that each individual holds several positionings, even in one field, dependent on the purpose of the action carried out and social role temporarily taken. An example of the latter can be the positioning of supplier in one field while being simultaneously a client to another business in another field: they can be suppliers to large corporate clients within an industry subsector, and simultaneously be clients of small parts manufacturers, for example. Both positionings require different performances of habitus, most of which is based on shared common understanding about a known field positioning and associated rules for behaviour.

I argue that the construction of a match between personal and field structure is temporary and has to be maintained, mainly through social relations management via capital acquisition and transformation. All individuals, to various degrees, have access to and negotiate the above-defined types of capitals (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990), independent of whether or not they pursue self-employment or business start-up. Similar personal structures, however, can lead to different constructions of strategic fit in the same field (an industry sector is an example of a field).

This approach here in Figure 2 goes beyond existing notions of capitals and conceptualises them as being relational and temporary in nature and thus located on the meso-level of the field and not the level of the individual (micro-level, as stated by Chell and Karatas-Özkan 2010). Social positionings as outcomes of negotiating capital transformation processes express the social materialisations of macro-structures and are performed through habitus. These macro-structures for this framework are focused on gender, race, ethnic belonging, religious performance through visible signifiers (veil, hat, clothing) and ideology and materialise in discourses. Ideology is focused on materialisations in enterprise discourses and associated business support structures temporarily available at a given point in time. Social macro-structures permeate society (under which economy is subsumed) including institutions and the personal structure of all individuals. Field specific habitus is in flux realising these macro-level social structures through the transformation of capitals (Bourdieu 1986, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) while re-constructing simultaneously social structures through referring to them.

Consequently, this research is not interested in the reasons for behavior, but how processes come about through drawing on context. The major goal of generating theory, and

more specifically, theoretically or analytically generalisable insights, is to advance our understanding of human actions. One goal is the ability to make predictions of this behaviour beneficial to the individuals and to the wider society (Dubin 1969; Eisenhardt 1989; Feldman and Orlikowski 2011; Stinchfield, Nelson, and Wood 2013). This conceptualizing in Figure 2 is helpful to show patterns of behaviour every individual will need to go through to some extent when entering a new field or changing the position in the power structure in a field they are (re-) constructing from a different positioning.

As pointed out, the bodily enactment of the strategic fit through performances of habitus', in plural, leads to a social positioning that feels right. This enactment draws on social macrostructures and field structures. This conceptualisation sheds light on how and why some individuals are starting up and others are not. This is important to note for the following discussion, as the perception and reality of the ability to change the expectations brought towards a social position and / or the "start-up" might socially construct a sense of mismatch between the personal structure and the image presented of the entrepreneur. Along the lines of gender, age, race etc. some might be more able to change a field position's attributes than others for their own benefit, as the power structures position them differently allowing certain behaviour for some position holders, and disallowing the same behaviour for others in the same field. The perceived availability of assets depends on personal structure and how individuals draw on social macrostructures. Eventually, some individuals can partially change the unwritten tacit "rules of the game" or field rules, develop new or change positions within a given field.

Social, economic, cultural and symbolic capitals only gain value in dynamic exchange relations. Capitals are by nature relational drawing on existing macro-structures and field structures (which are themselves shaped by and shaping macro-structures). Not only social

capital has structuring power for interactions (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014), but also all capitals and their transformed states have power to mediate social positionings, enacted by entrepreneurial field specific habitus’.

This framework contends capitals are located on the meso-level within specific fields (Anderson, Park, and Jack 2007) and not the micro-level as previously found for social capital (Karatas-Özkan 2011; Karatas-Özkan and Chell 2010). In my understanding, micro-level denotes the individual level where personal structures most importantly are located, including the skills an individual holds. Executing most of those skills is not dependent on others, for example, riding a bike or computer programming. However, skills only become relevant for entrepreneurial processes when they are applied to them. Personal structure socially materializes in a temporary social field positioning through drawing on capitals and is performed via habitus (see Figure 2).

Meso-level, on the other hand, denotes the level where individuals and institutions interact and (re-)create entrepreneurial capitals and enact habitus, thus bringing fields to life. This conceptualization leads to the notion that capitals cannot be owned and thus are not located on the micro-level. This insight builds on a recent research finding that social capital cannot be possessed (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014). Only entrepreneurial economic capital could possibly be regarded as being owned by the individual and thus might be located on the micro level. However, a view is taken here that its significance for new venture creation is only established when brought into social relations, such as for buying network memberships or buying and supplying relationships. For example, money lying in a bank account, which is not invested in the new venture has no impact on venture creation processes. This would allow for a

conceptualisation then that all capitals are enacted on the meso-level. This is important to understand for being able to use the framework suggested in Figure 4.

“Choice” is socially constrained by the ability to create and develop entrepreneurial assets and adapt the personal structure to the appropriate field structure. The term *strategic negotiations* used here draws on the concept of strategy-as-practice (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009) and focuses on the assessment, acquisition and realisation of what is needed to achieve a set goal, here to physically start up.

The benefits of this view presented here include raising awareness of behavioural patterns individuals in fields engage with, focusing on the acquisition and transformation of capitals. This framework in Figure 2 is applied to nascent entrepreneurs next; however, the scope of application is wider and could be to “the one changing a social position within a given field or entering a completely new field”.

<“Insert Box 1 Here”>

Framework application to starting a new venture

This framework applies best to new start-ups and not to franchises, as franchise start-ups have to follow a set framework and use existing already targeted products, systems and processes, which offer much less scope for negotiations for constructing a strategic fit. Similarly, it applies best to new service ventures engaged in some form of personal, or partially automated, interaction with customers (online and offline). Those businesses manufacturing and selling new products add more complexity to the venture creation processes and need consideration of additional factors.

This article conceptualises the new venture creation process as follows: Every individual who engages in new venture creation activities is called, for simplifying purposes, a nascent entrepreneur (Reynolds 2016). Indicators for the starting point of the nascent entrepreneurial journey can be exploring an idea for an app, customer complaints or in an area of passion, such as creative arts (Hill 2015). The new venture can be deconstructed as consisting of social relations the founder(s) (and staff) apply to new venture development.

Box 1 differentiates between entrepreneurial processes and activities - the latter are carried out by nascent entrepreneurs and thus become visible whereas entrepreneurial processes are wider and include the mental processes, such as reflection (indicative of the behavioural approach, see Schjoedt 2017). Of interest here are those processes that are shared to some extent by start-ups across industry sectors. All processes that are having an impact (positive or negative in nature) on moving towards new venture creation are labelled entrepreneurial processes. Similarly, all activities with an impact on the new venture creation processes are labeled entrepreneurial activities. Nascent entrepreneurs need to find out what is helpful for moving them on in their journey towards start-up.

<Insert Figure 3 here>

Once the nascent entrepreneurial journey has begun, situated in time and context, the assets nascent entrepreneurs possess need to be brought into the new venture creation process. Only when applied to new venture creation social relations, capitals gain relevance and can be conceptualized as entrepreneurial capitals. Capitals are differentiated using Bourdieu's terms (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1990) into entrepreneurial economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital

(see Figure 3). I conceptualise “economic” as the base capital into which all others can be turned (following Karatas-Özkan 2011). Nascent entrepreneurs need to develop the differentiation between entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial capitals during the entrepreneurial journey to start-up. Capitals’ relevance is sector and operations specific; the latter refers here to online, face-to-face, with(out) premises, etc.

Figure 2 is visualising the main elements of a strategic approach to managing entrepreneurial processes via capital management. It sheds light on how all the entrepreneurial processes draw on macro-structures and re-constitute them (indicated through arrows) and refer to capital transformation processes. In other words, essential mediating elements intervening in the processes from idea to start-up realisation are ongoing transformation processes of capitals. Through these capital transformation processes as part of emerging strategising nascent entrepreneurs discover, often with hindsight, what processes, activities and assets are helpful for start-up. These processes organise the individual behaviour of nascent entrepreneurs and allow adaptation to the industry sector (field). For the purpose of this research, the focus of attention is on the outcomes of transforming field specific capitals. The outcomes are building the habitus’ that performs to social positionings within a field. It might be helpful to note that most (nascent) entrepreneurs are only semi-conscious or not conscious about how they acquire and maintain capitals.

The temporary representations of ideology are, for example, business development programmes or business support organisations, theorized as social materialisation on the meso-level. They constitute iterative social relations offering institutionalized social and cultural capital through formal mentoring and business advice. As illustration, in the UK, the change in government in 2010 meant a reduction in the availability of government funded business support,

based on the different ideology of the role of the state in markets this government in power then held. One consequence of this change was that the actual availability of institutionalized social capital for business development was reduced, impacting on the ability to develop entrepreneurial social capital.

A female photography graduate², for example, has a lot of cultural capital (institutionalized through a formal degree in photography and work placements with a photographer) but lacks social networks when returning to her hometown after graduation. Family contacts enable her to get access to a staff member working for the Prince's Trust, a UK charity offering business support, training and loans for young people under 30, which she would otherwise not have found out about. Through the conversation with the Prince's Trust employee she finds out that a "contact" has entrepreneurial value. As a result of this discussion she opts to go through the Prince's Trust selection process. The programme gives her access to economic capital (a loan), a mentor (entrepreneurial social capital in the traditional sense) and training in business skills (further cultural capital).

Nascent entrepreneurs simultaneously develop their entrepreneurial capitals, personal structure and the social positionings on an ongoing basis. To be successful in doing so, they adapt personal structure elements to what they construct as relevant entrepreneurial field context. The term entrepreneurial personal structure denotes those elements of the personal structure that are constructed as relevant within entrepreneurial fields and brought into social relations. The associated behavior performed through habitus mirrors the partial field understanding (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, and 1990). Entrepreneurial fields have rules regulating significant patterns of behaviour, as can be found, for example, in industry subsectors; indicative are ways of doing

² This short case summary is based on a micro-business owner interview that cannot be presented in its entirety here in this article.

business. These can be decoded for pointers of “appropriate” behaviour. The outcome of this strategic matching process is the socially constructed strategic fit, which propels them to physically start-up.

What is this strategic fit then for nascent entrepreneurs? Strategic fit construction propels individuals to physically start a new venture. The business reality is that individuals start new ventures when they feel “it is the right time”; this means, they feel there is some fit or match between them, the venture set up and context (with particular consideration of industry subsector (field) context). This “feeling” is the confluence of thought and an emotion, a result of drawing on and constructing as relevant selected context aspects and thus this process is not solely internal. This article argues that the fact an individual started up, in other words was “giving it a go”, indicates these individuals concerned relied on a construction of a strategic fit. Others might not agree on the chosen point in time to be the “right time” nor can they see a fit. Start-up realisation is conceptualised as a sufficient strategic fit between personal structure, venture form and entrepreneurial fields (based on Bourdieu 1986, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). The construction of “sufficient” results from the above explained sense of having achieved a (partial) understanding of the field structure and having selected personal structure elements to “fit in”. Other reasons coming into the sense of fit can be having waited a “lot of time”, or, having engaged with “a great number of” pre-start-activities in the mind of the individual (where the actual amount of time and activities could be interpreted in many different ways). All of these experiences can contribute to the development of this feeling where opportunity recognition does not even come into the development of this strategic fit.

While entrepreneurial opportunity research as an important entrepreneurship research field has looked into these processes (indicative are insights by Dimov 2010, 2011), opportunity

identification might not be even part of the personal decision to “give it a go”. Similarly, research assumes a longer-term nature of an insight or an outcome of a significant change in beliefs (McCann and Vroom 2015; Shepherd, McMullen, and Jennings 2007). That research only marginally mirror the sense of strategic fit discussed here. The authors’ insights are assuming a rational logic and consciousness of these processes. However, their epistemological assumptions and lenses applied do not consider context as defined here; thus, their findings are not adding value here.

Entrepreneurial habitus’ perform the outcomes of the intricate exchange relationships between personal structure and entrepreneurial fields for nascent entrepreneurs through language, clothing style, and types of relationships. Entrepreneurial habitus draws on capitals and field structures in suitable ways based on the partial field understanding and employs the power in those relationships.

For the purpose of this framework social capital is seen as a structuring power performed through an appropriate field specific entrepreneurial habitus temporary in nature. For example, nascent entrepreneurs might be matching the expectation of the position as supplier or client through behaviour corresponding to their respective understanding of the field (industry sector) requirements. Having been allowed to grasp some of the unwritten instructions of the field, this understanding allows successful interaction. Successful in this context can mean to achieve goals personally set for the new venture, influenced by the partial understanding of what is required and expected to be successful in business in that industry sub-sector. In this notion, building on Bourdieu’s (1986, 1990) original work, social capital functions as a structuring force with impact on possible social positionings.

<Insert Figure 4 here>

Figure 4 brings together in one framework all elements discussed and visualises how structure and agency interlink in entrepreneurial processes materializing in field specific social positionings. It adds the three levels (micro-, meso- and macro-) and the insight that personal structure can change as a result of the strategic negotiations for achieving social positionings in fields. This circular element (indicated through the arrow pointing both ways from personal structure to fields and back) is indicative of the dynamic social relations underlying all ongoing development processes; in Figure 4 all dynamics are indicated through the ongoing capital transformation processes enacted by habitus leading to social positioning in fields. These processes at micro- and meso-level draw on macrostructures and through doing so re-constitute and can change them as pointed out above. The repetition of the term “context” indicates the need to consider the multiple contexts entrepreneurial processes are embedded in, such as spatial, political, cultural etc. Contexts materialize not only in discourses, practically in spoken and written words, technology, tangible goods, field practices etc. Contexts are always evolving, not only because the changing individual involves and adapts and selects different aspects as relevant for maintaining a strategic fit. Multiple contexts of fields, industry sectors and subsectors, society, etc. are simultaneously realized in entrepreneurial action. In this way, the framework is following recent calls to account for multi-layered and two-way relationships between contexts and individual (Fletcher 2011; Welter 2011, Zahra, Wright and Abdelgawad 2014).

The following three-step process allows entrepreneurs to take stock of their assets, acquire new ones and transform existing ones while making sense of the contexts and adapt to them on the journey to start-up in a particular industry sector with the purpose of achieving

strategic fit leading to physically starting a business. The first step is making social structures and field power relations visible, to illustrate how aspects of larger macro-structures such as age, gender, ethnic belonging, race, performance of religion (here referring to the visible symbols demonstrating religious belonging, from wearing a cross to a veil or typical clothing) contribute to shaping social positionings. These field structures draw on social macrostructures while re-constituting them through this same process of drawing on them. The second step identifies what capitals are relevant in a field, how field members draw on them and field structures, and which of the capitals have positioning power. This step allows seeing how field structures and associated capitals contribute to social positionings in a particular entrepreneurial field.

The third step is highlighting how associated power relations lead to the social positionings individuals maintain within a field for a time period, both in relation to others and in relation to the field itself. This step includes discovering the set of rules regulating the field. It is important to note that individuals can have more than one positioning within a single field dependent on what the purpose of the interaction is and the outcomes sought as pointed out earlier. Similarly, individuals are part of more than one field simultaneously, as the above supplier is also a customer buying stationery, an example of a different field. These steps assist in differentiating between expected conduct due to the field position, the identified field practices that make behaviour predictable, and other behaviour.

This framework application is offering a pathway for nascent entrepreneurs that is safe to follow when starting a business. Its application offers to unpack strategic resourcing through illustrating iterative behavioural patterns and benefits of creating, managing, reading and using social relations to negotiate and transform capitals. Ultimately, following the suggestions presented here allows would-be entrepreneurs and business advisers alike to be able to get more

quickly to market if assets are transformed and acquired to develop positionings in a focused way and can lead to saving time and money.

Discussion and conclusions

Discussion

How individuals achieve a strategic fit between personal and field structure is the core interest of this article. I argue that a construction of a strategic fit underlies the action to physically realise a goal. Strategic negotiation processes realised via transforming capitals are conceptualized leading this fit. These negotiation processes are a social materialisation of macro-structures and are performed through habitus in temporary field social positionings. The framework discusses social positioning as the key process element achieved through ongoing transformation of capitals enacted by habitus. Habitus is seen like a device through which an individual performs belonging to a field based on the partial field understanding.

Rooted in a process-relational approach and practice theory, this article introduces a new theoretical framework situating the research within the social turn literature (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014) and the emerging field of Entrepreneurship as Practice (De Clerq and Voronov 2009; Johannisson 2011; Keating, Geiger, and McLoughlin 2014; McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014; Watson 2013). The suggested framework application (Figure 2 and 4) is following the call to shed more light on entrepreneurial activities in context (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014; Welter et al., 2017; Zahra, Wright and Abdelgawad 2014). It is applied to new venture creation and explains in more detail how individuals creating new ventures integrate social macro-structures in developing active field membership. The new venture can be deconstructed as consisting of social relations the founder(s) and staff apply to

new venture development. These social relations and capitals are maintained at the meso-level are context dependent. This research argues when these processes lead to the construction of a strategic fit between personal and entrepreneurial field structure and context, a start-up is physically created (the latter is being simply measured as registration of a business and the start of trading, referred to as start-up). In order to demonstrate these underlying semi-conscious negotiation processes, the article sheds light on how nascent entrepreneurs negotiate the processes leading to physically starting a business. Adopting the lens of Bourdieu's concepts (1977, 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) of habitus, fields and capitals allowed this article to unpack how nascent entrepreneurs strategically manage capital transformations to construct a strategic fit between personal and entrepreneurial field structure that propels them to start up.

(1) The article differentiates between capitals as outlined by Bourdieu (1977, 1986, 1990) and entrepreneurial capitals relevant for start-up realisation, using the same labels, but focusing only on those elements that have impact on new venture creation. The discussion identifies them as entrepreneurial economic, social, symbolic and cultural capitals (see Figure 3). (2) The suggested theoretical framework (see Figure 2 and 4) offers a dynamic view of entrepreneurial processes and how they are strategically managed through ongoing entrepreneurial capitals acquisitions and transformations leading to the development of a strategic fit between personal entrepreneurial structure and fields. (3) Additionally, the article offered a convincing explanation of how the needed match of entrepreneurial personal structure and field structure for nascent entrepreneurs is achieved through capitals transformation to pursue physically a start-up at a given point in time. (4) Social macro-structures such as gender, age, race, ethnic belonging, class, visible religious performance and ideology were identified as the lines along which personal and field structure rotate. (5) Social positioning of a nascent entrepreneur was

introduced as a temporary materialization of the ongoing (re-) production of entrepreneurial habitus and fields. This social positioning is the social place from which trading happens. Habitus enacts this social positioning; both, habitus and social positioning represent social materialisations of those macro-structures on the meso-level. (6) Strategic management here is not the rational approach to planning and monitoring of action but based on strategy as emerging practice guided by simple learning processes of action, reflection, adaptation and changed action. Nascent entrepreneurs adapt to evolving networks of social relations and are positioning themselves while adapting to entrepreneurial fields on an ongoing basis.

Contributions and limitations

This article makes conceptual and practice relevant contributions. Conceptually, this article contributes to the slowly growing body of “social turn” research (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014) applying process-relational perspectives to explaining entrepreneurial processes within the emerging field of Entrepreneurship as Practice (Johannisson 2011; Keating, Geiger, and McLoughlin 2014; McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014; Watson 2013). Findings of this type of research reveal underpinning process-related knowledge of how entrepreneurs operate (Karatas-Özkan 2011; Keating, Geiger, and McLoughlin 2014; Steyaert 2007; Tatli et al. 2014), following the call for research and approaches to consider the situated realities of venture formation as explorations of the unknown (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014; Welter et al., 2017).

This article makes four significant contributions to developing our theoretical underpinning of entrepreneurial processes. With a focus on strategic fit, this theoretical framework offers a sound operationalization of Bourdieu’s (1986, 1990) work on practice, based on a critical reading of habitus, field, personal structure and capitals. The approach suggested

here re-imagines the (semi-)conscious taken for granted processes that underlie the acquisition and performance of habitus. The suggested theoretical framework was applied here to explain how individuals get propelled to the point of physically starting a business.

(1) It offers a focus on *strategic fit* - a label and conceptualisation of what propels some individuals to engage in a significant change in strategic (business) behaviour, which could be entering a new field or a significant change in social positioning. This article applies a new framework to physically starting a new venture (see Figure 2 and 4). This framework is offering theoretical underpinning for entrepreneurial processes an individual engages in for achieving the construction of a strategic fit, based on a sound operationalisation of Bourdieu's praxeology (1977, 1990). Transformations of capitals are leading to achieving temporary social positionings in entrepreneurial fields, conceptualized as a temporary strategic fit between personal and field structure based on a partial understanding of entrepreneurial field(s). Habitus is the device realising this strategic fit and performance of field belonging.

Previous frameworks drawing on transformation of Bourdieu's capitals (Karatas-Özkan 2011; Karatas-Özkan and Chell 2010), and their applications (Karatas- Özkan 2011; Vershinina, Barrett, and Meyer 2011) have provided the starting point for addressing explicitly the need to focus on transformation of capitals. However, this above research discusses only generally transformations of capitals, not giving any detail of how these transformation processes happen. Much of the discussion on capitals in entrepreneurship research has focused on social capital often reduced to an accumulation of networks (Gedajlovic et al. 2013). This kind of past research has been insufficiently linking capitals discussion to the core function of habitus to activate and realise (social) capitals as a structuring force for acquiring and maintaining social positions in

fields. Similarly, explanations of context often do not go beyond an assumed dichotomy of inside and outside of the individual.

This Bourdieu based framework (Figure 2 and 4) and the point in time in the venture creation process it sheds light on – physically starting a new venture (see Figure 1) – differs in focus from the important trigger research literature (Alsos, Ljunggren, and Petterson, 2003; Autio et al., 1997; Bird, 1988; Degeorge and Fayolle, 2011; Krueger and Carsrud, 1993; Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Tkachev and Kolvereid, 1999). Trigger research builds mainly on Ajzen’s theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which assumes a “rational human with free will”, focused often solely on intention – understood as an antecedent to action. The underlying research philosophy for the large majority of existing research is rooted in the behavioural approach seeing human beings as perceiving and reacting to an external environment (exogenous dynamic) or driven by internal factors (endogenous dynamic) (Degeorge and Fayolle, 2011; Hulsink and Koek, 2014; Liang and Dunn, 2007). Types of trigger phases (Degeorge and Fayolle, 2011) are an insufficiently defined time period starting from the first nascent entrepreneurial activity and lasting to an insufficiently defined end – either success or failure. Trigger literature is neglecting the dimension of constructing relevance based on personal situations, the impact of macrostructures and the dynamic interactive nature of social relations. Similarly, this past research undervalues the messy emotional spontaneous processes around starting a new venture.

In contrast to the trigger research, the strategic fit approach discussed in this article focuses on a point in time after engagement with those pre-start-up activities: physically starting a business (see Figure 1). The strategic fit concept acknowledges the inexplicability of actions that often defy any form of rational justification. For these reasons, the discussion in this article

concentrates on a momentary construction of a strategic fit that leads to business registration and start of trading. Strategic fit is denoting a temporary match between personal structure and the individual's ability to perform entrepreneurial habitus matching an entrepreneurial field materialising in social positioning that feels as a fit. This fit leads to the formal start of a new venture.

(2) Where this new framework goes further than most research is integrating the social materialisation of macrostructures into the theoretical underpinning of explaining individual actions on the micro-level and their function for achieving temporary social positionings. This integration of macrostructures is a great contribution in its own right because intersectionality of such structures is rarely explored in entrepreneurship research. The framework overcomes some of the limitations of previous approaches, which provide a generalized view of transformation of capitals only discussed from the subjective viewpoint. This approach here is going beyond the duality of objective structures and subjective experience offering a view of how they are intricately linked.

(3) The explanations of the framework make explicit that while macro-structures exist outside of the individual, context as it has been conceptualised for a while in entrepreneurship research has to be re-considered and re-conceptualised as being a function of the individual's ability to integrate and partially transform macrostructures and acquire and allocate capitals. (4) Thus, this framework integrates the aspect of time, the role and impact of time and temporal dynamics uniquely through introducing social positionings as temporary outcomes of field specific habitus' performances.

The above contributions address a significant lack in current knowledge, specifically, how individuals draw on macrostructures and realise habitus to maintain social positionings

leading to a social construction of a strategic fit that propels to a significant change in action, here applied to starting a new venture. Thus, this theoretical framework is the first to capture some of the strategic negotiation processes that happen at the half- or subconscious levels and are not reaching the level of conscious discourse (Bourdieu 1986, 1990).

Contributions for business support practice are multiple. Entrepreneurial symbolic capital is part of an individual's overall symbolic capital, as indicated in Figure 3. As mentioned previously, symbolic capital increases the entrepreneur's credibility and authority in the market and industry. This capital state is easily convertible to all other capitals within a short timeframe, making it one of the most important capitals nascent entrepreneurs need to develop. It can also be a direct lead to economic capital, as an award holder in the appropriate business area gains authority and is more likely to be invited for bid presentations for contracts and directly winning customers in the business-to-consumer-area. However, symbolic capital can also be used to build social capital, as the former is a strategic starting point for a conversation, for example.

Examples of entrepreneurial symbolic capital for adult professionals are the following:

- Winning or getting short-listed for awards in the relevant business sector
- Sitting on a panel for judging competitions of other start-ups in good/best industry practice

Symbolic capital has positioning power through impacting on the adaptation processes between personal entrepreneurial structure and the relevant entrepreneurial fields.

Entrepreneurial social capital has the most obvious direct positioning power: for example, when authorities or thought leaders in a sector recommend a nascent entrepreneur for the quality of services or products, this recommendation has an effect on positioning the nascent entrepreneurs and their services. Subsequently, this venture is in a more favorable position to the

entrepreneurial field than without this recommendation. Practically speaking, this effect can be achieved, for example, through a company website, which offers a link to “great business partners”. “Word-of-mouth” can thus be unpacked as having the most impactful positioning power through linking the personal entrepreneurial structure (and indirectly the new venture) to the entrepreneurial field, establishing strong ties (Jack, Dodd, and Anderson 2004).

Entrepreneurial social capital can be bought using economic capital through paid memberships of organisations, such as professional bodies, which allow access to particular events for members only, thus creating entrepreneurial fields in their own right. Significant illustrations are business referral networks, where membership is limited to one or two representatives of each trade or sector in a local group. The field created is strongly regulated through a set of social relations, which include rules for weekly or fortnightly meetings and a clear structure of those meetings, such as 60-second-pitches for each present business owner. Often, a time slot allows for the exchange of referrals collected for other members outside of the weekly meetings. The specifically designed referral forms structure information and building networks. Entrepreneurial social capital, thus, can be transformed with some investment in form of time into symbolic capital.

Cultural entrepreneurial capital summarizes all knowledge, formal accreditations and qualifications relevant to starting and running this start-up, knowledge and skills in business topics (such as marketing, and financial planning and analysis), networking, managing people and relationships, degrees and other qualifications in the technical skills for the venture. Process-related knowledge of how to act in a number of entrepreneurial fields and what language to use in particular entrepreneurial fields is tacit knowledge nascent entrepreneurs need to pick up. They can gain this tacit knowledge from family members, other businesses, through formal

mentors or friends. This kind of knowledge can further be acquired through transforming economic capital into access to the entrepreneurial processual tacit knowledge by paying a coach or mentor to work with them.

Entrepreneurial economic capital has been discussed here with a focus on financial capital; cash or assets can be used to buy all other forms of capitals in a short time period. Distinct examples are, for example, loans or grants solely for start-ups. Every start-up or early stage entrepreneur and business advisers usually seek to gain access to grants and loans with reasonable interest rates.

Limitations of the framework lie in the nature of frameworks: they try to simplify complex processes in order to show some significant iterative patterns of processes and links. Yet, further detail cannot be offered in the context of such an article.

This framework presented in Figure 2 can be used in multiple ways to further entrepreneurship research, following recent calls for more meaningful impactful research findings (Anderson and Starnawska 2008; Cunliffe and Scaratti 2017; Welter et al. 2017). Some suggestions are:

- To develop a research agenda for further unpacking the “How” of nascent entrepreneurs’ strategic management of their start-up journey.
- To inform business practice with applicable relevant knowledge – providing guidance on what to consider in a strategic way what currently is done haphazardly when starting a new venture by entrepreneurs. Similarly, when supporting start-ups with the goal to increase the number of individuals developing an idea through to business start-up (the 43% the RBS Tracker identified in their survey, RBS 2014) the suggested framework offers help.

- To apply the framework to wider management research, for example when changing from employee to manager (which is not discussed here).

Within the scope of this article I can indicate only few steps in those directions in the next section.

Research implications and future research

The discussions showed that this framework could be applied more generally for the change in a social positioning in a field an individual is already participating in as well as entering a new field. The application of this framework to interpreting qualitative research findings provides rich possibilities for socially relevant research (Welter et al. 2017). This kind of research can have an impact on business support policy and practice contributing to more and sustainable start-ups, ultimately leading to a more healthy thriving economy with more stable jobs.

This new framework opens up a different realm of inquiry with unique methodologies. Research inquiry is positioned as participative, situated, interpretive and ongoing, demanding multiple, embodied, verbal and observational accounts of all involved in the research process (Cunliffe and Scaratti 2017) so that multiple meanings and layers of meanings can emerge. Iterative patterns of behavior, conceptualized as practices are often positioned below the level of consciousness and thus often elude many forms of direct questioning. Open conversations and deep reflections within open interviews triggered through questions of the researcher allow for those meanings and contexts to surface (Cunliffe and Scaratti 2017) in narratives. These narrative texts can then be used to identify patterns in behaviour, together with the research participant applying a co-creation approach to generating knowledge.

The suggested theoretical framework can be supportive in informing a research agenda for objective-structure focused research, for subjectivist – constructivist approaches and further research from a process-relational perspective. These following examples are only indicative of the type of research needed to map in more detail what entrepreneurs are and could be doing.

Structuralist approaches may add value through utilizing critical discourse analysis on how enterprise discourses have developed and are currently shaping the infrastructure for business start-up and enterprise discourses, including the services offered to nascent entrepreneurs. The added value of this research is to deconstruct to what extent business success is a result of changing political and ideological conditions, which influence framework conditions for nascent entrepreneurs (and ultimately the kind of support available, from grants to bank loans, networks and training and mentoring).

Constructivist research could explore the dynamic relationship of founders and suppliers, where the relationship is ongoing due to the rarity of a good or service. This kind of research can shed light upon how value-exchange happens at various levels for both parties and what its impact is. The added value of this research is to unpack the complex nature of exchanges beyond the delivery of goods / services, the associated economic capital and the direct focus on the positioning power of social and symbolic capital in these exchanges. Further research within the process-relational approach could investigate the dynamics between field and personal structure for nascent entrepreneurs, providing empirical examples of adaptation processes in a number of performed variations of habitus'. Similarly, the above-mentioned changing business support infrastructure which can result from changes in ideology are then regarded as a field with regulations and norms the nascent entrepreneurs have to respond to and possibly can modulate to some extent, dependent on their personal structure.

Conclusions

I acknowledge that a case study illustrating the framework's validity would add value, but the limitations of an article do not allow space to do so here. Other articles are offering illustrations demonstrating validity of assumptions and framework features. I hope future research will challenge and test the theoretical framework's appropriateness not only for studying nascent entrepreneurship. Overall, I feel there is still a long way to go to fully map and illuminate what individuals do when engaging in physically starting a business and how they make sense.

Hopefully, this framework encourages further research along these and other lines suggested, and many empirical studies might add detail while exploring nascent entrepreneurs' actions and practices.

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Table and Figures

Table 1

Figure 1

Figure2

Figure 3

Figure 4