Turning Social Capital Into Scientific Capital
Men's Networking in Academia
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Abstract

Universities have changed in recent decades with the introduction of various performance measurement systems, including journal ranking lists. This Bourdieu-inspired article analyses three types of strategies used by male associate professors in response to journal lists: building social capital at conferences and during stays abroad; marketing of research papers to potential reviewers and journal editors; and tactical co-authorship. Drawing on 55 qualitative interviews with male associate professors in the social sciences in Denmark, the article shows that journal lists, and the forms of strategic networking they are associated with, represent a new doxa in academia. However, it also reveals that participants are unequally positioned when it comes to acting in accordance with performance metrics. Although comprehended as neutral, journal lists are based on (and contribute to) dividing lines between acknowledged and unacknowledged research – lines that tend to pass unnoticed among winners as well as losers in the academic publishing game.

Key words: academia, Bourdieu, capital forms, doxa, higher education, journal lists, men's networking, misrecognition, performance measurement, universities

Introduction

In the last two decades, research has demonstrated how the increase of quality monitoring, performance measurement and indexing of scholars, institutions and journals affect life in academia (e.g. Kallio et al., 2016; Bristow et al., 2017; Kalfa et al., 2018; Loveday, 2021; Orupabo and Mangset, 2022). Performance measurement is often viewed as a response to accountability and transparency demands but has also been shown to have unintended effects.

In a recent study, Aboubichr and Conway (2023) discuss performance measurement systems and how they may lead to 'gaming behaviours' among scholars, for instance proliferation (based on data recycling), strategic co-authorship and safe playing, i.e. choosing topics and methods that fit with the preferences of highly ranked journals. Other studies highlight how performance measurement may lead to research monocultures to the detriment of plurality and innovativeness (Willmott, 2011; Mingers and Willmott, 2013). Espeland and Sauder (2007) use the term 'reactivity' in their analysis of the mechanisms that performance measures (in their case, ranking of US law schools) set in motion. They show how agents 'play to the test' when certain kinds of knowledge and judgements are made authoritative, and how individuals and institutions tend to focus on indicators rather than the qualities the measures are designed to evaluate (Espeland and Sauder, 2007: 2).

Performance measurement is often described as part of a neoliberal turn in higher education, characterised by marketisation, individualisation and hyper-competitiveness (Burke, 2021). Scholars highlight the need to pay close attention to the ways in which these processes affect gender (and other) inequalities in academia. At first glance, performance metrics appear to be connected with equal opportunities for groups of faculty, with differences in outcome reflecting individual capabilities and accomplishments alone, and discrimination being regarded as a 'thing of the past' (Francis et al., 2014; Burke, 2021: 76). However, studies show that performance metrics are based on gendered politics of recognition where 'masculinised' discourses and research ideals are reproduced (Fotaki, 2013; van den Brink and Benschop, 2012, 2014; Gill and Donaghue, 2016; Helgesson and Sjögren, 2019; Nygaard et al., 2022). In some of this literature, the neoliberalisation of higher education is related to an image of faculty as self-managing entrepreneurs, focused on self-promotion and on marketing their research to influential audiences – an image that is more stereotypically

'masculine' than 'feminine' (Fotaki, 2013; Scharff, 2016; Gill and Donaghue, 2016).

There is a comprehensive literature on networks in higher education, revealing the centrality of relationships for knowledge production and academic careers, and women's relative marginality in powerful networks (for reviews, see van Helden et al., 2021; Westoby et al., 2021). However, as pointed out by van den Brink and Benschop (2014), there is little research on the actual behaviours that create gendered networks, and especially on the concerted actions of men producing and reproducing exclusionary networks. The present article, based on 55 qualitative interviews with male associate professors, is a contribution towards filling this gap. In accordance with van den Brink and Benschop (2014: 487), it asserts that a lack of awareness of men's actual networking strategies is an important explanation for the persistence of gender inequalities in academia. Furthermore, an uncovering of men's 'hyper-competitive' networking (Burke, 2021: 69) and of the relationship between instrumentalism and publishing in listed journals may give rise to a questioning of the 'doxa' of today's performance measurement systems.

Based on a theoretical perspective inspired by Bourdieu, the research questions of this article are: 1) Which strategies do male associate professors use in order to live up to their departments' performance demands, here publishing in 'top' journals? 2) What mechanisms enable some men but not others to convert social capital into scientific capital (prestigious publications)? 3) What expressions does Bourdieu's (1998, 2004) 'misrecognition' take in today's academia?

Social capital is defined as the actual or potential resources agents possess because of their belonging to specific groups (Bourdieu, 1990), while s*cientific capital* refers to knowledge

and scholarly achievements acknowledged as valuable by other players in the academic field (Bourdieu, 2004). The concept of *misrecognition* applies to two different mechanisms in Bourdieu's scholarship: a general denial of exchange relations in academia and obliviousness to the fact that performance measures may function as 'a system of censorship', favouring some types of research and disfavouring others (Bourdieu, 2004: 60).

In the following two sections, the theoretical frame of the article is presented, as well as previous research pertinent to the study. The methods of the study are then described, after which three forms of strategic networking are analysed. The article ends with a discussion of the study's theoretical and empirical contributions, also addressing the question as to how the role of the two interviewers may have affected the study's findings.

Theoretical frame

Bourdieu treats the academic field, like any other field, as an arena for struggle, where agents strive to achieve advantageous positions by gathering as much capital as possible. Agents take part in the struggles from unequal starting points, partly defined by their habitus, understood as a system of durable, yet changeable, dispositions that structure their practices. Some 'players' have a habitus that is more in tune with the organising principles of academia, while others enter the game from a position and with a disposition (habitus) that provide them with limited chances of succeeding.

Academia is, according to Bourdieu, the site of two kinds of capital: academic and scientific. Academic capital refers to managerial power or 'control of the instruments of the reproduction of the professional body' (Bourdieu, 1988: 78). Scientific capital, on the other hand, is not based on formal power but on the acknowledgement provided by agents endowed

with 'the adequate categories of perception', a perception acquired through field experience (Bourdieu, 2004: 55). Both scientific and academic capital are subcategories of symbolic capital which is an overarching capital form (the contents of which vary across fields) that provides each of its possessors with status and privilege. In this sense, academic and scientific capital are the stakes pursued by individuals (and collectives) to acquire and retain a favourable symbolic position. There are few fields where the accumulation of capital depends so strongly on recognition by co-players as in the academic, and where, to reword Bourdieu's declaration (Bourdieu, 1988: 91), reputation of quality *is* quality. In the academic field, producers of knowledge have their competitors as their most important evaluators, a fact that guarantees the field's closure on itself as an autonomic field (Bourdieu, 2004).

In academia, like in most other fields, the instrumental strategies related to capital building are often concealed. In Bourdieu's (1988; 2004) description, the traditional academic field was characterised by misrecognition of the fact that participants are involved in an instrumental game. In this idealised vision, academia is 'a small disinterested island in the ocean of interest', and scientists have no other objectives than science itself (Bourdieu, 1998: 110). This is one way Bourdieu conceptualises 'misrecognition': as a denial of self-interest and chasing of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1988, 2004).

Throughout Bourdieu's authorship, misrecognition is also given a different meaning. Here, the concept refers to the fact that definitions of a field's stakes typically appear self-evident and unquestionable although they to a certain degree are contingent (Bourdieu, 1982, 1990). This dimension of misrecognition is tied to another central concept, namely doxa. The doxa of the academic field encompasses conceptions of good vs. bad scientific work, legitimate vs. illegitimate scholarly behaviours, central vs. marginal research fields. Part of these

conceptions may be formalised but mostly, a field's doxa is taken for granted; it is something that 'goes without saying because it comes without saying', as Bourdieu (1982: 167) famously puts it. This does not mean that the doxa of the academic field is unchangeable: with time, the invisible 'truths' of a field may be substituted by other 'truths', the proponents of which struggle to transform into a new doxa.

Much has changed since Bourdieu developed his theories about the capital forms of the academic field (Garforth and Kerr, 2011; Kallio et al., 2016; Kalfa et al., 2018; Loveday, 2021). Among other changes, university reforms have strengthened the position of academic capital in relation to scientific capital, enabling stronger managerial power over faculty members, their access to and advancement in academia (Kalfa et al., 2018; Rowlands, 2018). Hence, the independence of the scientific field and the field's closure around its own standards of peer recognition seem to have diminished. The specific scientific connoisseurship, according to which scientific value can never be completely objectified, has given way to 'bankable symbolic capital' (Cronin and Shaw, 2002: 1268) defined by metric systems, journal rankings and citation indexes. As this article will show, performance measurement has created a new doxa in academia, one in which publications in listed journals constitute the pivotal form of scientific capital when it comes to defining formal criteria for hiring and promotion. Furthermore, attainment of scientific capital has to an increasing extent become dependent on the gathering of social capital. This new doxa represents potentiality as well as constraints, with the latter being consequential, not least for people occupying unprivileged positions in the field. Typically, though, these constraints are euphemised and ascribed to individual shortcomings.

Bourdieu has been criticised for shedding little light on the processes through which social capital is actually used in different fields and, more generally, how one form of capital fertilises another (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008). In this article, a Bourdieusian perspective is used to show exactly how, and the dimensions along which, social capital is built and transformed into scientific capital in academia, and how this process often (and contrary to Bourdieu's views on misrecognition as a denial of instrumentality) takes place openly and without camouflage of strategic exchange. However, the article also highlights how performance measurement represents a new doxa that tacitly draws dividing lines between acknowledged and unacknowledged research. These dividing lines, for instance between quantitative and qualitative research, were not planned by departments when the journal lists were introduced, and they are, like all kinds of doxa, 'transmitted through practice without necessarily attaining the level of discourse' (Bourdieu, 1982: 87). This obscurity surrounding the new doxa of academia may be seen as an example of the second form of misrecognition described by Bourdieu, namely obliviousness to the fact that doxic classifications create hierarchies.

Previous research on networks in changing academia

Research on networks in higher education is a vast field that encompasses a range of topics. This review focuses on three categories of research: Bourdieu-inspired studies of changes in higher education; studies investigating the relationship between networking and academic progress; and studies focusing on gendered academic networks.

Using Bourdieu's conceptual framework, scholars investigate how academics comply with the new managerialism in higher education although it challenges traditional values of academic freedom and collegiality (Kamoche et al., 2014; Kalfa et al., 2018). For instance,

Kalfa et al. (2018) show that open resistance to academia's market-orientation is limited among faculty members, despite their ideological objections. This is explained by their commitment to the game and by the fact that compliance with managerial demands is necessary for faculty's career progress. Fagan and Teasdale (2021: 778) investigate differences in female faculty's ways of 'playing the game', showing that women in male-dominated disciplines are more adapted to the publication-focused new academia than women in gender-mixed disciplines. Other studies within the Bourdieusian tradition analyse the diminution of academic voice in the new governance structures where the power of faculty-driven academic boards has diminished, and administrative processes standardise teaching and research practices (Rowlands, 2018). Furthermore, scholars investigate how the amounts of symbolic capital represented by specific universities and countries influence researcher mobility (Burris, 2004; Gerhards et al., 2018) and how the myriad new forms of social media engagements contribute to the gathering of symbolic capital (Desrockers et al., 2018). None of these Bourdieu-inspired studies focuses on the transformation of social capital into scientific capital in academia, nor do they explore the strategies faculty use when accommodating to performance measurement in the form of journal lists.

Another group of (quantitative) studies, unrelated to Bourdieu's sociology but pertinent to this article due to their focus on social capital in academia, investigates the relationship between networks, hiring/promotion and research productivity (e.g. Katz and Hicks, 1997; Figg et al., 2006; Hsu and Huang, 2011; Sarigöl et al., 2014). Hence, some quantitative studies analyse how faculty recruitment is influenced by the applicants' links to members of the hiring committee (Combes et al., 2008; Zinovyeva and Abgues, 2015) while others examine the effects of social relations on grant awards and the number of articles a researcher publishes (Rawlings and McFarland, 2011; Gonzalez-Brambila, 2014). In general, there is

strong evidence of a positive association between co-authorship and publications/citations, especially when prominent scholars are part of the authorship team (e.g. Katz and Hicks, 1997; Figg et al., 2006; Hsu and Huang, 2011; Sarigöl et al., 2014; Hayat et al., 2020).

The usefulness of networks in academia is also addressed in qualitative studies. One distinction is between 'engaged networks' and 'strategic networks' (Medina, 2019) with the former describing collegial relations based on affection and/or specific political-ethical interests, and the latter referring to more instrumental relationships. This research indicates that strategic networks have a greater impact on international publications and citations, while engaged networks are more relevant for non-academic dissemination and local, public debates. Another differentiation is between 'operational' (co-peer), 'developmental' (mentor/mentee) and 'strategic' networks (relationships with gatekeepers and sponsors) (van Helden et. al., 2021). In this typology as well, strategic networks appear to have the strongest positive influence on scholars' academic progress.

Finally, there is a group of studies investigating networks in academia with an emphasis on gender. Two articles, reviewing respectively 35 and 32 studies, show that strategic networks have significant influence on academic progress, and that men are more successful in using them than women (van Helden et al., 2021; Westoby et al., 2021). Men receive more mentoring than women, they have more personal friendships with seniors and they have easier access to 'top level' networks in higher education (Westoby et al., 2021: 1040).

In summary, this article brings into play groups of research that are generally not in conversation with each other. Previous research inspired by Bourdieu focuses on the consequences of and responses to managerialism and on the distribution of symbolic capital

across universities and countries but does not explore the relationship between social and scientific capital in the new academia. Outside of the Bourdieusian tradition, quantitative research demonstrates a relationship between networks and academic progress, while qualitative research identifies the types of networks ('strategic') that are most useful when it comes to publications and citations. None of these studies, however, explores the detailed mechanisms through which strategic networks are built and 'capitalised on' in the pursuit of prestigious publications. Furthermore, although a convincingly large number of studies find that men have easier access to powerful networks than women (Fisher and Kinsey, 2014; Fagan and Teasdale, 2021; Cohen et al., 2023), there is a lack of research on precisely how networks promote (some) men's careers. Hence, previous studies provide valuable knowledge about gendered network structures and outcomes, also showing that men are more successful than women when faculty's research achievements are measured by productivity indicators (Helgesson and Sjögren, 2019; Nygaard et al., 2022). However, the actual behaviours that produce these structures and outcomes have received far less attention (van den Brink and Benschop, 2014). In fact, van den Brink and Benschop (2014) claim that researchers have been so preoccupied with identifying differences between men and women that they have neglected to scrutinise *how* men actually network. Obviously, men's 'successful' networking is a pivotal factor when it comes to understanding the continued gender inequality in academia – an inequality that may grow further as a consequence of today's performance measurement systems.

Methods

The study is based on interviews with 55 male associate professors working within the broader fields of economics (20), political science (20) and sociology (15). Associate professors were selected because they represent the first cohorts receiving tenure after the

introduction of a more systematic performance measurement system in Denmark. The participants came from three different universities and were chosen because their social science faculties use performance metrics when hiring and promoting faculty. Seven out of nine departments have introduced 'top' journal lists, predominantly consisting of US journals, while two departments have broader criteria, such as publishing in high-impact US or UK journals, generalist or field journals.

All associate professors in the social sciences at the three universities, who achieved tenure less than 10 years ago, were approached. The contact was made via e-mail, briefly describing the study and how interviewees were secured anonymity. 82 percent agreed to participate. The 55 interviewees were Danes (40), Germans (5), other Europeans (5), North Americans (3) and others (2, not specified, for reasons of anonymity). The average age of the participants was 40.4 years at the time of the interview. The interviews were semi-structured, which ensured temporal flexibility in relation to topics that were of particular interest for the interviewees and/or interviewers. They were conducted on Zoom from May to October 2021 by the two authors, and most of them lasted between one and 1.5 hours, on average 75 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in full.

The project adheres to the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics (ASA, 2018) and the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2021) guidelines for informed consent, participant anonymity and secure handling and storing of data. Confidentiality was a particular concern as the study was conducted in the researchers' 'own backyard'. The participants, departments and universities have been anonymised, and quotes are not tied to personal information, nor are anecdotes or specific events reported that may be recognisable among local readers.

Procedure of thematic analysis

First, an open reading of all interviews was made. After running through the interviews several times, both authors made a one-page summary of each interview. The summaries were based on participants' answers to questions such as: 'How important have national and international networks been for your career?', 'What role have international conferences played in your career?', 'How have your co-authorship relations come about?' In the writing of these summaries, it became evident how crucial networks were for the academic progress of most participants, and how remarkably strategical many of them were in their building of networks.

At this point, a systematic thematic coding in NVivo was made of everything the interviewees said about networking (also when asked about other topics). The first version of the 'network code' filled more than 300 pages. When condensing this code, focusing on types of and settings for networking, the text was systematically anonymised leaving out or changing all names and markers that could be traced to individuals, departments and universities. Based on the network code and the one-page summary of each interview, the participants were sorted into three groups, to be described below.

Because social capital and strategic behaviour constituted a common theme in the network code and the one-page summaries, Bourdieu's seminal work on academia's capital forms and misrecognised instrumentality became an obvious reference point for the analysis. His concepts of social, academic and scientific capital, as well as misrecognition and doxa, were used in a thorough investigation of the three main strategies used by participants: 1) building social capital during PhD stays abroad and at conferences; 2) marketing research

to editors and potential reviewers; and 3) co-authoring articles with internationally acknowledged scholars in order to publish in prestigious journals.

Finally, the participants' publication records, publicly available on their departments' websites, were reviewed with the purpose of counting their articles in top journals (as defined by their respective departments) and identifying their co-authors. It is important to note that this information was gathered *after* the participants had been sorted into three groups, a categorisation that was based on the interviews alone.

Three groups of participants

The three groups of participants were named A, B and C (see table 1 below and table 2 in appendix). The A participants (no 1-22) typically described their national and (especially) international network as having been 'important', 'crucial' or 'decisive' for their academic progress. They talked about mentors, local professors and prominent international scholars as having been 'helpful', and stressed the significance of proactive networking at conferences and during stays abroad. This group typically had a 'strategic' approach to their career, frequently using this word themselves when describing their network.

The B participants (no 23-40) were less systematic than the 'A's in their building of networks, although they acknowledged networking as a key strategy for improving their publication record. Some of them had a strong international network but a less well-developed national network (a number of international scholars fit into this category). Others were well-connected locally but said they had 'discovered too late' that they also needed a strong international network. 'Strategic networking' was mentioned by some 'B's and was generally tied to positive accounts. Negative accounts primarily concerned the

participants' explanations that they had not been good enough at 'benefitting' from their networks.

The C participants (no 41-55) described networks as being of limited importance for their career. They gave the impression of being un-strategic and some of them were critical of their colleagues' 'excessive' networking. The 'C's wrote single-authored papers more often than the other participants. When they cooperated with others, they described how their co-authors were selected because of joint research interests and not because of their positions in academia. The C participants were more likely than the other two groups to work with qualitative methods (in political science and sociology) and/or with theoretical issues in economics, political science or sociology. Their preference for single-authored papers aligns with previous studies showing that empirical, quantitative research is more often carried out in teams than qualitative and theoretical research (Vanderstraeten, 2010).

Table 1 in here

A review of the participants' CVs shows that those in category A have been more successful in publishing in listed journals than those in categories B and C. Thus, 14 out of 22 men in category A have published in US or UK top journals (as defined by their departments) one to five times, compared to five out of 18 among the 'B's and two out of 15 among the 'C's. All publications in US top journals are based on quantitative data while two of the British publications are based on qualitative data. Of all the 50 registered top publications in listed journals, two thirds are written together with scholars from other countries, typically from the US or UK, only three are single-authored while the rest are co-authored with local colleagues. Furthermore, 90 percent of all the participants' co-authors

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are men. This shows that it is men and their relationships with each other that constitute the 'collectively-owned capital' (Bourdieu, 1982: 249) that, when needed, provides each of the network's members with backing, here in the form of efficient co-authorship.

Of the three groups, the 'A's and partly the 'B's can be seen as representatives of academia's new doxa. They comply with the performance measurement system, using strategies that optimise their chances of publishing in accredited journals. These strategies should not be seen as mechanic responses to performance metrics but rather as practices produced by an academic habitus in sync with the demands of the field. In Bourdieu's perspective, strategies come about in a dialogue between external constraints and agents' aspirations, out of which arises a naturalisation of the practices actually followed: agents simply do 'what needs to be done' if they are to be acknowledged players in academia (Bourdieu, 1982: 164). The following sections analyse the most important strategies used by the 'A's and 'B's: building social capital during PhD stays abroad and at conferences; becoming visible among editors and potential reviewers; and co-authoring articles with internationally acknowledged scholars. Accounts from the interviews with the 'C's are used to add perspective on the strategies used by the 'A's and 'B's.

Building social capital during PhD stays and at conferences

According to Bourdieu (2004), the dominant players in a field constitute an obligatory reference point for all other players. They are the ones who define what assets are legitimate and decide which other players should be admitted to the field, and what amounts of symbolic capital (here: scientific capital) they represent and may be expected to represent in the future. Bourdieu (1988: 56) uses the term 'co-option' for analysing the processes through which some newcomers more than others are welcomed by powerful players, showing how

access is dependent on a submission on the part of the entrants to the doxa of the field, hence confirming 'the dominants' values and the value of the dominants' (Bourdieu, 1988: 56).

In the interviews, and among participants in groups A and B in particular (see Table 2 in appendix), scholars from the US and from British top universities represented the most coveted form of social capital in academia and the networks the interviewees were most keen on entering. Notably, two thirds of the A participants had visited US universities during their PhD studies, typically for four to six months, compared to a handful in the B group and none in the C group. One interviewee who had a US supervisor during his PhD stay said that this scholar gave him a 'certification stamp of quality' which helped him obtain a tenure track position when returning to Denmark (A12[1]). Another interviewee, who equated the term 'research excellence' with US contacts, regretted that he had not had a US supervisor himself but said that he now urged his PhD students to take half a year in the US. He also suggested that the main reason for the international success of Danish scholars within his specific subfield of research was networking with people from the US:

> [Research excellence] is all about networks, which simply take a long time to grow. First, you need contacts with US researchers, then you can start shipping your PhD students over there […] Networking is a hugely important part of research excellence (B23).

Conferences were another key setting for strategic networking among A and B participants. The more determined network builders in these groups elaborated on self-made, or

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[1] Here and in the following, participants are assigned a letter (A, B, C) dependent on which network category they are placed in, and a random number to differentiate them from each other.

supervisor-taught, rules of participation. For instance, two interviewees explained: 'When I go to conferences, I always write to five-six people and ask, "are you interested in meeting with me". My PhD supervisor told me that this is the way to do it' (A2); 'I have committed myself to writing to at least three people before attending a conference, in order to set up an antenna […] For me, this is an easy way to establish useful contacts' (A9). Others, and especially participants in group C, described a more reserved approach. It is a 'personality thing' as one of them said: 'I am immensely bad at reaching out to people I don't know' (C43). Another participant said that he detested colleagues 'hunting Americans' at conferences, explaining that relationships should not be 'forced but allowed to develop naturally' (C52).

Bourdieu (1975, 2004) emphasises the norm of unstrategic behaviour in academia although he acknowledges that academic work has a dimension of self-interest as well as a scientific one, with the former as much as the latter influencing participants' behaviour. The academic field should *appear* as an arena of uncontaminated devotion where the agents' symbolic position is based on scientific criteria alone and not on their efficacious use of social capital. In contrast to this, participants in groups A and B showed few signs of concealing their strategic network activities, but rather regarded them as natural and necessary for establishing themselves in the academic field. They described the 'usefulness' of their networks in detail and sometimes proudly when mentioning prestigious names as being part of them. With few exceptions, the beneficial networks they talked most about consisted of other men, while female scholars were mentioned *en passant*, even in cases when they had been PhD supervisors or leaders of research projects the participants had been recruited to. This again indicates that men more than women represent the form of social capital the interviewees assign symbolic value to and want to be associated with.

Marketing research to reviewers and editors

While the section above described networking with a general purpose (being 'co-opted', establishing relationship that may be useful for one's career), this section addresses a more targeted form of networking: reaching out to journal editors and potential reviewers. Participants in groups A and B explained that 'you need to do sales work' at conferences where editors participate (A11), and 'market yourself and your publications' (A19) when meeting people that may become reviewers of your paper. They used metaphors such as 'a dating market' (B37) and showing good manners at a 'dinner party' (B29) when talking about editors and 'the pool of reviewers' (A5). The metaphor of dating refers to the idea that researchers should get to know each other before proceeding into some form of collaboration (for instance, asking an acknowledged scholar to comment on your paper), while the metaphor of a dinner party points towards etiquette in social interaction, for example, that one should not be too intrusive, as B29 explained: 'You need to wait for the food to come in front of you before you serve yourself. You shouldn't be greedy.'

Several A and B participants described a practice where they present a paper repeatedly (up to 25-30 times) and for a number of years in order to make it known in as large a circle of scholars as possible before it is submitted to a high-impact journal. One interviewee explained: 'You want to participate in the best workshops so that you have the chance of presenting for central scholars who will probably be the ones reading the paper when we submit' (A15). These 'central scholars' refer to potential reviewers at high-impact journals, often scholars holding key positions in their research field. Reviewers are gatekeepers behind a veil of anonymity and the best way to dismantle their power is, according to the interviewees, to 'try to identify them' before a paper is submitted. Editors of these journals

are described as even more important, not just because participants know who they are, but also because they are distinguished both in terms of scientific and academic capital. They are successful scholars but they also hold a managerial position, exercising control of other positions and the resources accredited to them – cf. Bourdieu's (1988: 78) definition of academic capital.

The strategy of reaching out to editors and potential reviewers was not equally practicable among all participants. It was related to two aspects: first, the question as to how narrow vs. broad an interviewee's research field is, and second, whether the journals in question are single-blinded (as prestigious journals in economics often are) or double-blinded (as they mostly are in sociology and political science). One of the participants, who worked in a relatively narrow field and published in top single-blinded US journals, said:

> You can often predict who your reviewers will be so it's all about contacting them beforehand. My field is rather specialised and I typically know the pool of reviewers […] When I submit the paper I write a footnote on page one stating: 'I want to thank these people for giving valuable comments.' My footnote takes up half a page showing that the paper has been presented at 30 different places […] You need to be strategic [because] editors typically choose reviewers from that list. Quality matters of course but network is incredibly important (A5).

For interviewees working in broader fields, and for those submitting to double-blinded journals, the strategy of contacting editors and potential reviewers beforehand was less useful. One participant in the B group explained:

[In my field] it's almost impossible to be tactical in the way that you reach out to people. You can't just call four colleagues expecting three of them to become reviewers […] But I am also active in more narrow fields and there it is possible. You meet once at a workshop and then you have all the reviewer contacts you need (B28).

One of the C-participants publishing in double-blinded journals said:

Right now, I don't sense there is any of that going on. I don't know if this is for better or for worse, but reviews are strictly double-blinded in my field, so once you move past the editor, it's not particularly likely that people know you (C41).

Using co-authors as door openers

The third, and most important, networking strategy used by participants in groups A and B was to build alliances with co-authors. Regardless of their own publication pattern, a majority of the interviewees (n=48) were of the opinion that international co-authorship, and especially with 'big names', improves one's possibilities to publish in listed journals. One interviewee in the A-group, who had a US top scholar as co-author early in his career, explained:

I think it's fair to say about me that I have always cultivated international networks and this has been *enormously* important for my career […] Let me put it like this: when I published with him [top scholar], it was like driving on a four-lane highway, as compared to the struggles I have with my papers when it's just me, an ordinary guy from Denmark, submitting an article (A16).

There are several explanations as to why the successes in publishing in prestigious journals may be higher when co-authoring with more established scholars. Many interviewees agreed that the contribution of experienced co-authors enhances the quality of the paper and that distinguished scholars from abroad are more skilled in framing a paper in a way that makes it interesting for an international readership. However, the interviewees were more preoccupied with explanations that were not related to the quality of the paper, but rather to the importance of names and affiliations. One of the participants in group A argued:

> Top researchers open doors to journals. It's taken more seriously when their name is on the paper; at least it's sent for review and there will have to be strong arguments from the reviewers if the editors decide to reject it. I had a paper published with X [established scholar]. If I had submitted that paper alone, I think it would have been rejected. Names hold signal value (A10).

Another A participant said:

> If you have a prestigious professor's name on your paper, independent of what that professor has contributed to the actual work, it helps in the publishing game. I struggle with this because I despise the mechanism but it's obvious that you are left behind if you don't play the game (A19).

In general, there was limited critique of performance measurement and strategic networking among the interviewees, whether in the form of instrumental building of social capital at conferences, marketing one's research to reviewers and editors or using co-authors as a means to accessing prestigious publications. There were a couple of C participants

mentioning that journal lists may lead to 'all kinds of tricks' (C52) and to 'an obsession with networking' (C47). Such viewpoints seldom turned up spontaneously in the interviews but rather in response to questions such as 'Do you see any kinds of problems related to your department's journal lists?' Most interviewees regarded journal lists not as a perfect instrument for assessing research quality but as a reasonable measure: 'Quality needs to be assessed and although the system is not flawless, it makes sense' (A11); 'What alternatives are there, I can't come up with a better one' (B29). With a couple of exceptions, participants in all three groups regarded strategic networking as a natural part of today's academia. To the extent that the interviewees (in groups B and C) presented evaluative accounts, it was more in the form of criticising their own ability to build strategic alliances than criticising the journal lists (see also Table 2 in appendix). In Bourdieu's terminology, this lack of notice and capitulation to the metric system would be comprehended as misrecognition.

Discussion

This concluding discussion focuses on the study's contributions to Bourdieu-inspired research on the 'new' academia and to research on how networks can benefit academic careers. It also addresses the phenomenon of misrecognition, conceptualised in two different ways by Bourdieu. Finally, the interview situations and the study's generalisability are discussed.

Bourdieu (1988) stresses the implicit, tacit character of academic assessments, claiming that research quality can never be completely specified or put into a formula. However, in his later works, he suggests that the system of peer evaluation is about to be subordinated to ends imposed from the outside of academia (Bourdieu, 2004). He expects this system to strengthen the position of academic capital holders as compared to scientific capital holders – and in

consequence, to weaken the independence of scholarly work. Bourdieu-inspired research on today's higher education verifies these concerns, showing that academic capital has indeed intruded on scientific capital (Rowlands et al., 2018) to the extent that it challenges traditional academic values of freedom and collegiality, and that faculty tend to accommodate this development despite ideological objections (Kamoche et al., 2014; Kalfa et al., 2018).

The present study extends this research by focusing on one specific way in which academic capital has been strengthened, namely through the introduction and increased use of performance measurement in the form of journal lists. These lists have changed assessments of candidates for academic positions from having been a process steered by scientific evaluators into a more formalised procedure where academic managers have more to say than before. Equipped with accredited journal lists, Heads of Departments and Deans can control whether faculty publish where they are supposed to and thus, if they are worthy of hiring/promotion.

The article shows that journal lists, and the forms of strategic networking these lists are associated with, represent a new doxa in academia, a conglomerate of ideals and practices that is more or less taken for granted by the participants. At the departments included in the study, journal lists represent a system of distinction that credits some research fields and methods and discredits others without ever stating this directly. In a Bourdieusian perspective, this type of performance measurement legitimates itself by being presented – and being comprehended by those who gain from it as well as those who lose – as a neutral quantification of research excellence (Bourdieu, 2004: 77).

The article contributes to previous research on social capital in academia by showing exactly what men's 'strategic networking' (Medina, 2019; van Helden et al., 2021) may consist of, and how the association between networks and research output, demonstrated in quantitative studies (e.g. Katz and Hicks, 1997; Figg et al., 2006; Hsu and Huang, 2011; Sarigöl et al., 2014) comes about. By detailing the mechanisms behind this association – instrumental networking at conferences and elsewhere; marketing of papers among reviewers and editors; and co-authorship in order to publish in designated journals – the article shows how strategic networking is both an off-shoot and confirmation of academia's new doxa. When investing years of their careers on strategic building of social capital, participants in groups A and B simultaneously comply with and legitimate the conceptions of scientific capital endorsed by the journal lists, conceptions that previous research has tied to gendered politics of recognition (Fotaki, 2013; van den Brink and Benschop, 2012, 2014; Gill and Donaghue, 2016; Burke, 2021).

The article also shows that men are unequally positioned when it comes to the three forms of strategic networking described. 'Co-option' (Bourdieu, 1988: 56) is a process of including some players, and not others into networks, dependent on how well the participants are able to comply with the new doxa of academia. Marketing among reviewers and editors is dependent on the character of one's research field (narrow vs. broad research areas, single-blinded vs. double-blinded journals). Co-authorship, and especially multi-authorship is an established practice in some parts of the academic field, while it is uncommon in others. As argued in the article, strategies are not just expressions of differing choices and aspirations among the participants. They are also reflections of their academic profiles and dependent on the match between their academic habitus and the stakes the field assigns symbolic value to.

There are clear differences between the three groups when it comes to publishing in listed journals, with group A and (partly) group B being more successful in this than group C. The small number of top publications among the 'C's may have several explanations: they may prefer other journals and ignore the listed ones or they may have tried the listed journals and been turned down. In Bourdieu's (1988) description of the academic field, those who refuse to participate in the game are often difficult to distinguish from those who are excluded by the rules of the game. Whatever the reason for group C's publication practices, there is a dissonance between their CVs and the current doxa of measuring performance with the help of journal lists. Given their departments' recommendation that associate professors publish in top journals if they are to become full professors, this cannot help influence group C's career prospects.

An unexpected finding in the study concerns the A and B participants' openness about their strategic networking. A Bourdieusian assumption would be that agents try to conceal the instrumentality of their relationships with others because academic progress should be based on scientific achievements alone and not on the gathering of social capital (Bourdieu's first variant of misrecognition). Surprisingly, though, there are few signs of participants disguising their network activities or downplaying the contributions made by their co-authors. Quite the contrary: participants in groups A and B often seem proud of their ability to team up with prominent co-authors and appreciative of the help they have received from them.

Another unexpected finding is that participants in group C seldom criticise their departments' journal lists. Critical comments would be reasonable in an interview situation where faculty are asked to describe their publication patterns, and where a lack of top publications – seen from the perspective of their departments' performance measurement system – can be

regarded as a shortcoming. In general, however, the C participants seem to accept the journal lists without questioning their functionality or fairness and without paying much attention to the mismatch between their departments' definitions of scientific capital and their own achievements. This accords with Bourdieu's (1988; 1990) claim that the discriminatory character of doxic dividing lines are often unnoticed, both among those they credit and those they discredit, a fact that contributes to the endurance of a field's doxa (Bourdieu's second variant of misrecognition).

The compliance of the participants in group C further substantiates our interpretation that performance measurement represents a new doxa in academia, a *social* structure deeply ingrained in the *mental* structures of the field's participants (Bourdieu 1982: 164). Bourdieu differentiates doxa from the two related concepts 'heterodoxy' and 'orthodoxy', which describe situations where a field's order is challenged by newcomers, often advocating for alternative (heterodox) norms while it is defended by established participants, often representing traditional (orthodox) norms. In Bourdieu's (1982: 164) description, a dialectic process of heterodoxy and orthodoxy implies awareness of the arbitrariness of the field's doxa and recognition of (and struggles for or against) alternative classificatory systems. In our interviews, there are few signs of such struggles.

At this point, some reflections on the interview situations are warranted. The interviews were conducted by two female professors questioning male associate professors about their careers, a constellation that may have influenced the perception of the new academic doxa described in the article. First, our role as professors may have led some interviewees to perceive us as representatives of this doxa, prompting them, as junior colleagues, to demonstrate their ability to live up to the performance demands the doxa is associated with.

Although we, in fact, are critical of the instrumentalism related to performance measurement, we remained neutral during the interviews, only sharing our views in the few instances where participants themselves were critical. An open critical stance on our part may have resulted in a more elaborated questioning of the consequences of performance metrics, especially among participants in group C, whose behaviours did not match the demands of the new doxa.

Additionally, the fact that we are women, asking questions about networking among men, may have resulted in some participants withholding a potential critique of their male colleagues' behaviour. While the study was not explicitly framed as gender research, the interview guide included questions about gender disparities in higher education and possible obstacles to women's careers. This could reasonably have triggered responses playing down the career benefits of homophile relationships and accounts portraying networks as open for everybody, including us as female colleagues. However, as the article demonstrates, most men did not play down the career effects of networks, nor did they provide substantial critique of journal lists. Instead, they stressed the importance of instrumental relationships among men, often acknowledging that these networks are challenging for women to enter.

The study was conducted at social science departments at three Danish universities and the findings cannot necessarily be generalised. Scholars from a small country such as Denmark face other challenges when submitting their papers to US and UK journals than researchers from the home countries of these journals. They need to adapt their papers linguistically and maybe culturally and convince reviewers and editors that the findings are of 'international relevance', something that is often taken for granted in US and UK studies. The strategy of teaming up with researchers from the US, in particular, is therefore probably a small-country phenomenon, although more studies are needed to clarify this.

Hence, further research should broaden the scope to encompass other countries and analyse strategic networking among both men and women and in samples that are more ethnically heterogeneous than the one in the present study. This will allow for a better understanding of how the pursuit of publishing in high-impact journals potentially reinforces inequality between faculty across multiple dimensions. The results of this study should be of interest for university management, particularly when it comes to performance measurement leading to unintended research priorities. Moreover, the ethical concerns raised in the study regarding instrumental authorship constellations and contacts to reviewers and editors before papers are submitted need much more attention.

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Table 1. Summary of the three categories of participants

Category: strategic orientation	Number of participants	Descriptive features
A (strong)	22 (A1-A22)	- Strong national and international network, often established with help from more senior scholars - Described network as having been 'helpful' or 'important' for their career - 'Strategic' approach to networking - 14 out of 22 have published in listed journals
B (medium)	17 (B23-B40)	- Less instrumental in building networks, although acknowledging networking as key for improving publication record - Strong or medium-strong international network but less developed national network or vice versa - Five out of 17 have published in listed journals
C (weak)	14 (C41-C55)	- Non-strategic and sometimes critical of instrumental networking - Described network as less 'helpful or 'important' for their career than participants in the other two categories - Said that selection of co-authors is based on research interest, not positions in academia - Two out of 14 have published in listed journals