The volume provides a field-analytical methodology for researching knowledge-based sociopolitical processes of transnationalization. Drawing on seminal work by Pierre Bourdieu, we apply concepts of practice, habitus, and field to phenomena such as cross-national social trajectories, international procedures of evaluation, standardization, and certification, or supranational political structures. These transnational phenomena form part of general political struggles that legitimize social relationships in and beyond the nation-state.

Part 1 on methodological foundations discusses the consequences of Bourdieu’s epistemology and methodology for theorizing and investigating transnational phenomena. The contributions show the importance of field-theoretical concepts for post-national insights. Part 2 on investigating political fields presents exemplary case studies in diverse research areas such as colonial imperialism, international academic rankings, European policy fields, and local school policy. While focusing on their research objects, the contributions also give an insight into the mechanisms involved in processes of transnationalization.

The volume is an invitation for sociologists, political scientists, and scholars in adjacent research areas to engage with reflexive and relational research practice and to further develop field-theoretical thought.

Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg is Assistant Professor at Potsdam University, Germany.

Stefan Bernhard is Senior Researcher at the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Germany.
Transnational Aging
Current Insights and Future Challenges
Edited by Vincent Horn and Cornelia Schweppе

Transnational Migration and Home in Older Age
Edited by Katie Walsh and Lena Näre

Transnationalizing Inequalities in Europe
Sociocultural Boundaries, Assemblages and Regimes of Intersection
Anna Amelina

Ethnomorality of Care
Migrants and their Aging Parents
Agnieszka Radziwinowiczówna, Anna Rosińska-Kordasiewicz and Weronika Kloc-Nowak

Cultures of Transnationality in European Migration
Subjectivity, Family and Inequality
Karolina Barglowski

Transnational Politics, Citizenship and Elections
The Political Engagement of Transnational Communities in National Elections
Chiara De Lazzari

Charting Transnational Fields
Methodology for a Political Sociology of Knowledge
Edited by Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg and Stefan Bernhard

Charting Transnational Fields

Methodology for a Political Sociology of Knowledge

Edited by Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg and Stefan Bernhard
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Notes on contributors


**Didier Bigo** is Professeur de sociologie politique internationale (IPS) at Sciences Po Paris and Research Professor at the Department of War Studies, King’s College London. He is also Directeur of the Centre d’études sur les conflits, la liberté, la sécurité (CCLS), and one of the editors of the new journal *Political Anthropological Research on International Social Sciences* (*PARISS*; Brill Publisher). His work concerns sociology of surveillance, policing, and borders. He co-edited *Transversal Lines* (with Tugba Basaran, Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet, and R.B.J. Walker), Routledge, 2016 and *Data Politics* (with Engin Isin and Evelyn Ruppert), Routledge, 2019.

**Karim Fertikh** is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Strasbourg, France. He is a researcher at the CNRS-Center Sociétés, acteurs et gouvernement en Europe (SAGE) and member of the Academic Institute of France. His current research focuses on the Europeanization and internationalization of social rights. He is the author of the monograph *L’invention de la social-démocratie allemande. Une histoire sociale du Bad Godesberg de la social-démocratie allemande*, éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’Homme, 2019, has edited a volume on *Social Europe*, Campus, 2018, and his articles have appeared in journals including the *Revue française de science politique*, *Genèses* and the *Austrian Journal of Historical Studies*.

**Julian Go** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, specializing in global historical sociology and social theory. His recent books include *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2016, and *Global Historical Sociology* (co-edited with George Lawson), Cambridge University Press, 2017.


**Monika Krause** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics. She is the author of *The Good Project: Humanitarian Relief NGOs and the Fragmentation of Reason*, Chicago University Press, 2014, and an editor of *Fielding Transnationalism: An Introduction*, Wiley, 2016 (with Julian Go). She was awarded the 2019 Lewis A. Coser Award for Theoretical Agenda-setting by the Theory Section of the American Sociological Association.

**Frédéric Lebaron** is Professor of Sociology at École normale supérieure Paris-Saclay, University Paris-Saclay and member of CNRS-Center Institutions et dynamiques historiques de l’économie et de la société. He specializes in economic and political sociology, methodology, and sociology of inequality. He recently co-edited *Empirical Investigation of the Social Space* (with Jörg Blasius, Brigitte Le Roux, and Andreas Schmitz), Springer, 2020.

Tomas Marttila is Assistant Professor in sociology at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. His research interests include political economy, economic sociology, and sociology of education. He is the author of The Culture of Enterprise in Neoliberalism, Routledge, 2013 and Post-Foundational Discourse Analysis, Palgrave, 2015; and editor of Discourse, Culture and Organization: Inquiries into Relational Structures of Power, Palgrave, 2018.

Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg is Assistant Professor at Potsdam University, Germany. Research areas: sociology of economic knowledge and professions, field and discourse analysis. Recent publications: “There Is No Such Thing as ‘the Economy’” (with Frédéric Lebaron), Historical Social Research, 2018; “Europeanization, Stateness, and Professions”, European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology, 2017.

Andreas Schmitz is Substitute Professor of Methodology at the University of Aachen (RWTH), Germany. Research areas: relational social theory, relational methodology, applied statistics, and generalized field theory. Recent publications: “Relational Sociology on a Global Scale: Perspectives from Field Theory on Cross-Cultural Comparison and the Re-Figuration of Space(s)”, Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 2019 (in print, with Daniel Witte); Empirical Investigation of the Social Space (with Jörg Blasius, Frédéric Lebaron, and Brigitte Le Roux), Springer, 2020.

Daniel Witte is Interim Professor of Sociology with a focus on Sociological Theory and the History of Social Thought at the Institute of Sociology at Goethe University Frankfurt. He also serves as Research Coordinator at the Käte Hamburger Center for Advanced Study “Law as Culture” at University of Bonn. His research areas cover sociological theory, including classical social theory, differentiation theory, and relational sociology, sociology of law, sociology of religion, and political sociology. Recent publications: “Relational Sociology on a Global Scale: Perspectives from Field Theory on Cross-Cultural Comparison and the Re-Figuration of Space(s)”, Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 2019 (in print, with Andreas Schmitz); “Post-socialist Constitutionalism in Central and Eastern Europe: Toward a Populist Constitutional Consensus?”, in Constitutional Cultures in Comparative Perspective, ed. by W. Gephart & J.C. Suntrup, Frankfurt/M., 2020 (in print, with M. Bucholc).
Chapter 1

How to chart transnational fields

Introduction to a methodology for a political sociology of knowledge*

Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg and Stefan Bernhard

Introduction

The main aim of this book is to explicate and exemplify a methodology for researching knowledge-based political processes of transnationalization from a field theoretical perspective. In our understanding, knowledge-based political processes of transnationalization refer to struggles over “common principles of vision and division” (Bourdieu, 1994a: 7) that involve “sustained cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formations spanning nation-states” (Vertovec, 2009: 2). Such processes bring about phenomena of different scale and scope. These include cross-national professional and life trajectories (Kelly & Lusis, 2006; Nedelcu, 2012); transnational procedures of evaluation, knowledge pooling, standardization, and generating statistics (Bruno, 2010; Bernhard, 2011); international educational certificates and diplomas (Wagner & Réau, 2015); and regional “supranational” institutions, such as the European Union (EU) (Favell & Guiraudon, 2011; Georgakakis & Rowell, 2013; Georgakakis, 2017). Transnationalization is not a new phenomenon. The fact that nation-states themselves – the entity that is literally transcended – emerged from transnational arenas and models (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997; Sapiro, 2018), is a case in point. What has changed in recent decades is the increased visibility of transnational phenomena, which results from open contestations of national political scopes and boundaries in international, regional, and local contexts.

The complexity of transnationalism has made it necessary to introduce new ways of thinking as well as new ways of conducting empirical research (Amelina, Nergiz, Faist, & Glick Schiller, 2012; Go & Krause, 2016). We approach this challenge by focusing on transnational political knowledge processes and drawing on a vibrant research strand originating in Pierre Bourdieu’s work on social fields. In recent years, field analysts have dealt with various processes beyond the nation-state, such as colonialism (Go, 2008; Steinmetz, 2008), transnational habitus (Nowicka & Cieslik, 2014), European security policy (Bigo, 2014; Berling, 2015), Europeanization of law (Vauchez & Witte, 2013), EU integration (Kauppi, 2005; Bernhard, 2010; Schmidt-Wellenburg, 2017), regional economic integration (Fligstein & Stone Sweet, 2002; Bernhard & Bernhard, 2016),
Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg and Stefan Bernhard


Importantly, these studies share more than just a few theoretical terms and concepts. They share a common mindset, and a style of research with a distinct epistemology and methodology. In other words, they constitute a research program (Bernhard & Schmidt-Wellenburg, 2012). It is this research program that we build upon and develop further in this volume. In what follows, theory is never separate, prior, or superior to methodological and epistemological considerations, but rather deeply engrained in them. Theoretical concepts function as heuristics that guide researchers through the countless decisions, routines, reflections, and mistakes that they encounter during the research process. This is not a minor issue. In fact, one of the main deficits in many adaptations of Bourdieusian sociology is that it overlooks this mutual embeddedness – this relational co-constitution – of theory, methodology, and epistemology. One of the messages of this volume is that this deficit restricts too much of the potential of field analysis, which we should rather tap. To do so, we identify five foundational methodological principles of the field analytical research program and relate them to transnational phenomena.

Another preliminary remark is in place here: We use the term “transnational” to denominate a common feature of an otherwise vast and very heterogeneous set of (potential) research interests (or “objects”). In our understanding, transnational points to the continued relevance of nation-states in current knowledge-based political struggles. However, this relevance is purely empirical, i.e., nation-states are interesting to the degree that they are relevant contexts of contestations. They have no inherent ontological or epistemological qualities, nor are they containers (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). The methodological considerations in the first part of the book and the empirical studies in the second part are indebted to this kind of “post-nationalism” (Krause, Chapter 5). They illustrate how one can take nation-states seriously without reifying them. Field analysis characterizes knowledge-based transnational political processes as deeply conflictual, power-based, and “multi-sited” (Marcus, 1995). It shows that agents have vested interests, and that they defend these interests in struggles with and for scarce resources. The outcome of such struggles and hence, the degree and form of “trans-”nationalization, is constantly contingent.

In our introduction, we will start by giving an overview of recent work researching transnationalization from different theoretical angles. This approach is not restricted to perspectives labeled as transnational, but also includes work engaging with phenomena beyond the nation-state that is subsumed under other headings. We will complement the overview by discussing the vast variety of recent
field analytical research in this area. Finally, we will exemplify our understanding of field theory as a vibrant research heuristic, outline five basic methodological principles that guide field analytical research practice, and conclude with a short summary of the contributions to this volume.

**Researching transnational phenomena from different perspectives**

In this section, we engage with the rich literature on transnational phenomena that can be roughly divided into two broad strands of research – one that starts from empirical research and focuses on transnational phenomena (research-driven approaches), and one that has more encompassing theoretical ambitions (theory-driven approaches). We are well aware that such an overview cannot do justice to the commendable, complex, and laborious extant research, but it allows us to position the merits and potentials of field analysis in contrast to other approaches.

**From researching transnational phenomena to sociohistorical insights**

The first strand of research we investigate starts from and centers on phenomena that transcend nation-state borders; it is called transnationalism studies, and since Phillip Jessup’s pioneering work *Transnational Law* (1956), it has argued that the “diminishing importance of territoriality, the constraints on state sovereignty, [and] the role of non-state actors” (Waldinger, 2013: 758) have continually increased. In the 1970s, Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane picked up on this initial impulse in their rejection of neorealism (Waltz, 1959, 1979) and the associated turn toward “transnational relations”, i.e., toward “contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments” (Nye & Keohane, 1971: 331, q.v. 1977). In the wake of this programmatic work, political scientists increasingly moved their attention away from intergovernmental organizations and formal treaties and toward a diverse transnational landscape that is characterized by a blurring of the division between the “international” and the “domestic”, private regulations, the increased importance of non-state actors, a shift toward new modes of rule making and rule enforcement, and a growing complexity of institutional interactions (Hale & Held, 2011: 6 ff.).

To tackle the growing complexity of these transformations, scholars such as Thomas Risse (Risse-Kappen, 1995; Risse, 2007) put more emphasis on the autonomous logic of international politics and its shaping of domestic state politics, turning international relations research into studying transnational governance. All approaches to transnational governance share an understanding of transnational phenomena as the outcome of a realm of contentious politics in its own right, but different approaches place varying emphasis on certain practices, agents, and institutional structures (Tarrow, 2001). Researchers from culturalist
and constructivist perspectives, for example, place at center stage political arrangements, politics, and ideas that actors see normatively or functionally as appropriate (Ruggie, 2004). They investigate their production and dissemination by focusing on the discourses that give meaning and legitimacy to transnational governance institutions (Risse, 2007). Neo-institutional approaches recently proposed to use the concept of field to account for “powerful structuring forces in the form of cultural frames or patterns of meaning” (Djelic & Sahlin-Andersson, 2006b: 22) or the concept of transnational communities (Haas, 1992; Djelic & Quack, 2010a, 2010b) to capture professionals’ influence on transnational rule making and rule shaping. In contrast to these perspectives, two more actor-centered approaches, transnational networks (Keck & Sikkink, 1998) and transnational movements (Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow & McAdam, 2005), concentrate on actors that are embedded in different national contexts and their manifest ties that span across borders. The emergence of transnationally shared beliefs is explained by “multiple belongings and flexible identities” of individuals (della Porta & Tarrow, 2005: 237).

We derive three main insights from these approaches of transnational governance. First, they see transnationalization as a change in the level of politics and in the constellation of agents involved, leading to changes in the relationship between different sources of legitimacy that governance draws on (Djelic & Sahlin-Andersson, 2006a: 380). Second, they argue that processes of transnationalization involve an institutional denationalization of states and regulatory power, and the creation of private intermediary institutions that handle tensions between the global economy and nation-states (Sassen, 2001). Third, they rebuke the idea that the relationship between transnational and national politics is a zero-sum game, thereby acknowledging that not only transnational agents, but also many national agents, are actively involved in building “the transnational” (Sassen, 2000).

Apart from political science, the concept of transnationalism flourished particularly within migration studies. In a prominent programmatic paper, Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Christina Blanc-Szanton (1994: 7) defined transnationalism as

the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders.

In addition, the term “transmigrant” stresses that agents engage in home and host societies alike when they create and sustain familial and economic relationships, as well as religious and political ones. The approach focuses not so much on evolving social orders but stresses a bottom-up (non-state) impetus of the term transnationalism, linking it explicitly to the movement of people and the boundary-spanning activities that ensue from these movements. To this day, a plethora of studies in migration research deal with all kinds of transnational aspects (Glick Schiller, 2007). Among those are studies on the economic effects of migration
How to chart transnational fields

(Guarnizo, 2005); transnational families (Skrbis, 2008); transnational political action, identities, and citizenship (Bauböck, 2003); and transnational practices (Dunn, 2010). In sum, these studies paint a vivid picture of the manifold interdependencies between people across state boundaries.

At the same time, transnationalism, especially when understood as linked to transmigration, is not as omnipresent as proclaimed by its most fervent adherents, and it is commonly understood that further qualifications are needed (Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999; Morawska, 2001). For example, not all migrants are able to engage in transnational practices to a similar extent due to differing economic resources and migration status (Al-Ali, Richard, & Koser, 2001), and states have to be taken into account as fostering or hampering cross-border relations (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). In recent years, the focus in migration studies has shifted from mere connectivity across borders, toward social spaces or fields (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007: 131; Pries, 2008b). The focus is now on emergent qualities that originate from migrants’ cross-border movements (Portes et al., 1999: 217) – for example, variants of transnational social spaces including small groups, issue networks, communities, and organizations (Pries, 2001; Faist, 2009). This research has begun to use social network analysis to operationalize structural patterns within such fields (Lubbers, Verdery, & Molina, 2018).

Both studies on transnational governance and studies on transnational migration focus on issues such as changes in rule making and enforcement; modes of governance or conflicts; and connectivity, movements, or identifications across borders. In so doing, both strands of research conceptualize transnational phenomena via social and political structurations. At the same time, studies in transnational governance, as well as studies in transnational migration research, do not deny the relevance of nation-states and national forms of societization. Moreover, recently, both substrands have explicitly referred to the concept of field to understand better these emergent structurations (Djelic & Quack, 2003; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Pries, 2008a; Faist, 2004, 2010). While this research provides valuable insights into relevant aspects of transnationalization, we argue that these studies do not go far enough when adopting field theory. Integrating methodological and epistemological axioms, such as relationalism and reflexivity, are valuable orientations that stipulate new perspectives on governance and mobility, as contributions to this volume show.

From theorizing transnational phenomena to general sociohistorical insights

Theory-driven approaches constitute a second broad strand of research into phenomena beyond national settings. They roughly fall into two substrands: approaches that elaborate general theoretical models of transnationalization, drawing on specific phenomena; and approaches that expand a general social theory to new scales. In both substrands, globalization (in a broad sense) is a key concept.
The first substrand concentrates on specific global phenomena as major objects of study and produces theoretical arguments that highlight their unique logic. Special emphasis is placed on “a transplanetary process or set of processes involving increasing liquidity and the growing multidirectional flows of people, objects, places and information as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows” (Ritzer, 2010: 2). Flows (Castells, 1996; Urry, 2001; Rey & Ritzer, 2010) are then contrasted with an age, or rather stage, of solidity in which analytical curiosity is captured by identities and barriers (Baumann, 2000). Transnational phenomena are seen as being neither fixed in time and space, as moving easily and being hard to stop, as roaming the globe and dissolving solids, such as nation-state boundaries, that stand in their way.

Connectivity over time and space, as well as transmogrification, are also at the heart of a set of concepts discussed in close proximity: glocalization, hybridization, and creolization (cf. Bhabha, 1994; Nederveen Pieterse, 1994; Robertson, 1995). Practices originating from one context become adapted to, integrated in, or connected with practices stemming from other contexts, making mélages not an exception but the norm. Bricolage techniques such as sampling, collaging, and assembling explore relations and the simultaneous or mutual constitution of diversities. These approaches describe multiple ways the globe transforms, but at the same time, these analyses focus on very specific phenomena and neither aim at understanding overall societal processes, nor at providing more encompassing explanations.

Here, (post)colonial approaches have a more comprehensive take on globality in two ways. First, they focus on different flows and relations that persist between imperial powers and their subjects in a wider sense. Second, they engage in explaining how imperial powers are constructed, shaped, and reproduced in relations of colonialism up to the present day, creating global, regional, and national phenomena as well as shaping political, economic, and academic practices alike (Said, 1979). This opens up possibilities of critique, especially of the naturalization and universalization of the nation-state perspective in three ways: first, historically showing that teleological development of social order toward nation-stateness is specific only to a certain European period and needs to be analyzed by taking into account the imperial relationships of European agents to colonial subjects (Bhambra, 2018); second, focusing on the current situation and showing that we live in a postcolonial world in which the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, United Nations Organization (UNO), and EU have taken the place of former imperial powers (Go, 2017b); and third, laying open the discursive construction of legitimate and articulate subjects on the one hand and unarticulated subaltern subjects on the other (Spivak, 1988), and pushing for a reflexive turn on modernity as well as social sciences (Rodríguez Gutiérrez, Boatcă, & Costa, 2010; Seth, 2013; Go, 2017a; Connell, 2018).

The second substrand of theory-driven approaches “globalizes” theories of society and links transnationalization to modernity, evolution, and tendencies towards worldwide homogenization. In its most comprehensive version, all action or communication is seen as part of one world society (Luhmann, 1975, 1997), structured along the lines of the system of modern societies (Parsons, 1971) into functionally
differentiated subsystems and integrated by exchange and symbolic generalized communication media. This evolutionary Parsonian heritage can also be found in more Weberian versions that analyze transnational phenomena as the outcome of not one but “multiple modernities” (Eisenstadt, 2000). Here, single societies or cultures are seen as developing units, rationalizing along distinct paths in a common direction, according to their specific cultural and structural prerequisites (cf. Münch, 1993). Even approaches that diagnose “reflexive modernity” and emphasize inverse and risk-laden consequences (Giddens, 1990; Beck, 2009) are indebted to the idea of modernization as a universal process, albeit in combination with a critique of methodological nationalism and a plea for cosmopolitanism (Beck & Grande, 2007, 2010).

The Weberian idea of rationalization and tackling negative consequences thereby produced also lies at the heart of world polity theory, as developed by the Stanford School. John Meyer (2000) argues that when acting, we all draw on a “generalized other” that stems from a currently globally shared meaning background, with the desire to be recognized as modern and hence “agentic” actors fueling an enactment of templates of rational agents (Meyer & Jeppersen, 2000). Empirical studies trace the worldwide spread of agency templates, such as common organizational forms (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006), organizing politics in nation-states (Meyer et al., 1997), or practicing science in universities and research institutes (Drori, Meyer, Ramirez, & Schofer, 2003), and diagnose an increase in worldwide homogeneity – albeit with emphasis on local practical divergence (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2014).

In addition to these Weberian approaches, there is one prominent approach that starts from a distinct Marxian perspective: world systems theory (Chase-Dunn & Grimes, 1995; Wallerstein, 2000; Chase-Dunn, 2014). Here, the argument is turned around, and rationalization, modernity, and globalization are in effect analyzed as outcomes of economic development driven by specific modes of accumulation and the accompanying exploitation and changes in the population (Babones, 2015). World economic relations take the shape of relations of dependency between states, with the center being defined by the currently most effective mode of production, the periphery being exploited, and the semiperiphery breeding revolutionary tendencies aimed at toppling the center – which, in turn, stabilizes the world system by implementing hegemonic norms and values on a world political scale (Wallerstein, 1974).

Both substrands of research aim at theorizing general models of globalization, albeit differently, according to their object of research: on the one hand, theorizing focuses on a specific social phenomenon; on the other hand, the phenomenon in question is society. In both cases, overgeneralization of the model seems to be the danger, albeit with exactly contrary results. Ideas of global or world society end up with a simplified picture created due to the diffusion of the same content in the form of templates, structural morphologies, or cultural patterns, or by installing a homogenous set of relations. Ideas of glocalization, hybridity, and flows, on the other hand, overgeneralize one specific aspect of globalization, and tend to also lose the ability to differentiate between global and nonglobal tendencies.
In this situation, we propose to turn to concepts of relational and reflexive social thought inspired by the work of Bourdieu, that has been developed in a constant struggle against both these social scientific temptations. Field analysis offers a research style that marries theoretical concepts to empirical research in a way that is *uno actu* research driven and theory driven. Unlike other approaches to transnational phenomena, field analysis is a theory of practice that guides research routines and offers a tool to reflect upon them. This research aim amounts to a unique observer position that is simultaneously more involved in its research objects (by deliberately constructing them) and more detached from them (by using instruments to reflect upon and uncover relations of power).

**Transnationalizing field analysis**

At first sight, Bourdieu’s theoretical approach might be considered an unlikely candidate for transnational analysis. He developed his sociology mostly on research questions closely linked to or originating in struggles with French institutions such as education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), class structure (Bourdieu, 1984), state and government bodies (Bourdieu, 1992, 2013), elites (Bourdieu, 1994b), the housing market (Bourdieu, 2005), or the literary field (Bourdieu, 1996, 2008a). Moreover, when Bourdieu commented on transformations beyond the nation-state, he did so more as a public intellectual than as a sociologist (Bourdieu, 1999a; but see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1999). However, the impression is misleading in at least two ways. First, Bourdieu’s research was never confined to France or nation-state society. His studies on Kabyl life in Algeria in the 1960s (Bourdieu, 1979), his seminal theoretical work *Outline of a theory of practice* (Bourdieu, 1977), and his late work *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu, 1999b) could be called transnational in the best sense, because the objects of research are constructed beyond nation-stateness, taking their distinct historical, social, and epistemological constitution seriously (cf. Heilbron & Steinmetz, 2018: 39, 41). Second, Bourdieu’s heritage is not restricted to his own writings. His “équipe” at the Centre européen de sociologie et de science politique refined and developed the analytic and methodological tools of field analysis, and applied these tools to non-French settings (for more detail, see Wagner, 2005; Schultheis, 2018). In this context, field analysis proved to be a valuable tool to analyze complex interdependencies between social processes at different “scales” or, to be more precise, between social processes with different spatially connoted claims and resources. One of the reasons for this is that field analysis is sensitive to historical social processes, and this also holds in regard to analyzing the emergence of the nation-state as a dominant form of political organization (Bourdieu, 2014) – a development that has always been inherently transnational (Sapiro, 2009, 2013).

The field analytical research following in Bourdieu’s footsteps has inspired a vast variety of studies on transnational phenomena, not only in France but also beyond. A first substrand of work focuses on the contextualized production of agents, ideas, practices, and worldviews in one national setting and their relocation
into another setting, where they are recontextualized and “remade” (Bourdieu, 1999a). Well-known studies are Michele Lamont’s work on the transatlantic construction of Jacques Derrida as a legitimate and dominant philosopher in France and the United States (1987); Pascale Casanova’s study on the world literary field (Casanova, 2007); Yves Dezalay’s and Brian Garth’s research on lawyers and international arbitration (1996), as well as on the proliferation of Northern professional expertise in South American countries (2002); Loïc Wacquant’s analysis of the transnational diffusion of a US-bred neoliberal punitive common-sense (e.g., Wacquant, 1999); or Richard Münch’s study on the spread of academic capitalism (2014) and of neoliberalism in general (Bernhard & Münch, 2011).

A second substrand of research concentrates especially on European processes of how transnational fields are established and gain autonomy from nation-states as well as from each other, and this includes constituting transnational practices as opposed to a more national habitus and more national agents and institutions. This research envisages not only careers in transnational fields (Carlson, 2018) or the rise of European institutions and respective policy fields (Bernhard, 2011; Fertikh, chapter 9), but also the rise of a European bureaucratic and political field (Georgakakis & Rowell, 2013) populated by Europeanized agents such as members of the European parliament (Beauvallet & Michon, 2013), European bureaucrats (Georgakakis, 2017), or Brussels lobbyists (Lahusen, 2013; Laurens, 2018). With the establishment of European institutions of consecration such as the College of Europe, and institutionalized professional trajectories such as the Concours of the European Commission (Georgakakis, 2010), it can be argued that a transnational or EU habitus (Poehls, 2009) emerged and that transnational fields developed their own specific form of stateness (Schmidt-Wellenburg, 2017), radiating right into communal and regional administrations and their professionals (Büttner & Leopold, 2016). Recently, Niilo Kauppi (2018) integrated key insights of this political sociology of the EU from a Bourdieusian perspective.

A third substrand of field research takes a more global outlook and studies the colonial legacy of British, French, and German Empire (Go, 2008: Chapter 7; Steinmetz, 2008, 2016) and more recent US hegemony (Go, 2017b), opening up field analysis for ideas from (post)colonial and decolonization studies (Go, 2016). Other objects of research are transnationalization of migrants’ habitus (Kelly & Lusis, 2006; Nedelcu, 2012; Nowicka & Cieslik, 2014), transnational capital accumulation in middle classes (Gerhards, Hans, & Carlson, 2017), the production and reproduction of transnational elites (Kauppi & Madsen, 2014), and transnationalization of social inequalities (Schneickert, 2018; Atkinson, 2019). Addressing these issues of power and inequality invites us to reflect on the question of how to construct the object of transnational research, e.g., the effects of struggles and differing constellations in a global field of power (Schmitz, Witte, & Gengnagel, 2017; Schmitz & Witte, Chapter 4) and taking the analysis into a “post-national” realm (Krause, Chapter 5).

A fourth substrand contributes directly to the development of an international political sociology. It puts emphasis on professional and disciplinary groups,
such as lawyers (Dezalay & Madsen, 2012), judiciaries and transnational courts (Madsen, 2018), economic experts and regulation (Fourcade, 2006; Schmidt-Wellenburg, 2017; Suckert 2017; Maesse, 2018: Chapter 11), and experts in the areas of humanitarian relief (Krause, 2014), fields of art (Buchholz, 2016), security studies (Mérand, 2008; Bigo, 2014: Chapter 3), and terrorism (Stampnitzky, 2013). Here, close connections exist in research that looks into the transnationalization not only of certain disciplines but also more generally of science and education, such as the proliferation of a testing industry and related governance via the Organization for Economic Development’s (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Münch, 2012; Hartong & Nikolai, 2017) or the EU’s Bologna Process (Münch, 2014), the European Research Council (Gengnagel, Baier, & Massih-Tehrani, 2015), global academic rankings (Kauppi & Erkkilä, 2019; Hamann & Schmidt-Wellenburg, Chapter 8), or evidence-based governance of education (Marttila, Chapter 10), and the effects such developments have, for example, on national school reforms (Hartong, Chapter 12).

We argue that following the basic methodological traits inherent to the research just outlined in these four substrands enables us to construct the objects of research by confronting and challenging habitual, everyday, and academic perceptions that are taken for granted. One needs to avoid the temptations of empiricism as well as scholasticism, take agents’ positions and their statements not as ontologically given but as relational effects that have a generative history, and last but not least, bring the academic, social, and political effects of research into a wider political debate (cf. Kauppi, Chapter 2).

**Toward a methodology for transnational field analysis**

In this section, we present the methodological principles of applied rationalism, oscillation between theoretical and empirical construction, relationalism, generative structuralism, and reflexivity. Together, these five principles constitute the core of a research program that intends to engage in theoretically informed empirical research processes.

**Applied rationalism**

Transnational phenomena seem well defined and marked off from national phenomena, as they have their own distinct existence. Our methodological approach advises against taking their existence for granted and against pursuing, as if these objects only need to be adequately recorded, either by quantitative measurement or qualitative documentation. We argue that the object under research needs to be actively constructed by the researcher as a scientific object, not simply adopted with all its societal implications and effects. There are two reasons why this is the case, which together constitute the methodological principle of applied rationalism.
First, we understand knowledge as a process of social construction evolving from the relationship between observer and object. In the case of scientific knowledge, this amounts to the insight that “for a scientific mind, all knowledge is an answer to a question. If there has been no question, there can be no scientific knowledge. Nothing is self-evident. Nothing is given. Everything is constructed” (Bachelard, 2002: 25). Hence, a scientific practice that pushes its reflexive potential cannot take scientific objects as self-evident. It needs to investigate them as specific scientific objects that have been constructed. This can be done using the concept of “epistemological rupture” that allows overcoming existing knowledge and facilitates creating new insights, and that has been deliberately initiated in scientific practice.

Second, we argue that this necessity for an epistemological rupture or break is especially virulent in the social sciences because, as Bourdieu (1991b) points out, we are constantly surrounded by spontaneous conceptions of the social interwoven into nonscientific meaning and power functions. Hence, we have to break with everyday perceptions and concepts of the social and consciously start to construct our scientific social objects. If not, we are reproducing not only the already existing categories of the social but also the politics inscribed in them, without being able to control the process. We need to actively put some distance between the standpoint of the scientific observer and the everyday cognition of the world, using the resource of “alienating” ourselves from our research objects in order to impregnate the sociological gaze against the danger of “going native” (Hartmann, 2012). However, epistemological rupture necessarily also involves a critique of the basic scholastic beliefs in a certain research area – a step much harder for researchers to take. Taken together, this means constructing the phenomena of interest as a scientific object, and reintroducing the subjective practical sense involved in the phenomena as part of the phenomenal reality that is able to irritate and control the scholastic view (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Champagne, Lenoir, Merllié, & Pinto, 1999).

What does this first principle of applied rationalism imply for researching transnational phenomena? Applied rationalism points to the necessity of distrusting everyday conceptions of the transnational as merely geo-spatial relocations of persons, objects, or ideas. Instead, we should ask whether and how transnational practices differ from national practices, and how they relate to one another. As Bigo (Chapter 3) points out, many national practices actually constitute themselves with reference to the transnational, and vice versa.

Focusing on agents, the question arises whether there is such a thing as transnational habitus, or if it exists only in the everyday perception as a caricature and empirically thin mirror image of national habitus. The indication of having lived abroad – in another “nation” – is not enough to define transnational habitus. Instead, we should pluralize the concept itself to include not only different class and (professional) field contexts, but also different “scopes”: regional, local, national, international, and global contexts of habitus production, thereby abstaining from essentialism and taking the relationality of habitus seriously (Bourdieu,
In such a reading, the everyday nationalist naturalism and essentialism is overcome in favor of a relational constructivism interested in the production – current and historical – of the scopes of habitus, practice, and field.

From a field analytical perspective, the production of such scopes is seen as an outcome of field struggles in which the national as well as the transnational are at stake: they are field effects, albeit not necessarily of a transnational field. We should not opt for a certain empirical type of field to be the specific one in which these struggles take place, such as bureaucratic fields, political fields, or religious fields. Instead, we argue that these struggles are a function that such fields may have more or less in relation to other fields. Some fields in comparison to others become places where struggles over the face of society and its processes of societization are fought over, where “the social” and its “scope” become objectified and where their legitimacy and legitimate resources and agents are produced. At the same time, the open and observable struggles in such a “dominant” field are an effect of the underlying power and meaning within this field’s relationship to other fields and vice versa.

Bourdieu describes this constellation as the field of power, the space that structures the struggles over the relationship between different fields and the dynamic relationship between different logics of symbolic and material domination (Bourdieu, 2014; Schmitz & Witte, 2017). Therefore, it is not national politics or international diplomacy alone where struggles about meaning and scope take place, albeit both are important catchment areas where certain agents have managed to historically monopolize material and symbolical power as they have engaged in these struggles. Instead, other fields, such as science and religion, also have to be taken into account, as they serve or have historically served a universalizing function and have contributed to certain legitimate visions of society and its divisions, that have managed to order fields and their relationships beyond the initial field where they were produced. Hence, researching transnational phenomena means becoming skeptical of everyday perceptions of the nation-state as the ultimate and unchallenged monopoly of symbolic and material power, and of functional differentiation as the only reasonable structure of field relations; instead, we are encouraged to take into account the possibility that other accretions of powers, forms of field relations, and scopes of social order may exist, and to research how they are produced.

**Oscillation between theoretical and empirical construction**

The second methodological principle spells out one of the consequences the first principle has for organizing the practice of social science research. Applied rationalism creates the necessity of constantly iterating between theoretical interpretation and abstraction on the one hand and empirical application of methods and data fabrication on the other hand, trying to realize theory-driven social research without imposing one’s prejudicial preconstructions on the world and
simultaneously creating empirically validated theoretical statements. As Bourdieu (1992: 225, 227) points out, the

most ‘empirical’ technical choices cannot be disentangled from the most ‘theoretical’ choices. (. . .) It is only as a function of definite construction of the object that such a sampling method, such a technique of data collection and analysis, etc. becomes imperative.

At the same time, he warns not to interpret this relationship as a one-way road, calling to “try, in every case, to mobilize all the techniques that are relevant and practically usable, given the definition of the object and the practical conditions of data collection.” Iterating between these two poles creates a research practice that is akin to a reflexive fitting process in which “grounded” sociological theory can be created through empirical theory building (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Diaz-Bone, 2006: 79).

Such an approach to the practice of research entails dialectic research designs that reject (deductive or inductive) one-way reasoning. This indicates the necessity of using existing theories and theoretical insights to, on the one hand, devise research questions that structure the construction of research problems and, on the other hand, in a more self-reflexive theoretical thrust, to confront theories and practical theoretical reasoning with irritating empirical “evidence” to spark sociological, albeit not scholastic, puzzles that need mending. The second aspect reminds us to use methods against the grain in order to break the routine link between theoretical models, methodologically imagined empirical-sociological objects, and methods to generate and analyze these objects.

Relationalism

Field-analytical approaches to transnational phenomena are relational, not essentialist, meaning that the transnational character of a certain research object cannot be determined on its own but only with reference to other phenomena, their more or lesser transnational characteristics, and their associated spatial notions such as global, international, and regional, as well as national and local (Pries, 2008a). At the same time, these spatial notions refer to different proto-political authorities that make claims to prevalence, validity, and scope. These claims point to more or less well-established monopolies of power and the effects of symbolic domination. We thereby construct the transnationality of a scientific object by identifying some of its characteristics as backed by authoritative sources beyond the nation-state context, stabilizing its transnational scope. At the same time, we also need to specify – at least in the theoretical model – how these characteristics differ from more nationalized characteristics (and objects). Hence, the phenomenon under scrutiny is understood as a function of an abstract scientific model that involves more than one possible realization, and is relational in itself as well as
to its empirical realization. When developing such models, we propose to use the three previously mentioned relational concepts: field, habitus, and practice.

Practice refers to the social processes in which agents actively relate to others through their engagement, whereas field and habitus are understood in relation to practice as two forms of its history – subjective and objective, which are structured over the course of time and which structure the present conditionality of practice at the same time. In addition, habitus and field also form a relation – not an opposition:

they are not polarities, but ‘limits’. [. . .] The habitus is a limit condition of the embodiment of the field. Field and habitus are both instruments to understand that collective and individualized are the single face of a Möbius strip seen from two angles, because society is a ‘society of individuals’ as Norbert Elias said before Bourdieu in order to describe specific historical figurations (Bigo, 2011: 238).

When researching transnational phenomena, a focus on practices triggers questions such as the following: Does the knowledge needed to engage in practices of different scope differ? How are differences in scope practically created and enforced? Do practices of a certain scope have an inner logic that excludes certain other practical logics? A major insight from relational sociology can be put to work here: Opposing aspects of relations do not cancel each other out, but may mutually condition each other. First, opposing scopes such as global and local often originate in the same practices, an insight that gave rise to the term “glocal” (Robertson, 1995). Second, practice is neither layered nor choppy but fluid and omnipresent; therefore, discontinuities between scopes and essences or hard cuts have to be researched as practically produced differences that are the effects of practices. Such a perspective challenges researchers to take “the other side” of relations into account: global effects appear only if there are also local effects, transnational effects imply national effects, and many structural effects that are perceived as opposing each other might actually originate from the same practice or from interlinked practices.

When we focus on the knowledge needed to engage in transnational practices – habitus – we should also take the principle of relationalism seriously; that is, there is no such thing as a transnational habitus, only more or less transnational versions in relation to other more or less national or otherwise scoped versions. All habitual dispositions are stances in the world, acquired in certain contexts and situations that differ in scope and are hence more or less linked to different sources of symbolic power. This nonessentialist conception allows us to use habitus as an attribute of individuals as well as of class in a double sense: Being more akin to certain agents and less to others due to one’s dispositions and hence falling into a certain categorical class, but at the same time being classified as member of a specific social class because of differing dispositions and subsequently differing strategies due to one’s position in relation to others (Bourdieu, 1985). A nonessentialist
reading of habitus can then be combined with the multipositionality of agents in different fields in order to pose questions on the homology effects of certain habitus forms across different fields – or the occurrence of habitus cleavages, be it at the individual or collective level.

Using the concept of field to analyze transnational phenomena means conceptualizing them as field effects, albeit not necessarily of only one transnational field. Transnational fields, unlike national fields, are not restricted to the national scope in their (re)production of specific field practices, capitals, and habitus. This implies relative autonomy from other types of scopes in two dimensions: first, autonomy from nation-state politico-bureaucratic fields and, at the same time, links to likewise transnationally scoped politico-bureaucratic fields; and second, autonomy from other social fields scoped in a differing way, and linkages to transnationally scoped fields. Using these two dimensions creates an analytical grid in which relative “vertical” and “horizontal” autonomy (cf. Buchholz, 2016; Krause, 2018) from certain fields can be detected and at the same time understood as heteronomy in regard to other fields and scopes.

The relative autonomy of fields is created by field-immanent institutions of consecration (Bourdieu, 1996). They back certain practices as inherent to the field, as ways of gaining access, and as important steps in acquiring position and status, and they delimit others as not linked to the field or farther apart and needing “translational work”. Transnational fields in the making often do not have strong immanent institutions of consecration, but instead rely on institutions more interwoven into other fields and their logics, and can hence be termed “weak fields” (Vauchez, 2011) in relation to “stronger”, often national fields. However, such relations of autonomy are subject to sociohistorically specific conditions, as the relative “strength” of the field of transnational European nobility or of the Roman Catholic Church in former times shows, compared to “weak” European nation-states in the making (Elias, 1982; Bourdieu, 2014). At the same time, gradual differences in autonomy apply not only to the field as such but also to different areas in it: according to the practices enacted, the capital forms used, and agents that are more or less entangled in other fields, more autonomous field areas can be distinguished from more heteronomous field areas, and more transnationalized field areas can be distinguished from less transnationalized field areas.

**Generative structuralism**

If we take the third methodological principle of relationalism seriously, we cannot restrict thinking in relation to the dimensions of objects in space or social positions, but have to expand the notion to time and processes of becoming. Focusing on the generative characteristics of social phenomena is central to Bourdieu’s concept of practice, which is not substantialist and hence not a theory of action, but a theory of agency. Following Émile Durkheim (2009), Bourdieu understands social practices as collective forms of thought and action. *Practices* are ever new becomings generated through agents engaging in life; they are a constant and
changing flow that produces and shapes what social objects are. Here again, habitus is important, because it is the generative principle of regulated improvisation that shapes practice. Taking this conception of "generative structuralism" (Bourdieu, 1991a: 14) seriously leads to a radical sociohistorical contextualization of the constructed objects.

Turning to the analysis of transnational phenomena, questions arise about how transnational categories, practices, and habitus have historically developed, how they are constantly produced, how their relationships to nontransnational phenomena change – or not – and how they are connected to establishing not only normative orders in the Weberian sense, but also forms and relationships of authority beyond the nation-state setting. This in turn leads to the power-related questions, e.g., from where transnational orders draw their legitimation resources that had in recent centuries been concentrated in statist fields and institutions (Bourdieu, 2014).

The dynamic nature of the analysis allows us to address social order and change at the same time, and it paves the way to the relational idea of habitus advocated here. Social change is seen as a basic trait of social practice. In relation to practice, habitus becomes a source of social order, since it is the consolidated form of prior experiences. In relation to fields, habitus becomes a source of change, as it embodies experiences made in different fields and over time. Fields again are, in relation to each other, sources of constant irritation and hence, of change. In addition, habitus in itself can also be used for detecting changes in the form of trajectories that can not only be visualized over time though fields but also as trajectories of either individual lives as life-courses or of classes through social space as positional mobility.

Hence, in order to identify how transnationalism comes about, we have to follow two paths of investigation. First, we need to focus on the historic development of transnational dispositions and world relations that have a scope beyond the national. Second, we need to understand the individual socialization of the specific agents’ habitus as equipped with either a more national or transnational outlook. In addition, we need to keep in mind all the other possible scopes interacting with the transnational scope. Finally, yet importantly, we have to be attentive to how the perceptions, judgements, and actions of agents change due to agents’ changing positions in time and space vis à vis other agents.

If we want to discern which conditions are favorable of change toward “transnationalization”, we need to turn to the concept of field. Fields are not solid social entities, but rather the product of agents engaging in practice, creating field effects according to their interrelatedness with other agents and their sociohistorically specific habitus. Institutions of consecration matter to this process of reproducing or changing certain field constellations, because they objectify certain positions, forms of capital, and habitus as legitimate and natural. Here, the question arises as to which institutions of consecration have historically existed and which scopes they had or were linked to. One prominent example is the Roman Catholic Church and its century-long dominance of fields as different as the arts, academia, and
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politics. In addition, the historical development of new institutions of consecration, such as the League of Nations, the UNO, or the EU institutions and their influence on existing fields and their scope – e.g., different legal and judiciary fields that had formally been closely scoped in the manner of a nation-state – becomes the center of interest. We need to investigate how different fields produce their own autonomy, hierarchies, and principles of differentiation using a variety of more or less internal institutions of consecration, and at the same time manage to draw on power monopolies beyond the field itself in order to universalize their claim of autonomy.

**Reflexivity**

According to Bourdieu, sociological knowledge – as with any other form of knowledge – is the result of a sociohistorically contextualized process of social objectification, structured by scientific field forces and stances in relation to other forms of knowledge. Bourdieu generalizes Durkheim’s and Mauss’s (1963) idea that all symbolic representations and moral judgments are social facts created by a specific socially embedded collective and serving a social function (Bourdieu, 1991b). At the same time, he draws on Karl Mannheim’s (1960) thesis of the social determination of ideas (Vandenberghhe, 1999: 57; Kögl, 1997) and argues, similar to Mannheim, that sociology does not need to discard the idea of objective knowledge for pure relativism (Bourdieu, 2004: 18 ff.). Two strategies are of help here. First, turning the methodological principle of reflexivity into self-reflexivity and objectifying one’s own position, as Bourdieu has done himself as a scientific (Bourdieu, 1988) and, in a broader sense, social agent (Bourdieu, 2008b). Second, using the concept of field to analyze and determine which socialhistorical conditions are favorable of a high degree of autonomy that allows the production of objective scientific knowledge – albeit that this knowledge will always be in relation to a given state of society and in flux, thereby sociologizing Gaston Bachelard’s epistemology (Bourdieu, 2004: 78 ff.). Social science is then at best a continuous reflexive and collective effort that has to be pursued repeatedly and will never be fully achieved, but yields the potential for new insights and scientific knowledge.

Why do we emphasize this methodological principle when researching transnational phenomena? When agents challenge national scopes and the dominance of national politico-bureaucratic fields, they need alternative resources and allies. Hence, researchers and whole disciplines that research transnational phenomena are seldom disinterested bystanders, but become sought-after experts and often comrades in arms in convincing the world that the phenomena in question do exist, are worth engaging, do make a difference, and are of universal importance. At the same time, scientists are themselves engaged in inner-disciplinary and interdisciplinary cognitive and power struggles to produce and legitimize transnational categories, ideas, and agents in the face of established research programs. New social science disciplines such as European or transnational studies start
from the margins of existing disciplines, are transdisciplinary projects, and are closely linked to (if not personally interwoven with) the research objects they construct (Kauppi, 2010, 2018). In this configuration, social sciences gain practical influence. This makes a reflexive stance even more important and indispensable.

With respect to transnational phenomena and the question of scope, it becomes important to acknowledge that all practices are charged with certain indexicalities of scope, referencing legitimation contexts they draw on. The idea of an unfettered scientific access to reality is not only epistemologically undesirable but also ontologically unattainable; it needs to be substituted by a reflexive scientific practice that cautions against its own indexicalities of scope. Questions we desperately need to ask in our research practice are as follows: How do our everyday scientific practices contribute to the construction of categories, persons, objects, knowledge, and practices of the transnational, and which moments of symbolic violence are built into our research and objectification practices?

To perpetuate this methodological principle, we need to turn to the conditions of producing a reflexive research habitus, because without it, a reflexive scientific practice seems unattainable. Such a habitus does not simply exist and cannot be created out of thin air. Much to the contrary, it is in itself a social history and subjective effect of certain practical conditions of acquiring it. The five principles discussed here are the condensed and objectified prerequisites of such a habitus and can be used to highlight what is needed – albeit presented here in a pointed and at the same time scholastic way. Theoretical reflection and methodological guidance may only hope to irritate, but are bound to fail if applied only from the book in a top-down manner. As Bourdieu points out in his seminal work *The Craft of Sociology* (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991), practical learning is necessary and can only be done by experiencing via one’s own mind and body social research, including its pitfalls and dead ends, its unexpected and at times unwanted insights and stimulations; in the end it is a venture beyond one’s own safe environment, albeit under scholarly guidance. What we need in transnational studies is a discussion about practical conditions that might be amenable or counterproductive for acquiring a reflexive research habitus.

This brings us to the conditions of the scientific field that favor the operation of such a reflexive methodology. Having the high material and high symbolic autonomy of the scientific field is advantageous, as it is derived not only directly from other social fields, such as the economic or political fields, but also in a broader sense from the field of power, be it national or transnational. The danger of being co-opted by transnationalist and/or nationalist political movements always exists. It goes much deeper than just a tit-for-tat exchange of economic or political capital for scientific capital in the form of “true” statements, as a homology of national versus transnational structures does exist in many fields; the relationship between positions of transnational researchers researching transnationalism, and nationally anchored researchers researching nationally framed phenomena, often mirror the relationship between positions of transnational political and economic agents in relation to nationally anchored colleagues (cf. Schmidt-Wellenburg, 2018;
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Schmitz, Schmidt-Wellenburg, Witte, & Keil, 2019). Here, a possible coalition of interests to promote “the transnational” in its existence as a natural fact and outright influence on all other scopes may prevail, as it led in the 1990s and 2000s to a drive toward globalization as well as Europeanization in public discourse. Only if it becomes possible to invest oneself in the game of academic pursuit, and to follow academic practices that aim to generate insights acknowledged as objective statements on the world that do not need to conform to the perspective of a certain scope, do we get the chance to truly construct and question transnational phenomena. This also holds for the field analytical methodology of a political sociology of transnational fields proposed here in relation to other possible approaches in analyzing transnational phenomena. It only stands a chance of contributing to the polycentric and competitive dynamic of producing scientific knowledge if it can secure a certain amount of symbolic and material autonomy in transnational studies as a whole. In addition, it will only be able to make a valuable contribution if it is alert to the need to constantly reflect on its own relationship – in resources (material) as well as categories (symbolic) – to the different sources of authority, their scopes, and aligned alliances. Hence, performing transnational field analysis means critically questioning one’s involvement in fields via “academic” statements in political, economic, and other social processes of becoming, whether they are processes of transnationalization, nationalization, regionalization, or something else.

Overview of contributions

The contributions of this volume address two aspects of research on knowledge-based political processes. The first part, Methodological foundations, concentrates on the aspect of “charting” and presents methodological and theoretical contributions to the study of transnational processes in and across fields. The second section, Investigating political fields, contains contributions that address transnational phenomena in fields of different foci and scale.

Niilo Kauppi’s contribution, How many fields can stand on the point of a pin? Methodological notes on reflexivity, the sociological craft, and field analysis, opens the first part of the book. He starts from the observation that Pierre Bourdieu’s work has inspired social researchers all over the world. Countless books, articles, projects, and essays – including the present volume – draw on key concepts such as habitus, practice, and field. Such continuations are always adaptations that take place against the backdrop of social positions, individual trajectories, historical times, and cultural contexts. These factors inevitably influence how Bourdieu’s concepts feed into research. Kauppi reflects on the reception of Bourdieu’s sociology and its impact. Particularly in “mainstream” adaptations, he locates a tendency to abandon some of Bourdieu’s most valuable insights. Turning against objectifying and realist reductionism, he reminds us that Bourdieusian field analysis constitutes a research program that offers heuristics for empirical research. It is a craft that guides a practice – the practice of doing social research.
Moreover, field analysis has normative implications that come from an effort to demystify “common-sense reality” and its underlying power relations. Researchers interested in transnational processes are well advised to bear Kauppi’s argument in mind when constructing their research objects.

In his contribution, *Adjusting a Bourdieusian approach to the study of transnational fields: Transversal practices and state (trans) formations related to intelligence and surveillance*, Didier Bigo develops an analytical as well as an empirical argument. Analytically, Bigo argues that Bourdieu’s conceptualization of sociogenesis, fields, and habitus cannot be a simple add-on to transnational studies, especially international relations. In contrast, he challenges the fundamental beliefs of these disciplines. He deconstructs the nation-state as a unitary actor and center of hierarchical decision making. Moreover, he views core distinctions, such as public versus private and national versus international, not as analytical elements employed by the researcher but as objects of the sociological analysis itself. Researching how these concepts are produced, legitimized, and used in transversal fields of state power needs to be the main task of a political sociology of transnationalization. Empirically, Bigo shows how national security has been reworked not only by states but also by a plethora of private agents, corporations, data experts, police, military, and secret services in recent years. He argues that the current realignment of national security together with the digitization of state reason has created a situation in which national intelligence services are no longer “national” but part of a transversal field. In times of crisis, they readily cooperate to produce a “state mission” focused on global protection against transnational threats and using prediction, prevention, and constant suspicion against those easy to target. The chapter illustrates the epistemological advances in research practice if one wholeheartedly adopts the basic relational and reflexive stance of Bourdieusian field analysis advocated here.

Andreas Schmitz’s and Daniel Witte’s contribution, *National, international, transnational, and global fields: Theoretical clarifications and methodological implications*, taps the analytical potential of Bourdieu’s field theory by an in-depth discussion of its relational theoretical foundation. The chapter reconstructs the epistemology of Bourdieu’s sociology, describes how it links to field-analytical methodology, and theorizes “global” phenomena as effects of a global field of power. They take care not to identify their analytical framework prematurely with sociohistorical phenomena, such as the colonial nation-state or the UN, and thereby circumvent the danger of reifying traditional theoretical dichotomies such as micro versus macro, individual versus collective, or global versus local. This in turn opens the way toward a post-nationalized sociology: in their sociological construction of research objects, national, international, transnational, and global social phenomena have to be analyzed and understood as sociohistorical effects of a global field of power and meaning. The chapter thereby shows the potential a Bourdieusian relational and reflexive sociology holds for rethinking transnational research and theory alike.

Monika Krause deals with programmatic questions of field analysis beyond the nation-state in her conceptual contribution, *The post-national analysis of fields*. Against the backdrop of numerous empirical studies, she engages with inherent complexities of what she deliberately labels a “post-national” research
object—complexities that emanate from intersections of fields at different scales. She argues in favor of a new vocabulary that revises and complements some of the field analytical vocabulary developed in national contexts. This theoretical move introduces terms such as “kinds of autonomy” (instead of degrees of autonomy) or “multiscalar fields”, which open the way to new multiscalar questions about transnational fields. Thus, Krause’s contribution is not only instructive for researchers engaging in empirical research, but also reflects on the field of field analysis and its dialogue with new research objects.

Frédéric Lebaron shows in his chapter, European elites as (a)field(s): Reflections on the uses of prosopography and geometric data analysis based on three joint surveys of transnational objects, the potentials and pitfalls that occur when researching transnational phenomena from a field analytical perspective by building prosopographical databases and investigating them using geometric data analysis (GDA). The contribution draws on experience gained during three large collective research projects on European elites: EU central bank governors in the global field of central bankers, the field of EU legal professionals, and the field of Eurocracy. He discusses the research logics behind constructing transnational objects, starting with the initial research design, data collection and limitations, followed by the assembly and management of the database, the use of GDA tools for the statistical investigation, and presentation of the results. His main emphasis lies on the methodological, epistemic, and sociological challenges that the construction of transnational research objects poses, the project-specific solutions found, and the more general insights that can be drawn from these experiences for further research. Lebaron’s contribution is extremely valuable for all those who are currently engaging or might in the future engage with constructing transnational scientific objects themselves, because it does not conceal the difficulties one encounters when transferring the logics of field analysis into research practice.

The second part of the book begins with Julian Go’s chapter, Global change: A field perspective on the end of empire. Understanding and explaining social change is a key task of social science. Go addresses a fundamental shift in the global political field of the past century, the end of old colonialism. He grounds his historical perspective in a theory of change derived from Bourdieu’s writings and, in particular, his conceptualization of fields as arenas of struggle over capital. Thus, the end of colonialism results from processes in and between several fields. The globalization of anti-colonial nationalism resulting from homologies in colonial fields was one of the mechanisms contributing to this development; the inter-imperial competition among the main actors on the global scale was another. The fundamental change brought about by these dynamics became visible when the British did not make Egypt a permanent colony after Nasser’s announcement to nationalize the Suez Canal Company in 1956. The British decision not to subjugate the country permanently documented how much the “repertoire of power” had changed since the heyday of colonialism. The rules of the game had shifted in a way that still defines global politics today. From a theoretical point of view, Go’s contribution demonstrates how some of Bourdieu’s central ideas can be scaled up and used productively to understand post-colonial phenomena.
Valuation practices based on quantification are omnipresent phenomena in current societies. Julian Hamann’s and Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg’s contribution, *The double function of rankings: Consecration and dispositif in transnational academic fields*, investigates how academic rankings rescope and transnationalize academic fields, often shifting the relation between existing power sources. Building on the extant literature, they identify key characteristics that make rankings a prevalent form of quantification in academia and an efficient instrument of power in transnational contexts. Integrating Foucault’s concept of dispositif in their analysis, they proceed to argue that rankings serve a “double function”: inside of academic fields, rankings impact the struggles of challengers and incumbents by giving preference to certain types of academic milieus, paradigms, agents, and strategies over others. Outside rankings open up boundaries of academic fields for lay audiences in economic, social, political, and mass media contexts. To the degree that academic fields become intelligible to these audiences, the dynamics within and around academic fields multiply and become further complicated. In pointing to these complexities, Hamann’s and Schmidt-Wellenburg’s study is an exemplary case of how internal rivalries, multiscalar settings, and renegotiated field, context, and relations intertwine in structuring transnational fields.

Farim Feritkh’s empirical study, *A weak field of social policy? A transnational perspective on the EEC’s social policymaking (from the 1940s to the 1970s)*, elaborates on a decisive development in EU integration – the entrenchment of a genuine European social policy. From a sociohistorical perspective, he meticulously reconstructs the multifaceted configuration of professionals, organizations, and venues that made the development of a “weak field” of EU social law possible. Opposing some commentators that question the significance of EU social policy, Fertikh stresses its remarkable achievements, most prominently the construction of new categories such as “deterritorialized social rights” and “social harmonization”. To acknowledge such achievements, one must realize that transnational fields are multisited phenomena that evolve and settle in complex settings. Fertikh makes clear that the EU field did not materialize out of thin air, but was developed against the background of an international arena filled with players and resources that proved essential to its history. Thus, field analysis proves valuable for both unearthing the dynamics surrounding a field and recognizing its strengths and potentials.

Tomas Marttila’s contribution, *The rise of a European field of evidence-based education*, shows that taking the development of transnational fields into account opens up the possibility to understand and explain change on a national and subnational level. Marttila argues that the introduction of the idea of evidence-based education to the field of education policy opened up national fields of education – that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, were dominated by national political and academic authority – to transnational agents, concepts, and strategies, reworking the practical logics of educational policy within the last two decades. Marttila is able to show that even in such an area as educational policy, that is absolutely central to the construction and reproduction of nation-state authority, certain expert communities have been able to construct a European imaginary
using ideas of benchmarking and national competition to initiate a transnational field; these communities have created stakes and bound agents using their interests up to the degree to guarantee its relative autonomy. Marttila asserts that the European space of education is a “weak” field, with the European Commission acting as a dominant institution of consecration when appointing experts but subject to considerable influence by national and supranational academic and political agencies. Here, the wider global field of power does play a considerable role, equipping US-academic and OECD experts and expertise with particular symbolic power. Marttila highlights that developments in rather specialized policy areas are an important driver of governmental changes and contribute to the realigning and transnationalization of fields of state formation in a more general sense, rearranging what states and state authority are, and will be in times to come.

**Jens Maesse**’s chapter, *The Euro crisis dispositif: Heterogeneous positioning strategies in polycentric fields*, shows that the different statements that agents have made in the Euro crisis can be best understood if we analyze them as the outcome of a transnational field seen as a complex and heterogeneous discursive positioning practice. The approach taken here argues that the conflict over economic policy is rooted in different but interrelated fields that are discursively drawn together into one transepistemic positioning arena. Combining Bourdieu’s field theoretical approach with the Foucauldian discoursetheoretical concept of dispositif allows research on how the presentation or symbolic-imaginary visibility of social actors in their discursive practice relates to their institutionally sedimented modalities of existence. Maesse uses this theoretical framework to trace and analyze the discursive struggles are structured by different structural conditions in certain fields. This framework also allows us to show how new elements emerged in the crisis were used for strategic positioning in the transepistemic crisis dispositif, and opened up the possibility for change. Maesse reconstructs not only changes in the discursive struggles over the politico-economic order from a technocratic EU governance positioning toward new possibilities of critical democratic and more moderating positionings, but also changes in the institutional settings from which the discursive struggles draw, i.e., the different field contexts such as academic economics or Brussels bureaucratic institutions. He thereby not only offers an inspiring empirically grounded socio-logical theory of recent changes in EU crisis discourse, but also proposes a valuable concept for analyzing discursive change in transnational settings.

**Sigrid Hartong** shows in her contribution, *Tracing “the transnational” in the nationalization of school policy: The transformation of standards-based reform in the United States*, how standards-based reforms in school teaching, which have proliferated worldwide, changed school policy in the United States in the last 50 years. This is a prime example of a “national” policy issue and field created and developed not in isolation and entrenchment, but though the interconnectedness and varying linkages its agents hold beyond its imaged national confinement. Hartong argues that a hard distinction between national and international is of no real use to analyze such phenomena; instead, she opts for the concept of policy networks and transversal practices to trace the creation of a cast of new actors and
organizations in this evolving policy space. Changing network constellations over 50 years have fabricated particular forms of reforms in which differing transnational imaginaries have played a significant role in shaping schooling practice. US school reform has hence been reconstructed as a US trans-state practice closely connected to developments in the worldwide production of standardized school performance data, best described in terms of heterarchical and topological connections spanning different scopes.

Note

* The present volume draws on the expertise of German, French, British, and American colleagues, most of whom are associated with the research network Political Sociology of Transnational Fields, which is funded by the German Research Foundation from 2017–2021. We would like to thank all members and workshop participants for the many lively discussions and fruitful collaborations, without which this volume would not have been possible. Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg would also like to thank the Käte-Hamburger Centre for Advanced Studies, Bonn, for the chance of spending a highly inspiring and productive half-year as fellow at the center, a stay without which this volume would not have flourished.

References


How to chart transnational fields


How to chart transnational fields


References

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1 Transversal and transnational: In the most general terms, the terminology of transversal lines seeks to present a problematization that cuts across conventional planes of scholarship, both theoretically and empirically. Empirically transnational is often the terminology used to describe these crossings and multidimensional scapes (see the following, and for more details see Basaran et al., 2016).

2 The ANR research UTIC on the uses of technologies for communication surveillance that Laurent Bonelli, Sébastien Laurent, and myself have conducted from 2015 to 2019 is available at www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/en/content/uses-technologies-communications-surveillance-utic. The main results can be found in Bigo, 2019a, 2019b; Bigo & Bonelli, 2019.

3 As Rob Walker explains in his book in the first chapter, “One great difficulty posed by the modern international in this context is that it (modern international) arguably emerged historically precisely as an alternative to imperial forms of hierarchical authority, sometimes theologically ordained, and as an affirmation of principles of pluralism, autonomy and even self-determination; or at least this is has become our standard retrospective understanding of what must have happened at some rather elusive point. Like the modern state and modern nation, the modern international expresses ambitions for secular principles of liberty and equality rather than hierarchy and subordination. Whatever we might suppose we refer to when using the concept of an international, it is not a universal empire, though it has certainly provided opportunities for many universalizing empires” (2017: 19).

4 For a discussion of centripetal and centrifugal dynamics, see Bigo, 2016c.

1 It is in this sense that, from the perspective of field theory, “[t]he antinomy between constructivism and realism does not exist” (Bourdieu, 1992: 46).

2 In fact, this question of varying degrees of “fieldness”, which comprises the idea of “emerging” and “vanishing” fields, was identified and productively implemented by Bourdieu, e.g., in the context of the field of art (1996), the field of law (1987b), and, especially, the field of the nation-state (1994).

3 Despite widespread interpretations in parts of the secondary literature, historicity, social change, processes of structuration, and the emergence of new social forms are at the center of (Bourdieusian) relational theory, which emphasizes the complexity of social reality and the myriad reciprocal influences it expresses.

4 Thus, we also contend that the generalized field of power/meaning can indeed grasp what Bourdieu expressed with the social space concept, namely society at large.

5 To a certain extent, the “Reichsbürgerbewegung” might be compared to the US “sovereign citizen movement”.

6 A similar point could be made for other fields: Actors who spend most of their time in academic contexts, for example, do not necessarily feature an “academic” habitus in the narrow sense, i.e., one that is significantly structured by the autonomous pole of the scientific field.

7 Again, the fact that some units are treated as “deficient” nation-states according to a hegemonic Western model must be put into the context of the relations of (symbolic) domination between different countries.

8 Still, apart from the hermeneutic problems of deriving indicators that are adequate to the cases in question, researchers should also try to use common indicators (derived from different fields and cultural perspectives) in order to develop meaningful, relational references.
Consequently, it should be emphasized that these statistical approaches share the same foundational properties (such as identifying latent dimensions, constructing spatial relations, decomposing matrices for those purposes, etc.).

Another relevant problem, well-known from traditional research endeavors, is to accept that the construction of a field can always fail—not because of personal shortcomings, but due to the mere fact that calling something a “field” may simply rest on inadequate assumptions.

* The chapter draws on earlier arguments by the author (Go & Krause, 2016; Krause, 2018). I thank the members of the Network Political Sociology of Transnational Fields funded by the German Research Foundation, the editors, and the International Relations Theory Workshop at the LSE for useful discussions and feedback.

See McCall (1992) and McNay (1999) for an analysis of the association between field formation and the emergence of the public/private division; they raise the question to what extent field analysis mirrors the exclusion of the private rather than examining it.

This chapter builds on a paper originally presented at King’s College London at a seminar organized by Didier Bigo in 2014. It was developed at the Moulin D’Andé as part of the thematic summer school organized by D. Georgakakis, J. Rowell, and A. Vauchez in June 2015.

The collection by Broady et al. (1995) presents a good overview, resulting from an international conference presenting work carried out at Bourdieu’s Centre de sociologie de l’éducation et de la culture (renamed again Centre de sociologie européenne at the end of the 1990s). The research presented in the volume was the first of a series of many prosopographic studies undertaken in the 1990s in different national contexts such as Brazil, Russia, Sweden, etc.

We would like to thank all the colleagues who sparked different reflections and who contributed to the progress of these studies.

With regard to the “qualitative” approach, we focus in particular on the reflections developed by Olivier de Sardan (2008). For an in-depth historical and epistemological reflection of the ethnographic approach employed, see e.g. Weber (2015).

The analyses were all performed using the SPAD8 software and the modified rates were calculated using Macro Excel developed by Flora Chanvrl.

* For comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this paper, the author thanks Neta Crawford, Jeff Colgan, the participants of the workshop “End of Empires?” at Brown University, Srdjan Vucetic, Kevin McMillan, and the participants of the “International Theory Network” workshop at the University of Ottawa, George Lawson, Kirsten Ainley, Tarak Barkawi, and the participants of the “International Theory Workshop” at the London School of Economics, and the editors of this volume, Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg and Stefan Bernhard.

The work besides the present volume is growing; my own views on scaling up Bourdieu’s field theory can be seen in Go and Krause (2016).

Most existing scholarship is primarily about decolonization rather than non-colonization (Strang, 1991; Crawford, 1993; Goerz, 1993; Jackson, 1993; Philpott, 2001; Wimmer & Min, 2006; Gartzke & Rohner, 2011; Reus-Smit, 2013: 153).

See Werron (2015) for a theorization of “competition”. For purposes of this paper, I use the terms “competition” and “struggle” interchangeably.

Colonialism around the world in the modern era varied but this general pattern is evident (Anderson, 1983; Breuilly, 1982; Furedi, 1994; Goswami, 2004).

CO: Colonial Office, Public Records Office, Kew, UK.
USDS: United States Department of State.
PDE: Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower.
1 Geneva, ILO, box 197239: Brief for the Director General in connection with the forthcoming meeting with the president of the High Authority of the ECSC (End 1956, beginning 1957).
2 Florence, Historical Archive of the European Union (HAEU), ME 2213 and AHUE, ME 816.
3 Amsterdam, International Institute for Social History (IISH), ETUC, 89.
4 HAEU, CM2 1962–1162.
5 Geneva, ILO, box 197239: Brief for the Director General in connection with the forthcoming meeting with the president of the High Authority of the ECSC (End 1956, beginning 1957) (emphasis added).
6 ILO Archive, 197239, brief for the Director General in connection with his forthcoming meeting with the president of the High Authority of the ECSC, mid-1950s.
7 ILO Archive, 197239, brief for the Director General in connection with his forthcoming meeting with the president of the High Authority of the ECSC, mid-1950s.
8 Cf. for instance: ILO Archive 161277: Letter of Francis Wolf (legal adviser of the ILO) to Alexandre Berenstein (secretary of the ISLSSL), January 15, 1957.
9 In the 1970s, ILO officials worked together with the Council of Europe and the EEC to define a program of harmonization in the domain of social norms and social security. ILO, 199542: Beziehungen zwischen ILO und EWG, Minute Sheet (G. Perrin, October 5, 1971).
1 Bourdieu (1985: 22) defines symbolic power as the legitimate right to install a particular perspective as the new “legitimate vision of the social world”.
2 Emirbayer and Johnson (2008); Swartz (2008, 2013), and Vandenberghe (1999) include more detailed discussions about social fields’ invariant phenomenal characteristics and general logics of structuration.
3 Abbott (2005) refers “hinge” to an issue or a group that interlinks two or more previously unrelated social arenas and their respective populations of actors.
4 According to Tuschling and Engemann (2006: 453), the subsidiary principle is based on the idea of European “uniformity” whilst maintaining respect to national “diversity”.
5 This group included, amongst others, the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (IBB) in Germany, the Centre for Innovation in Education (CINOP) in the Netherlands, the Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers (ISFOL) in Italy, and the Quality and Certification Agency (QCA) in the UK (EC, 2004a).
6 CEPR was founded in 1983 by the economist Richard Portes at the London Business School. It serves as an independent research institute and consulting agency. CEPR has received funding from a wide range of public and private actors and organizations, including the European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank. In contrast to CEPR, EENEE was founded in 2005 to serve as a think tank that provides the European Commission with expert knowledge on economic issues. The European Commission appears also to be the primary source of funding for EENEE.
7 The original group of members included: Giorgio Brunello (University of Padua), Antonio Ciccone (University of Barcelona), Torberg Falch (University of Trondheim), Angel de la Fuente (University of Barcelona), Francis Kramarz (Centre de Recherche en Economie et Statistique, Paris), Stephen Malkin (London School of Economics), Daniel Münich (Economics Institute, Prague), Hassel Oosterbeek (University of Amsterdam), George Psacharopoulos (University of Athens), Ludger Wößmann (University of Munich).
8 Hanushek has held influential positions in the US field of education. Amongst other things, he worked for the U.S. Department of Education and the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), and has been a member of the Council of Economic Advisors and the National Academy of Education. In Europe, Hanushek is affiliated
with leading European research institutes in economics (cf. www.hoover.org/profiles/eric-hanushek).

9 EENEE’s analytical reports are listed on its official website (www.eenee.de/eenee-Home/EENEE/Analytical-Reports.html). Biographical data about EENEE members is gathered on their professional internet websites and profiles.

10 IDEAS is the largest bibliographic database dedicated to economics and available freely on the Internet. It is based on the Repository Research Papers in Economics (RePEC) that interlinks a vast amount of archives, is run by volunteers, and has over 55,000 registered authors.

11 These research institutes include the Centre for Economic Studies (CESifo) at the University of Munich, the IZA Institute of Labour Economics in Bonn, the Centre of European Economic Research (ZEW) in Mannheim, the London School of Economics, and the Hoover Institute in Stanford (US).

12 These projects are EBEP (applied by the City of Antwerp), Linked (applied by the European Schoolnet), and EIPEE and EIPPEE (both applied by David Gough).

13 David Gough was director of the EPPI Centre (Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre); Ann Oakley was Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at the Institute of Education at University College London; Philippa Cordingley was Chief Executive of CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education); Andrew Morris was Director of NERF (National Education Research Forum).

1 Empirical data for field analysis as well as text excerpts of discourse analysis are selected on the basis of document studies, field studies, and ethnographic analyses carried out in the FED project (2011–2015, Universities of Mainz and Warwick, funded by the Volkswagenstiftung). The main selection criteria are their belonging to certain groups and actors and their relation to the economic crisis that culminated in the so-called Euro crisis that began in 2009 and became a political drama in 2015.

2 A leading German economic newspaper.

3 A leading German daily newspaper.

* The presented research was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation).

1 This does not mean, however, that school data was not collected before the 1960s. In fact, scholars have documented the governmental power of tests and educational statistics as early as the 1850s (Reese, 2013). Nonetheless, the period after the 1960s marks a crucial turn toward multilevel, nationalized school monitoring, which significantly differs from any earlier form.

2 For example, Bernhard (2008) and Hennig and Kohl (2011) have documented the importance of field theory for explaining why particular networks emerge in a particular way, according to social field positions.

3 For my earlier research applying and discussing these characteristics, see Hartong, 2015, 2016b, 2018a.

4 In this regard, hierarchization and topologization are in fact not “new” phenomena, but can be traced back at least several decades. Nevertheless, their scope has grown dramatically, particularly over recent years with the rise of digitalization and algorithmization.

5 See also Landri (2018: 39 ff.), who illustrates this transformation using the example of the European Education Space.

6 For a more detailed reconstruction, see Hartong, 2018a.

7 For a closer explanation of the relation between A Nation at Risk and US standards-based reform, see Hartong, 2018a: 128–132.


Kauppi, N. (2010b). The Political Ontology of European Integration. *Comparative European Politics, 8*(1), 19‒36.


Zimmermann (Eds.), *Ein Soziales Europa als Herausforderung* (pp. 47‒84). Frankfurt am Main: Campus.


