EU Social Science Collaborations as Unequal Europeanisation

An Ethnographic Study of People and Practices in EU-Funded Research

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ENGLISH ABSTRACT

For social scientists, participating in EU Framework Program projects represents moments and spaces where scholars around Europe are able to collaborate across national borders, disciplines, and fields, all while creating international networks and producing useful and innovative research. However, participating in largescale EU-funded collaborations, and sometimes not participating, can be an acute representation of the academic inequalities, sociohistorical assumptions, and geopolitical dynamics that exist across the academic landscape of Europe. The inevitable European-specific dynamics that academics come face-to-face with during Horizon 2020 projects, and the enormous expectations these projects invoke, are not an accidental side-effect of the Framework Programs. These phenomena are a distinct manifestation of an ambitious form of European integration or Europeanisation which has not only been politically fuelled and manufactured by the EU Commission but has also shaped novel conditions for the academic vocation.

This dissertation sheds new light on what has come to be a tightly woven relationship between the sociohistorical and geopolitically specific landscape of Europe and the academic vocation for European social scientists. Through my employment of Dorothy Smith's Institutional Ethnography, it investigates the experiences, work, and practices of those academics participating in the EU-funded social science collaborations. It is focused not only on how this work looks, but also on how academics across Europe are differently positioned in their ability to navigate and participate in these forms of research.

The dissertation takes shape in relation to multi-sited ethnographic research carried out over a two-year period, during which I studied collaborative practices and the development of three large-scale transnational and multidisciplinary social science projects funded under the Societal Challenges pillar of Horizon 2020. Guiding this work was the main research question: How are European social scientists participating and collaborating in the EU Framework Programs and how can this be understood in the light of Europeanisation? This question was approached through four sub-questions, each corresponding to a paper throughout the dissertation.

Paper 1 provides an introductory overview of the social sciences in a European space and the numerous and transformative facets of Europeanisation that have shaped the related institutions, disciplines, and practices of producing social science. Paper 2 argues in favour

of building on the classic approach to Institutional Ethnography, providing an account of how the Framework Programs can be conceptualised as a transnational institution. Paper 3 is an ethnographic exploration of *navigational work*, a concept I introduce to discuss the unique and less visible forms of work that scholars engage in when they participate in the EU-funding landscape. The paper also discusses how scholars across Europe are differently positioned to learn and practice this kind of work and how this contributes to epistemic inequality. Finally, paper 4 explores choices of empirical cases in EU Framework Programs and makes an explicit link between the unequal European geopolitical landscape and epistemic inequality that is often (re)produced in large-scale collaborative EU FP projects.

Through my use of Institutional Ethnography and Maria do Mar Pereira's theory of epistemic status, the papers and the synopsis surrounding them show how forms of EU-political authority are shaping social knowledge production in Europe and how social scientists are differently positioned to learn and practice the work of navigating participation within the EU-funding landscape. The dissertation contributes to the limited amount of empirical data and academic literature highlighting and studying Europeanisation of the social sciences through academic and social practices. Additionally, the research contributes methodologically by identifying space in the Institutional Ethnography literature for more reflection when taking the global or transnational into consideration by providing an example of ethnographically studying the transnational coordination of knowledge production.

DANISH ABSTRACT

For samfundsvidenskabelige forskere som deltager i EU Framework programmet, præsenterer projekter øjeblikke og steder hvor akademikere Europa rundt har mulighed for at samarbejde på tværs af nationale grænser, discipliner og felter alt imens de skaber internationale netværk og producerer brugbar og innovativ forskning. Imidlertid kan deltagelse i omfattende EU-finansieret samarbejder, samt nogle gange ikke at deltage, være en præcis repræsentation af de akademiske uligheder, sociohistoriske antagelser og geopolitiske dynamikker der eksisterer på tværs af det akademiske landskab i Europa. De uundgåelige og specifikke europæiske dynamikker som akademikere står overfor under H2020 projekter, samt de enorme forventninger disse projekter påkalder, er ikke en utilsigtet bivirkning ved FP'ene. Disse fænomener er en distinkt manifestation af en ambitiøs form af europæisk integration eller europæisering som ikke blot har været politisk drevet og skabt af EU kommissionen, men som også har formet nye betingelser for det akademiske erhverv.

Denne afhandling kaster nyt lys over det der er blevet et tæt sammenvævet forhold mellem det sociohistoriske og geopolitiske specifikke landskab og det akademiske erhverv for europæiske samfundsvidenskabelige forskere. Gennem min anvendelse af Dorothy Smiths Institutionelle Etnografi undersøges erfaringerne, arbejdet og praksisserne for de akademikere der deltager i EU Framework programmer. Den er ikke kun fokuseret på hvordan deres arbejde ser ud, men også hvordan akademikere på tværs af Europa er positioneret forskelligt i deres mulighed for at navigere og deltage i disse former for EU finansieret forskning.

Afhandlingen tager sin form efter relationen til multi-sited etnografisk forskning udført over en toårig periode, hvor jeg undersøgte samarbejdspraksisser og udviklingen af tre omfattende transnationale så vel som multidisciplinære samfundsvidenskabelige projekter finansieret ved Societal Challenges (SC) søjlen af Horizon 2020. Guidende for dette arbejde var hovedforskningsspørgsmålet: Hvordan deltager og samarbejder europæiske samfundsvidenskabelige forskere i EU FP'erne og hvordan kan dette blive forstået i lyset af europæisering? Dette spørgsmål blev behandlet gennem fire underspørgsmål, der hver især svarer til en artikel i afhandlingen.

Artikel 1 behandler det første underspørgsmål gennem et introducerede overblik af samfundsvidenskaberne i et europæisk rum, samt de talrige og transformative facetter af europæisering der har formet de relateret institutioner, discipliner samt praksisser for produktionen af samfundsvidenskaberne. Artikel 2, som behandler underspørgsmål to, argumenterer ikke kun for at bygge videre på den klassiske tilgang til Institutionel Etnografi, men yder også en forståelse for hvordan Framework programmerne kan blive konceptualiseret som en transnational institution. Artikel 3 diskuterer det tredje underspørgsmål ved en etnografisk undersøgelse af navigationsarbejde, et koncept som jeg introducerer for at diskutere de unikke og mindre synlige former for arbejde som akademikere engagere sig i når de deltager i EU-finansieringslandskabet. Artiklen diskuterer også hvordan akademikere på tværs af Europa er positioneret forskelligt i forhold til at lære og udøve denne form for arbejde. Endelig behandler artikel 4 det sidste underspørgsmål gennem en undersøgelse af valgene af empiriske cases i EU's FP'er. Artiklen opretter en eksplicit forbindelse mellem det ulige europæiske geopolitiske landskab og epistemisk ulighed der ofte (re)produceres i omfattende kollaborative EU FP-projekter.

Gennem min brug af Institutionel Etnografi og Maria do Mar Pereiras teori om epistemisk status, artiklerne og synopses omkring dem, vises hvordan former af EU politisk autoritet former nye betingelser for vidensproduktion i Europa og hvordan samfundsvidenskabelige forskere er forskelligt positioneret til at lære og praktisere arbejdet med at navigere i deltagelsen af EU-finansieringslandskabet. Hermed bidrager afhandlingen til den begrænset mængde empiriske data og den akademiske litteratur, der belyser og studerer europæiseringen af samfundsvidenskaberne gennem akademiske og sociale praksisser. Herudover bidrager forskningen metodologisk ved at give et eksempel på hvordan det er muligt at studere den transnationale koordination af vidensproduktionspraksisser og identificere plads i litteraturen om Institutionel Etnografi for flere refleksioner om hvordan det globale eller transnationale tages i betragtning.

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Reflecting on the many people who have shaped these last four years of my PhD studies, I am overwhelmed with a tremendous amount of gratitude. It is difficult to fully articulate all of the encouragement, constructive critique, challenging insights, and generosity that have helped make this PhD what it is. My doctoral research would not have been possible without these people.

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Thank you to Anton Grau Larsen, for being an essential discussion partner and endlessly supportive colleague during these last years. You have encouraged and challenged me as a teammate from a place of goodwill and kindness—assuring me that my work is both valuable and useful. I have had the most refreshing experience learning from you about how to collaborate out of my comfort zone in ways and spaces that felt both inspiring and witty. I feel very fortunate to have had your input, advice, and comradery during this PhD process.

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To the Institutional Ethnography Community and the attendees and organisers of the mentorship seminars, I appreciate the feedback and discussions you have provided and facilitated. My journey with Institutional Ethnography is ongoing, and I look forward to continuing to build and contribute to this community of talented researchers.

I also owe a considerable appreciation to my interviewees and research participants. Your everyday experience, knowledge, and insights have helped me to unpack a previously unfamiliar arena of academic work. Thank you for your trust and your time.

Writing a doctoral thesis is as much an emotional endeavour as it is an intellectual and academic one. The challenge this process brought was only heightened by an unprecedented global pandemic that shook both my plans for the PhD and my perseverance. Thank you to the PhD fellows at the Department of Social Science and Business for celebrating the times of joy and accomplishment and for commiserating with me on times of frustration, confusion, and sometimes hopelessness. Learning from you and with you has carried me through this process.

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encouragement, emotional support, discussions that have furthered me in my process, and sometimes when I just needed an ear. I am so lucky to know you all and to have you in my corner.

Last, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude and love to my family, especially my mom and dad. I have been so far from you all for so long, and you have without fail supported me in every way possible— in all of my choices, during every dip in confidence, and to celebrate me even when I did not celebrate myself. Throughout the last four years I have felt secure in knowing that when I need you, you are there without hesitation—whether that means on a call, on a plane to Copenhagen, or welcoming me home to New York in the most loving and thoughtful ways. I am so fortunate. As my Nana says, my cup runneth over.

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Throughout the dissertation, I use a considerable amount of EU jargon, professional terms, abbreviations, and titles. Here I will provide a comprehensive list of these titles and abbreviations, in some cases accompanied by a short description.

FPs - Framework Programmes

H2020 - Horizon 2020

ERC- European Research Council

ESF- European Science Foundation

SC- Societal Challenges

EC - European Commission

PC - Project coordinator

PO - Project officer

PM - Project Manager

WP - Work package

IE- Institutional Ethnography

TIE- Transnational Institutional Ethnography

CEE- Central and Eastern European

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Toward the latter half of an interview with a mid-career academic, situated at a university in an Eastern European country, I began asking critical questions about her current role in a Horizon 2020 (H2020) collaborative project. At this point I had established some rapport with her, and we were candidly discussing the experience of participating in this Framework Program (FP) project. She explained:

> "I mean, it's a Horizon, I would never think of doing it myself, I know my limitations [...] For me, there's no one who can coach you and there's no official course that enables you to do it [...] I think this is also the reason people in [my country's] academic community are reluctant to join forces with other academics across Europe. They kind of are afraid or hesitant, not because of their own poor capacities, but because it will eat up all of their day to catch up with their peers in European academia."

Here, embedded in her assessment, a uniquely European issue is raised that accompanies participating in knowledge production at the European scale. Her reflections on H2020, the most recent iteration of the FPs, speak to the widely acknowledged academic competition and administrative burden associated with successfully applying for and coordinating these projects. However, more pertinently, they address the enduring and well-studied socio historical and geopolitical divides that exist across Europe—divides that are reproduced in academic knowledge production with and about Europe, reflected in her experiences as a researcher coming from an eastern European university setting.

For social scientists, participating in FP projects represents moments and spaces where scholars around Europe are able to collaborate across national borders, disciplines, and fields all while creating international networks and producing useful and innovative research. However, participating in largescale EU-funded collaborations, and sometimes *not* participating, can be an acute representation of the academic inequalities, sociohistorical assumptions, and geopolitical dynamics that exist across the academic landscape of Europe. The beliefs quoted by the researcher above articulate these inequalities, highlighting the disparities of access when it comes to coordinating and participating in this kind of transnational EU-funded research.

The inevitable European specific dynamics that academics come face-to-face with during H2020 projects, and the enormous expectations these projects invoke, are not an accidental side-effect of the FPs. These phenomena are a distinct manifestation of an ambitious form of European integration or Europeanisation in academia which has been politically fuelled

and manufactured by the EU Commission. In his 2014 opening remarks at a high-level conference in Lisbon, European Commission president José Manuel Barroso commented on a report presented by his Science and Technology Advisory Council titled 'The Future of Europe is Science' (European Commission 2014). His comments underlined that the EU remains "the largest knowledge factory in the world", before referring to the upcoming iteration of the European FPs, H2020 as a "flagship to strengthen Europe's innovation leadership, by fostering excellence in research and the development of new and future emerging technologies, as well as to address societal challenges" (European Commission 2014, 1). Barroso positions science and research as an essential and competitive force for shaping the future of Europe. His message, as well as the specific words he chooses (e.g., "excellence", "future emerging technologies', "societal challenges"), all represent the distillment of decades of transformative policy, narrative shifting processes, and events that have cemented an undeniable entanglement between the EU and scientific knowledge production in Europe. Policy initiatives such as the European Research Area (ERA) or the European Research Council (ERC), the setting up of universities such as CEU or the EUI, and the establishment of the European Science Foundation (ESF) all exemplify and solidify the ambitious establishment of this relationship over the recent decades. For many individual social scientists in Europe, the entanglement between the science and the EU and is often most visible and concretely experienced when collaborating on an FP project.

The FPs were first established in 1981 with the latest iterations introduced in 2014 and 2021 as H2020 and Horizon Europe, respectively. They were originally designed for integrating and coordinating the many research activities funded by the EU (Guzzetti 1995), however over the years the FPs have expanded to become one of the world's largest research and innovation funding schemes with a total budget for Horizon Europe of €95.5 billion. Since their start, the programs have carried a dual purpose—they were meant to both strengthen the EU's position as a competitor in the global knowledge economy in concert with contributing to growth and development within Europe through, inter alia, fostering of a European "scientific community" or the ERA in fuelling the conditions for science at the European-level (Nedeva and Stampfer 2012). Subsequently, the programs are known to fund large-scale, transnational research collaborations with consortia that include researchers and institutions scattered across the EU.

Participation in FP projects tendentially evokes different responses for scholars, carrying varying levels of prestige and associated 'excellence'. Much-like the social and global relations it entangles with, the academic vocation is continually transforming, and the last decades have brought European-specific changes to the work of producing social science. National and institutional management demands have expanded for individual researchers to become 'entrepreneurial', coinciding with both the pressure to secure research funds and produce articles, and the growing expectation to demonstrate that they are 'collaborative, 'multidisciplinary', and above all, 'international' (Deem 1998; 2006; Fleck and Hönig 2014; Shore and Wright 2011; Wright 2014). Whether it was to meet this building tension or a partial contributor to it, scholars have increasingly turned towards EU research funding from the FPs to secure opportunities for transnational and multidisciplinary collaborations.

When I began exploring EU-funded research, particularly projects funded under the European FPs, participation was described to me by several academics as not only notably recognised in their departments or research networks, but also as a natural career move and method for acquiring a more international network. It was depicted as an apparent extension of regular scholarly knowledge production, save for the inevitable addition of tedious administrative and financial accounting.

However, contrary to the natural extension of academic work that the FPs were painted to be, I was met with a steep learning curve during my first experiences with the funding scheme when it came to the administrative bureaucracy, academic norms, and tacit knowledge specific to the European geopolitical context that was involved in scholarly participation. While it was clear that academic 'excellence' was part of the criteria for winning FP funds, a concept I will address later in this dissertation, successful participation seemed to include an additional dense inventory of experience and professional know-how unlike most other academic activities I was acquainted with.

For example, one researcher explained how "EU-language,"—or a particular implicit and explicit knowledge of certain norms and practices unique to the FPs and the EU-funding landscape—recurrently shaped activities such as formulating a collaborative team and project proposal or the production of research products during and after the EU project (e.g., deliverables, books articles, conferences). This knowledge was not scientific or discipline-specific academic knowledge, nor was it simply politico-bureaucratic or administrative. In other words, both participation and practices of collaborative knowledge production in the

FPs were uniquely shaped by the specificities dictated by participating in this form of EU-funded research. Thus, while the EU commission made clear the ambitious notion that "the future of Europe is science", scholarly participation in the EU FPs stood out as a demonstrative example of one of the ways in which *the future of science in Europe was becoming uniquely European*.

This dissertation sheds new light on what has come to be a tightly woven relationship between the sociohistorical and geopolitically specific landscape of Europe and the academic vocation for European social scientists. While an exploration of this relationship has been taken up by scholars in various ways, this dissertation takes its point of departure in the experiences, work, and practices of those academics participating in the EU FPs. It is focused not only on how this work looks, but also on how academics across Europe are differently positioned in their ability to navigate and participate in these forms of research. Specifically, the dissertation takes shape in relation to multi-sited ethnographic research carried out over a two-year period, during which I studied collaborative practices and the development of three large-scale transnational and multidisciplinary social science projects funded under the Societal Challenges (SC) pillar of H2020. While I will unpack the different pillars of H2020 later in this dissertation, the SC pillar is the one which is most explicitly intertwined with EU level policy objectives. It is through an exploration of these materially and socially constructed practices that I investigate the FPs as a transnational institution for knowledge production, considered here to be not only a window into the entanglement between the EU and science but also an institution for the coordination of knowledge production practices and ultimately an instrument of European integration or Europeanisation.

In this research, I examine the role of the EU FPs, the practices of social scientists who participate in them, and the knowledge they produce as a contribution to, and manifestation of Europeanisation for social scientists in Europe. Here, *Europeanisation can be defined as the process where an increase in the amount of regional social arenas leads to further European integration at all levels, and identities, practices, norms, and institutions are supplemented or replaced with European ones* (McNamara 2015). For over a decade now, researchers such as Johan Heilbron (2014; Heilbron et al. 2008; Heilbron et al. 2017; Heilbron et al. 2018) have hypothesised an emerging transnational European field in the social and human sciences, "largely created from above through European funding schemes, [and] structured by a growing number of programs, organizations, and more loosely

organized networks"(Heilbron 2014, 70). To explore the practices of scholars participating in EU FP projects through this lens is to also discuss how participation in the FPs is shaped by the complexities of geopolitical inequality in Europe, in concert with global transformations to the scientific vocation, and how this looks for social scientists in Europe.

While this dissertation is empirically focused on the FP's, the choice to investigate this large-scale empirical phenomenon as a transnational institution and through people and practices is one that is heavily inspired by Dorothy Smith's (1987; 1990; 2005; 2006) Institutional Ethnography (IE). IE was developed as an ontological and methodological mode of inquiry with the purpose of promoting a sociological approach by which to investigate the social construction of everyday life—how people move through their socio-material spaces and are actively being organised and coordinated in their consciousness and work practices. As a feminist approach to studying the intersection of science and power, IE is an essential tool for this research when it comes to bridging the ethnographic study of everyday scientific practices and a zoomed-out perspective on the European funding landscape that is tendentially dominated by research and disciplines that take a perspective 'from above'—analysing EU funding distribution and policy or disciplinary representation with little emphasis on the relationships and practices of scholars themselves. In other words, IE provides a way to avoid what Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar (1986) describe as the progressive "forgetting" of the originating researchers—the people in actual settings who organise and are being organised by definite everyday social relations. Here, it also refers to those academics who are simultaneously 'doing' Europeanisation with their participation in the FPs.

In my experience, knowledges, and more specifically dominant trajectories of scientific knowledges, are especially equipped and often encouraged to appear objective or independent of the means by which they are produced. Dorothy Smith (1990, 66) describes the movement from knowing to knowledge as an act that inevitably calls attention to the disappearing subject. This systematic conversion from people and practices of knowing to scientific knowledge, represents a moment of disjuncture with a tendency to neutralise or obscure the technical and socio-materially organising realities that grant social science knowledge its shape, relevance, and reverence. The exploration of this progressive 'forgetting' has become an area of study that has captured my attention for some time. Subsequently, this project has culminated in a dissertation that is not focused on scientific

knowledge in and for itself, but rather the conditions for knowing—particularly how these conditions look for social scientists in Europe, their experiences navigating them, and implications of these conditions for the norms and practices of the scientific vocation.

This research is driven by the following research questions to explore this relationship between the landscape for EU-research funding and scholars who participate in it. The research question consist of one main question that acts as a red thread throughout the dissertation, and four sub-questions to which each paper will contribute to addressing.

How are European social scientists participating and collaborating in the EU FP's and how can this be understood in the light of Europeanisation?

1. *What does Europeanisation look like in relation to the social sciences in Europe and the institutions that house and govern them?*
2. *How can the EU FPs be understood as an institution that is organising knowledge production practices?*
3. *How do academics navigate their participation in the EU FPs and the European funding landscape?*
4. *How does geopolitical inequality in Europe play a role in shaping forms of epistemic inequality when participating in the FPs?*

Each of these sub-questions is addressed by a corresponding paper throughout the dissertation. Paper 1 addresses the first sub-question, through an introductory overview of the social sciences in a European space and the numerous and transformative facets of Europeanisation that have shaped the related institutions, disciplines, and practices of producing social science. Paper 2 addresses sub-question 2, not only arguing in favour of building on the classic approach to Institutional Ethnography but also providing an account of how the Framework Programs can be conceptualised as a transnational institution. Paper 3 discusses the third sub-question through an ethnographic exploration of navigational work, a concept I introduce to discuss the unique and less visible forms of work that scholars engage in when they participate in the EU-funding landscape. The paper also discusses how scholars across Europe are differently positioned to learn and practice this kind of work. Finally, paper 4 addresses the final sub-question through an exploration of choices of empirical cases in EU FPs. This paper makes an explicit link between the unequal European

geopolitical landscape and epistemic inequality that is often (re)produced in large-scale collaborative EU FP projects.

Notably, this research developed in dialogue with Associate Professor Kristoffer Kropp and Assistant Professor Anton Grau Larsen, and as part of a larger project titled 'The European Field of Social-Scientific Knowledge Production', with funding from Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond. Together, we set out to study social science research projects funded through European institutions and European research politics in order to understand both contemporary structures and historical changes in European social science knowledge production.

As a publication-based dissertation, the four papers I have included are intended to stand alone and were produced for different readers and journals. However, contrary to a standard publication-based PhD, I have chosen to disperse the papers throughout the dissertation rather than separate them from the framework that structures them and ties them together. This is done for two reasons. First, the papers are intended to build on each other, and to develop the dissertation as a whole, as it is read. Consequently, each paper is introduced in relation to its placement in the dissertation. Second, I consider this a way to further signify that the analytical aspects of this dissertation do not start and end in the papers. Rather, each chapter and paper offers some form of analytical contribution and reflection. Thus, while the papers should be read and understood individually, they should also be considered as situated within the work as a whole. This, I believe, provides a fuller picture of the research for the reader and a more enjoyable read. Nevertheless, there are also drawbacks to structuring an article-based dissertation in this way—namely some repetition throughout the framing and the occasional quote taken directly from the four papers that I have included.

Additionally, in the light of this decision and in the spirit of creating a reflexive reading experience, I have included figure [1] below, which depicts an overview of participation in an EU-FP project from the perspective of an academic. As I elaborate later in the dissertation, the IE approach is particularly invested in the relationship between the local and the trans-local—how local practices are organised by trans-local forms of order and coordination. To visually represent the relationship between the local and the trans-local, a 'hero diagram' is sometimes used to show the vantage point from which a specific group of people participate in an institution. It is called a 'hero diagram,' because it is meant to depict

the standpoint of the everyday 'hero' looking up at the different intersecting forms of trans-local coordination, originating beyond their view and entering into their everyday lives. It is *not* to show a top-down directionality or how these forms of coordination organise the social. Moreso, the diagram is used as a way to visually depict 'the strange forms of power that are

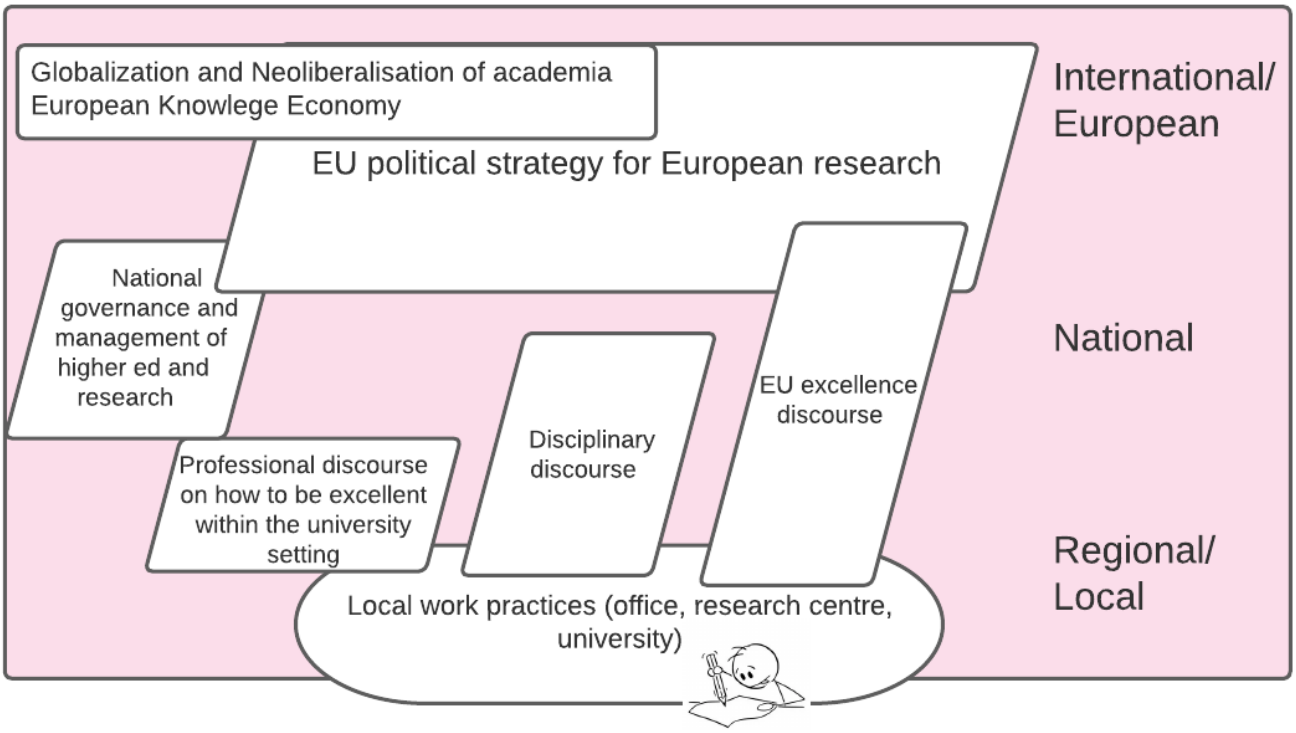

Figure 1

at once present and absent in the everyday' (Smith 2005, p. 41).

This hero diagram, which I have adapted from Dorothy Smith's original version[1] (2006, p.3) shows how I take up my own inquiry— from the site of the everyday work located in a university setting or research centre and 'looking up' through the complex of discourses, social relations, and forms of governance that enter into and organise their lives and work. Although much of the complexity has been stripped away, the model shows the overall architecture of the PhD I have written[2]. In other words, an approximate illustration and topography of the empirical field that I am about to engage with. I will refer back to it when

[1] Smith's original 'hero diagram' appears later in the dissertation, where I also note my criticality of using the 'hero' nomenclature when referring to participants I interview.

[2] Although this diagram comes at the beginning of this dissertation, it was fully realised and created at the end of my research process after thorough analysis. In other words, it is meant to be descriptive and not prescriptive. Additionally, the diagram is not meant to show unilateral directional, top-down flows of power.

positioning papers or sections, and I have included it early in the reading to aid in continually locating the different aspects of my research within this topography throughout the dissertation.

In doing this I also ask you, the reader, to think about your own experiences and practices throughout your reading. I imagine that the majority of readers are likely themselves academics and will have either participated in a transnational EU FP collaboration or worked with colleagues who have. In your engagement with this work, I invite you to reflect on your own encounters with the EU research landscape and how my account resonates with the picture you have pieced together yourself in your confrontation with this broad empirical field.

Dissertation Outline

The dissertation is organised as follows.

In Chapter 2, the project and research question(s) are empirically contextualised through an introduction to the EU-funding landscape. This chapter first outlines the EU Commission's transforming ambitions for the FPs throughout recent decades. Additionally, it unpacks the shape and function of the FP's contemporary form H2020[3], drawing out and questioning the woven-in normative tensions and ambiguity for participating researchers.

Chapter 3 positions this dissertation and my approach to this research area as speaking to four broadly defined fields: Science and Technology Studies (STS) including feminist STS, Global South and post-colonial studies, the anthropology of policy and neo-liberalised academic governance, and social studies of science in Europe.

This chapter includes Paper 1, a co-written introductory chapter to the edited volume titled *The Social Sciences in a European Space – changes in institutions, disciplines, and ideas.* For the purposes of this dissertation, this paper is intended as both an introduction to the concept of Europeanisation in the social sciences as well as a means by which to map out the multifaceted landscape for changing EU research.

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[3] While Horizon Europe will have commenced at the time of this dissertation, the bulk of my fieldwork and analysis took place during Horizon 2020. Thus, I will be referring to Horizon 2020 when I discuss a contemporary or the most recent version of the FPs.

Chapter 4 introduces IE as an ontological positioning for this project and unfolds its significance in providing both an overarching ontological and theoretical framing for this research. Further, this chapter fleshes out the dissertation's central framework for analysis, Maria do Mar Pereira's theory of the epistemic status, and discusses how her work is employed in concert with other means of conceptualisation throughout the dissertation.

Chapter 5 presents reflections on the methods, ethics, and my positionality in this research. I first unpack the methods I worked with in IE. Here, I also consider the effect of Covid-19 on this research and the overall dissertation. I discuss being an 'insider-outsider' during fieldwork and how this affected the course of the research. In this chapter I open a discussion of my positionality during this PhD, both in relation to my own research environment and to the field with which I engaged.

I have placed Paper 2 at the end of Chapter 5. This paper, titled Thinking with Transnational Institutional Ethnography: Moving Towards Spatially Conscious Methods for Studying Geographically Dispersed People and Institutions was published in the International Journal of Qualitative Methods. The paper argues for building on a classic approach to IE with spatially conscious methods to study institutions that are neither physically centralised nor nationally bound. In it, I discuss the FPs as a transnational institution and advocate for TIE as a novel approach to ethnographically studying transnational and global processes. With this paper, I show how conceptualising the FPs as a transnational institution contributed to understanding how EU-funded research is social and textually coordinated across heterogenous material spaces and disciplines.

Chapter 6 is intended as an opportunity to open up my empirical data through narratives and stories from the field. It is included so as to give the reader a more robust description of both the fieldwork that I conducted and a sense for how the FP's form and function for scholars who participate. In this chapter, I make use of expanded interview quotes and field notes in order to unpack EU project participation from the perspectives and practices of scholars through lenses that were not sufficiently elaborated on in the 4 papers that constitute this dissertation.

This chapter is followed by Paper 3 and 4. First, Paper 3 is a book chapter titled EU Research as Unequal Europeanisation? Exploring the less visible navigational work accompanying EU-funded Social Science Collaboration. In it, I ethnographically show how various scholars are doing a form of navigation work which is difficult to quantify or account for. I also discuss

this particular work as unique to the FP's and the EU-funding landscape, acting as a form of 'doing' Europeanisation. Further, the chapter touches on how some scholars across Europe are in a better position to do this work than others.

Paper 4 is titled Geopolitical and Epistemic Inequalities in European Research: Exploring the selection of countries as cases in EU-funded transnational collaborations and has currently received a revise and resubmit at The Sociological Review. In this paper, we use quantitative and qualitative methods to build on Pereira's theory of the epistemic status of nations by arguing that the theory can be extended in its implications to address EU-funded research and geographic choices for empirical cases. With this, we critique strategies for geographic inclusion in the FPs and call attention to consequences for social science knowledge produced in large-scale transnational collaborative research.

To conclude, Chapter 7 discusses the research question(s) posed throughout the PhD and how they were addressed across the four papers. I discuss the contributions made by dissertation and implications for this research.

CHAPTER 2 EU RESEARCH POLICY AND THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK PROGRAMS

As I point out in the Introduction, when I first approached studying the FPs, I found the learning curve steep. This was emphasised further when I began interviewing academics and affiliates of the European Commission (EC) who employed a broad range of jargon and norms. They provided glimpses into what I later came to understand as the lengthy social and political history of the FP's and the current H2020 FP. This chapter provides a primarily descriptive and historical contextualisation of the European research funding landscape through a brief account of the EU FPs and the social sciences funded under them. I further empirically contextualise my research question(s) empirically by discussing how the political and academic trajectory of the FPs— particularly their shift in purpose following the introduction of the political ambition of a European Research Area (ERA)— works to shape the underlying strategies for H2020 and how scholars participate in this form of EU research.

In this chapter I begin by laying out the shifting EU research policy narratives around European Research funding from the early 1980's in order to establish a foundation for understanding what EU research policy currently looks like. I then address the current state of the FPs and how their trajectory has culminated in an unclear form of 'excellence' that is promoted for researchers and research in the Societal Challenges (SC) pillar. Finally, I specifically focus on the position of the social sciences and humanities in the context of the European research landscape and in relation to the rise of EU research policy and funding. This chapter functions predominantly as a contextualisation and historical overview of the empirical field with which I engaged during this research. However, throughout this account, I begin to pose critical questions regarding both the political narrative of EU research policy and how H2020 functions. These questions set the stage for exploring how projects are formed and how they function under the contemporary FP, H2020.

2.1 Shifting EU Policy Narratives – From Coordinating Science Activities to a 'European Science'

Before the establishment of the FPs in the 1980's, EU science policy occupied an unclear position within EU policy as a whole (Kropp 2021; Wedlin and Nedeva 2015). Although

small steps were taken as far back as the 1950's toward the organisation of science at the European level, there was a high degree of disorganization and incongruity within the European Community when it came to science and research (Guzzetti 1995, 83). In 1983 the introduction of the Framework Programs for Research and Technological (FPs) signalled the early stages of building a European-level infrastructure for science and research.

Most notably, the overarching purpose of the FPs at their inception was to coordinate the aggregate of EU-funded scientific activities with a view to supporting their applicability to major industrial and agricultural policy areas (Guzzetti 1995, 83). At this time, European research policy was focused not on funding basic research but on supporting technologies and applications that were expected to benefit Europe on a broad scale (Dyker 1997). This can be understood in part as a function of the 'principle of subsidiarity', which states that the EU can act only if individual country actions are insufficient. In other words, all European-level science and research initiatives were required to provide 'European added value', a concept that was generally interpreted to mean subsidiary encouragement of transnational collaborations across the fledgling European research community (Nedeva and Stampfer 2012; Nedeva and Wedlin 2015). Previously, national governments were generally protective of their role when it came to funding and legislating scientific research. Now, with the introduction of the FPs, the first overall initiative was taking shape with the intention of addressing a form of organisation building at the European level.

The overarching discernible goals endorsed by the EU at this time concerned bringing together information technology firms and the public sector in collaborative R&D and joint research to 'solve generic research problems that had wide applications across many industrial sectors' (Luukkonen 2002). In light of this, it is important to note that, from the beginning, the discourse around the FPs placed particular emphasis on the funding of collaborative research projects across geographic locations, research domains, and between research and industry—characteristics that are still associated with the FPs in their present form. While the purpose and function of the FPs were at this time relegated mainly to coordinating and supporting research, the narrative around what exactly constituted European added value was slowly beginning to shift.

2.1.1 Enter the ERA

The early 2000's were a particularly notable time for EU science policy. The notion that European countries were 'lagging behind' the US and Japan' and that public and private investment in science was too low raised concerns for both academics and members of the EC (Luukkonen 2015). With pressure from both members of the EC and influential European academics—primarily within the natural sciences—it gradually became clear to the EC that European science policy could no longer focus solely on aggregation, technology, and research applications. Most notably, this tension came to a head at the Lisbon conference, resulting in the 'Lisbon Agenda' that was formulated in 2001 by the European Council of Ministries. It set out the ambitious goal of positioning Europe and the EU at the forefront of the global knowledge economy. The aim was to foster 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, (European Commission 2000) thus simultaneously catapulting research policy to the centre of the EU agenda (Chou 2012; Chou and Gornitzka 2014). While the concept of 'European added value' was previously invoked to emphasise funding and support instruments that enabled trans-European collaboration, discourse around the concept was shifting towards an explicit and critical focus on fostering competition, and the notion of *'excellence in research'* was introduced at the European level. This idea was concerned not only with fostering competition for excellence across Europe but also with encouraging a competitive Europe as a whole with respect to global competitors such as the US (Nedeva and Stampfer 2012).

Ultimately, the strategies and ambitions originating from the Lisbon Agenda developed at the political level and culminated in the introduction of the European Research Area (ERA)—a complete renovation of the rationale for European-level science policy intervention and organisation. The ERA, spearheaded by the acting Commissioner for Research at the time, Philippe Busquin, was launched as the most ambitious effort yet to coordinate and integrate research policy in Europe. Busquin argued that the EU should tackle a host of related issues, including the cross-national mobility of researchers in Europe, the renovation of Europe's research infrastructure, the definition and standardisation of scientific excellence across Europe, and better coordination of existing intergovernmental scientific cooperation, with a greater degree of long-term project self-management by European actors (Edler et al. 2003). Each of these aspects of the ERA touched on established national prerogatives, while still inching towards the notion of a 'European science'—at least

at the level of infrastructure and policy. Importantly, this was the first directional move towards an explicit and politically fuelled form of 'Europeanisation' of science and research.

With the introduction of the ERA, in concert with newly fuelled competition at the pan-European level, the FPs took on a new significance as they transformed from being merely a tool to principally support and organise technology and industry collaborations to a means for addressing national fragmentation in research agendas and collaborative networks. In his January 2001 Berlin address, Busquin argued that the Member States had accepted the principle that the 'framework programme will no longer be the quasi-unique objective of Union policy. It will certainly remain an important, even essential instrument, but it will have to be seen as an element of the ERA' (Busquin 2001). As researchers such as Maria Nedeva and Linda Wedlin (2015) highlight, it was at this time that the rationale for supporting and funding research at the European level was signalled by a general reorientation from the *coordination* of national research to the *integration* of national public science systems (see also, Breschi and Cusmano 2004; Luukkonen, Nedeva, and Barré 2006; Luukkonen and Nedeva 2010). To put the financial and budgetary growth of the FPs into perspective, the budget for the four-year FPs increased from roughly € 700 million per year for FP1 to about € 4.5 billion per year for FP6. For FP7, the period of four years increased, so the program lasted seven years with a budget of € 7.5 billion(Marks and Kiss 2010). In the years that followed, the FPs became an important symbol and a primary tool of the ERA political agenda and competitive funding at the European level, kicking off the next 10 years of the FPs under the ERA, which spanned from 2002 to 2013, the duration of FP6 and FP7.[4]

This gradual shifting of the meaning of 'European added value' represents both an essential point for the development of European research policy and a foundational consideration for this dissertation. It represented a transformation in how the EU would begin to develop and justify science infrastructure at the European level, foreshadowing what would become a deep entanglement between the EU and scientific knowledge production in Europe.

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[4] The 5th FP (**1998–2002**), the 6th FP (**2002–2006**), the 7th FP (**2007–2013**), and Horizon 2020 (**2014–2020**).

2.2 Horizon 2020- The Contemporary Form of the FP's

With the introduction of a new FP in 2014, the EC signalled its ambitions for the newest program. For almost 30 years, starting in 1984, each FP was referred to by a sequential number. However, after FP7, what would have been called FP8 was dubbed 'Horizon 2020'. At the time, the Commissioner for Research explained this change, saying, "We want the CSF [Common Strategic Framework] to mark a clear departure from business as usual. We are not simply moving from the 7th to the 8th Framework Programme. And what better way to demonstrate this shift than with a new name?"(Geoghegan-Quinn 2011).

The ambition for Horizon 2020 to create a competitive 'European science' across the whole funding scheme can first be identified at the political level in the Green Paper published by the EC in February 2011 titled 'From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding.' (European Commission 2011). This 15-page Green Paper briefly outlines the EC's position on the major challenges that the coming FP should address, as well as its organisation. The document emphasised newly explicit focal points intended to directly target societal challenges and strengthen the ERA through competition. Additionally, it suggested that the EU should break away from a 'compartmentalised' approach, emphasising innovation that is focused on challenges and outcomes and coordinated by greater EU policy objectives, as this is critical for 'closing the gap with international competitors. Here, the Commission reiterated the necessity and 'added value' of the FPs in terms of fuelling a unified ERA and subsequently bolstering Europe at the competitive global scale. In short, the Green Paper politically positioned the EU and H2020 at front and centre when it came both to keeping science in Europe as a competitive global force and effectively finding solutions to what are deemed 'societal challenges' and centrally linked both these objectives to greater EU-level ambitions.

With Horizon 2020, there was an increased and more explicit focus on innovation and bringing scientific research closer to the market. Thus, the programme was organised with a greater focus on supplying immediate solutions for private enterprises and government and sought to include 'end users' in the projects to ensure 'impact' and solutions to the societal challenges defined in the programme. The 2011 Green Paper states: 'In line with the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and the provisions of the Treaties, the Common Strategic Framework will focus on addressing societal challenges, encouraging the competitiveness of Europe's industries and the excellence of its scientific and technological

base.' These priorities can be mapped onto the three distinct separate pillars that constitute Horizon 2020: the *Excellent Science* pillar, the *Industrial Leadership* pillar, and the *Societal Challenges (SC)* pillar (see Figure 2).

STRUCTURE OF HORIZON 2020

Excellent Science	Industrial Leadership	Societal Challenges
European Research Council	Leadership in Enabling & Industrial Technologies	Health, demographic change and wellbeing
Future and Emerging Technologies	- Information and communication technologies	Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime and inland water research and bioeconomy
Marie Skłodowska-Curie-Actions	- Nanotechnologies - Advanced materials - Biotechnology	Secure, clean and efficient energy
Research Infrastructures	- Advanced manufacturing and processing - Space	Smart, green and integrated transport
	- Access to Risk Finance	Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials
	- Innovation in SMEs	Europe in a changing world-inclusive, innovative and reflective societies
		Secure societies – Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens

Figure 2: [EU Commission 2022]

First, *Excellent Science* is focused on basic research and includes the European Research Council (ERC) and initiatives such as the Marie Curie program. I will briefly explore and contextualise the implications of the ERC later in this chapter. The second pillar is centred on *Industrial Leadership* and focuses on industry and innovation (including the European Innovation Council). The third pillar, on which the majority of my fieldwork and inquiry, was concentrated on 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness'.

This third pillar, *Societal Challenges*, is organised around six areas defined by the Commission as major societal challenges to which scientific knowledge can help provide solutions. Each of the six challenges has a designated work programme on the backs of which the calls for projects are formulated. The calls specify the problem areas and other conditions for the projects, such as the budget, required output, and composition of the project. Each proposal is evaluated by an expert panel (European Commission 2022). This three-pillar structure allows the EC to relegate one funding pillar to each of the major stakeholders in research policy: government,

H2020 Budget from 2014-2020		
Excellence Science	Societal Challenges	Industrial Leadership
24.441 million €	29.679 million €	17.015 million €

Figure 3 (EU Commission 2022)

industry, and universities/research organisations. As Mitchell Young (2015) points out, this formal division allows the Commission to retain a top-down governance method for choosing research priorities for the SC pillar while also allowing academic communities to evaluate the proposals to make use of a less prescriptive, bottom-up method for determining which projects to fund.

2.2.1 The Societal Challenges Pillar

In the SC pillar of H2020—the most politically shaped FP pillar and the focus of my fieldwork—several hallmark features of previous FPs remain present. However, some additional transformations were also introduced to the formal procedures for applying and evaluating proposals. First, in line with earlier FPs and as a direct continuation of FPs 6 and 7, the central point of the SC pillar remained to create multidisciplinary, transnational collaborations across European countries to produce solutions that are scalable to the prescribed challenges. For example, one of the key criteria for winning funds is the extent to which the proposed project's outputs contribute to the expected impacts mentioned within the SC work programme (Amting 2017; European Commission 2016). Still, it is important to reiterate that scalable solutions are not the only outcome-shaping criterion for funding in this pillar. As a continuation of FPs 6 and 7, the H2020 SC pillar is still considered the most discernible manifestation of the goals and ambitions of the ERA for academics. In other words, the broad goals for multidisciplinary consortia and transnational collaboration across Europe are framed as a direct contribution to building up the EU as a competitive force in the global knowledge economy (see Figure 4[5]); these goals translate into both formal and informal criteria for project funding. As I discuss in Chapter 3—which positions this work in terms of the existing academic literature—and in my

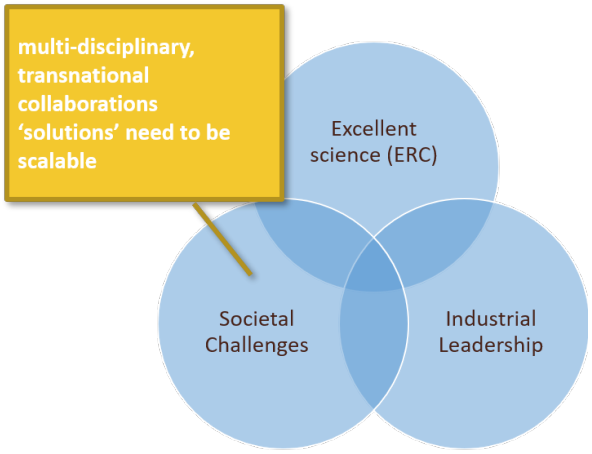

Figure 4

[5] While Figure 4 shows 'Added value through Horizon Europe,' the FP that directly succeeded H2020, it has a clear correlation with the H2020 definition of added value. This strengthens the claim that the EC continues to cultivate this definition of added value.

methods chapter (Section 5.1), the choice to focus on the SC pillar was made both because it was an understudied area of EU-funded research and because it was the most evident space to study the blurring of lines between the EU political field and academic knowledge production.

While the changes made to aspects of the SC Pillar of Horizon 2020 appear relatively superficial, they have come to represent some significant transformations in the underlying narrative of the funding scheme that affect how academics interact with the EC and collaborate within projects.

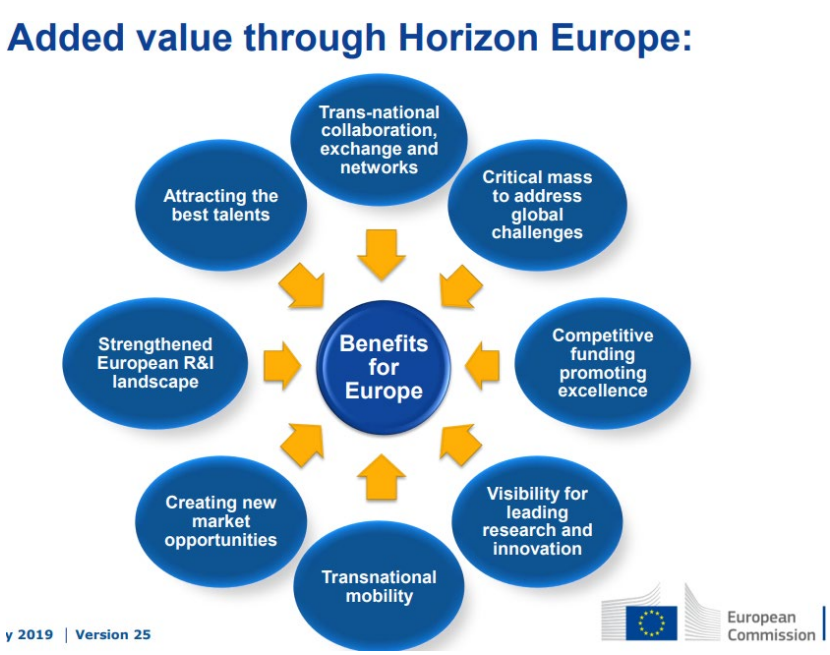

Figure 5: [European Commission. "Horizon Europe Investing to Shape Our Future." 2019.]

Notably, one of the features that distinguished Horizon 2020 from FPs 6 and 7 was the EC's decision to reduce the bureaucratic and administrative burden on academics who apply to and participate in FP projects. Over the course of previous FPs, the funding scheme had developed a reputation among academics for involving lengthy and bureaucracy-laden application procedures. Furthermore, after funds were awarded, managing an SC project inevitably involved a significant ongoing administrative burden that was frequently cited by participants as one of several reasons to steer clear of the funding scheme. While the reduction in these bureaucratic and administrative procedures was generally welcomed, it also brought a shift in the requirements to apply to and participate in SC projects. For example, in Horizon 2020, the application is the singular indicator of the consortium's intentions, values, and plans for research. There is no room for negotiation or clarification once it has been submitted (European Commission 2016). In the directions for potential evaluators, it is stated that a member of the EC should 'evaluate each proposal as submitted, not on its potential if certain changes were to be made' (Amting

2017). The fact that the process of evaluating applications was simplified and that proposals were to be scored strictly on their face value, rather than offering opportunities for editing, was highlighted by the EC as an advantage of H2020 that should facilitate simpler review procedures and quicker turnaround times. However, due to this shift, the project must be meticulously scheduled, accounted for, and quantified prior to submission. During an interview, an experienced project manager explained some of the noticeable differences between managing previous FP projects and managing projects within Horizon 2020. He commented,

> "[The Commission] has to trust, to some extent, the beneficiaries of the project…there used to be less trust. You'd have to get all kinds of details like travels and finances approved. The proposal has always been a binding contract, but I think there is a much closer monitoring now in terms of sticking to the promised deliverables. We are probably able to manage the project with fewer hours a week now… but the application process is more demanding."

This project manager speaks directly to the critical transformations made to the structure of Horizon 2020 and the implications for work practices. He equates a decrease in the bureaucracy around having finances and travel approved with an increase in trust received from the EC. However, as Young (2015) points out, *trust* in this manner often results in the acceptance of more accountability as a prerequisite for more autonomy. It is an indication of a form of trust that is institutionalised in measures, benchmarks, and quantifiable products—echoing aspects of neo-liberalised academic work and forms of new managerialism (Deem 1998; 2003) in research settings (see also sections 3.3 and 6.3.1). In other words, while there seem to be fewer administrative hurdles for researchers *during* the project, the implications of this shift entail increased consideration at the project formulation and application writing stages. Furthermore, greater emphasis is placed on the contractually binding grant agreement (GA) and delivering the promised knowledge products to the Commission. This is emphasised by how the project manager quoted above reflects on an increasingly demanding application process.

For the purposes of this research, I underscore how crucial these seemingly superficial or banal administrative and management changes are and question the effects they have had on the formulation and unfolding of proposals and collaborative projects for participating researchers. As I elaborate on elsewhere (6.1.1 and Paper 4), these processes and the timeline for consortium formulation and proposal writing in SC projects play a crucial role in shaping both the practices of collaboration and the knowledge produced in SC FP projects.

2.2.2 The ERC and the Construction of Excellence

In discussing the SC pillar of the FPs, it is important to also take into account the formation of the European Research Council (ERC) and the construction and veneration of scientific 'excellence'. Although the ERC is a separate FP pillar, its formulation and the related notion of excellence represent narratives that are deeply entangled with the ERA and the current state of the FPs. Additionally, understanding how researchers conceive of the SC pillar would be difficult without considering the influence of the ERC and EU excellence discourse on the landscape of European research.

As previously mentioned, while the Lisbon strategy and the ERA were being formulated and introduced, European scientific competition with the US and Asia grew steadily, and the policy discourse around European science moved further towards enforcing a version of competitive excellence in order to compete in the global knowledge economy. The funding of basic research quickly became a pressure point for groups in the natural science community who were concerned about the reconstruction of European science institutions and 'frontier research' after WWII. Later, the narratives around competitive scientific excellence that came from basic research were taken up by the EC and legitimised by the ERA on the grounds that building up excellent European research contributed to the ambition for a broader knowledge-based society (Hoenig 2017).

While the first presentations of the ERA objectives did not mention 'excellence' specifically, and the concept did not enter the EC agenda until 2003, it seemed to quickly become the Commission's avenue for further solidifying a 'European science', as opposed to an aggregate 'science in Europe'. According to communications from the EC, 'excellence' and 'risk-taking' when it came to basic research were set to become one of the 'guiding principle[s] for ERA policy' (European Commission 2009). Finally, after ongoing communication about the importance of basic research at the European level, the Commission identified a need for a pan-European, supranational-level support mechanism for individual researchers, projects, and basic research funding. This reflected the previously mentioned shift in the definition of 'European added value' to mean the added value brought by competition at the European level. The considerable growth of funds in the Seventh Framework Programme eventually enabled the establishment of a new body entirely on the basis of European funds: the ERC.

In her book, Europe's New Scientific Elite, Barbara Hoenig (2017, 111) summarises the ERC as follows:

> "Institutionally, the ERC is the explicit invention of a supranational funding body mediating between the Commission and the scientific community, whereas previously researchers directly interacted with 'the Commission' when submitting proposals for [FPs]. With the ERC, a scientific–administrative elite's organization thus actively intervenes in research by autonomously defining criteria of 'excellence' decisive for resource distribution. The political goal of transnational cooperation between institutions is replaced by competition for scientific 'excellence' between single researchers (and their organizations)" (Hoenig 2017, 111).

Hoenig's definition acts as a window into current perceptions of the ERC and, by extension, of the notion of 'excellence'. Thus far, scholars who study the ERC, in addition to those who coordinate and participate in the projects (and those who do not or cannot participate), seem to be captivated by the funding programme. It has been characterised by ERC affiliate Thomas König (2017) as generally a 'success story' and by former ERC president and STS scholar Helga Nowotny (2013) as the academic 'gold standard'. Much of this praise and defining of 'excellence' is related specifically to the ERC's distinction from 'the political goal of transnational cooperation between institutions'—a defining quality of the SC pillar.

Indeed, at the European level of funding, the ERC has co-shaped several changes that set it apart from the other openly mission-oriented pillars of the FPs in major ways. For example, it represented a break with one of the traditional principles of EU support by funding individuals rather than organisations. Additionally, research areas in the ERC are not pre-defined, as they are in the SC pillar, and there is no focus on large international collaborative networks or multidisciplinary applicability. In short, the ERC came to represent a consecrated form of scientific 'excellence', free from the ambitions of both the EU and with no university politics involved or strings attached—as these grants were intended for single researchers as opposed to other FP grants that are awarded to collaborating universities.

Still, the funding programme has not escaped critical assessments of its long- and short-term implications. One such critique addresses the enduring impact of the concept of 'excellence' that has developed in conjuncture with the Research Council. When the ERC and the concept of 'excellence' began to dominate the European research landscape, everything that was not funded under the moniker of the ERC's 'excellence' was seemingly characterised as politically shaped *juste retour* or as distinctly *less than excellent* in the most basic sense of the concept.

In his 2015 article, Mitchel Young emphasises that excellence is most often employed to counter arguments for distributive justice. This is often how the concept is used when

politically discussing the FPs. Young quotes an EU official who worked on Horizon 2020 in DG Research at the time, saying:

> If you hear us speak of excellence here in Brussels, then it is typically this opposition between what is pre-allocation of the structural funds, where we say up front that x million euros will go to that and that country, and the absence of any *juste retour* or considerations like that in the framework programme; that is, on a very general level, what we mean by excellence. In a political sense, it is the negative definition that predominates: the avoidance of redistribution systems that support the catching up of weaker Member States or *juste retour*.

The official goes on to say, 'For us generally, what excellence means is that we fund the best, whatever way you want to look at it … We won't make any balances in terms of geography or university versus industry and so on.'

As I have pointed out, the ERC currently represents one of the three pillars that make up the most recent FPs; it is branded as the pillar for scientific excellence. However, the criteria for receiving funds under the other two FP pillars, Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges, also include the explicit criterion of 'excellence.' In a presentation released by the EC giving advice on how to win SC funds, the evaluation criteria are broken up into three parts: Excellence, Impact, and Implementation. The presentation states that 'only the very best are selected' (European Comission 2018). Ultimately, the Commission's ambition was to create a competitive 'European science' across the whole of the FPs. Still, while excellence in reference to the ERC is understood to mean meritocratic academic excellence, free from political considerations, balancing techniques, or *juste retour*, it is less clear what 'the best' or 'excellence' means when it comes to proposals under the other two H2020 pillars. In other words, while an evaluative ideal for excellence in the ERC may be subject to several contingent factors (e.g. disciplinary debates or academic and professional capital), the evaluation of excellence falls squarely within the jurisdiction of academic peers to decide.

In contrast, within the SC pillar, although the criterion for academic excellence is still a significant evaluative requirement for proposals, the concept takes on a less clearly defined and recognised meaning. Here, excellence moves beyond the familiar form of academic excellence to include additional criteria that require academics to display knowledge of EU-specific political and professional evaluative criteria relevant to SC projects. These additional requirements could include, for example, knowledge of how the EC evaluates impact or how to interpret certain informal requirements for interdisciplinarity or for a transnational consortium. Here, I problematise what excellence might look like in FP

projects if not solely defined by merit. In questioning these ambiguities, I lay the groundwork for exploring how researchers might navigate the various aspects of both acquiring FP SC funds and participating in these projects when the criteria for 'excellence' or 'the best' are shaped in part by EU political strategy.

I find it important to note that throughout my fieldwork, I had a difficult time making sense of the position of the ERC in Horizon 2020 as a whole. Although the Research Council is formally considered to fall under the umbrella of the FPs, the majority of the academics with whom I spoke regarded the ERC as a funding body separate from the FPs and emphasised the divergence in its perceived status among their academic peers. Even so, the FPs were rarely discussed without some mention of the ERC or of 'excellence'. The participants tended to measure and compare the prestige of the SC pillar against the ERC, perpetuating the notion that the ERC was the 'gold standard'. While winning Research Council funds seemed to evoke associations of prestige and achievement, winning funds in the other FP pillars did not attract the same kind of reverence from academics.

2.3 Social Science and Humanities in the EU Funding Landscape

As the first part of this chapter shows, the process of Europeanisation through the lens of EU research policy is well documented. However, little is known specifically about how social science and humanities (SSH) disciplines have been transformed and have collaborated with each other in relation to this politically fuelled form of Europeanisation in science. Furthermore, although social science knowledge has been closely entangled with European political integration since the 1950s, the social sciences play a comparatively minor role in EU research funding (Adler-Nissen and Kropp 2015; Kropp 2021).

Although the SSH disciplines have become increasingly institutionalised at the European level, both through European political initiatives and academic -based associations, there has been, and continues to be a uniquely national element to how SSH discipline's function, change, and collaborate with each other. Institutionally, the social sciences developed within state-sponsored modes of organisations, such as universities and government bureaus, — historically, both contributing to and critiquing nation-state governance. Simultaneously, the challenges of the states and the societies in which the social sciences were embedded became the issues and inquiries that were taken up and studied (Kropp 2021). And, although the scientific inquiries tends to be organised by discipline, these disciplines cluster into

national academic systems that are not only socio-historically relevant, but also carry long histories of geopolitical traditions, statuses, and associations (Heilbron 2014a; 2014b).

There were effectively no funds given to the social sciences in the initial FPs, and SSH disciplines were slowly incorporated into the FP funding scheme beginning with FP4 and continuing in subsequent FP's. Although only 1%–2% of the overall FP funds went to SSH research, the impact this made was considerable. For example, in the FPs between 1994 and 2006, approximately 580 SSH projects were funded. These ran for roughly three years, had an average of ten institutional partners, and might include over a hundred individual participants (Heilbron et al. 2018). Not only did FP policy and funding have a considerable impact on core areas of social science research (resulting in 5,000–10,000 books and 20,000–32,000 journal articles) but it also helped structure national social science policy across Europe (Kastrinos 2010). Additionally, the programmes contributed substantially to network building across Europe within the social sciences. During the earlier framework programmes, every project was required to include researchers from a minimum number of European countries, underlining their purpose as not just funding allocation programmes but as an EU-sponsored means for fuelling European collaborative networks. Some of the researchers with whom I spoke during the fieldwork were still working within networks they found as early as FP4.

However, during the negotiations leading to Horizon 2020, the small but secure position of SSH in the whole of the FPs was changing. According to sociologist Kristoffer Kropp (2021), the social sciences were assigned a subordinate role in Horizon 2020 and took an unceremonious blow when it came to the allocation of both space and funding in the upcoming programme. Despite the introduction of the SC pillar in the newest FP, 'social science researchers had to get involved if the field was to have a place in the coming FP' (Kropp 2021, 10)

Following pressure and demands from social sciences and humanities associations in 2011, the EU Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, confirmed that these efforts were not in vain and announced that one of the six challenges in the SC pillar of the FP would specifically address topics in the social sciences (Schindler-Daniels 2014). However, this new challenge problematically lumped together the social sciences and humanities with security studies, another struggle that was taken up by social science and humanities with security studies; this was another issue that was taken up by the SSH

associations. Finally, the challenge devoted to SSH and security studies was split into two challenges. Although it had the smallest budget of all the challenges, there was one societal challenge that was solely devoted to SSH: SC6 'Europe in a changing world: Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies' (see Figure 6).

Societal Challenges

Total funding for 2014-2020	€ million
Health, demographic change & wellbeing	7 472
Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine/maritime/inland water research and the bioeconomy	3 851
Secure, clean & efficient energy	5 931
Smart, green & integrated transport	6 339
Climate action, environment, resource efficiency & raw materials	3 081
Inclusive, innovative & reflective societies	1 310
Secure societies	1 695

Figure 6 Budget for Societal Challenges (EU Commission 2022)

Even with this overall win for SSH across Europe in securing a singular challenge in the upcoming FP, the social sciences and related SSH topics and approaches were considered a 'cross-cutting issue' in H2020, meaning that besides this designated SSH challenge, social scientists would need to continue advocating for their research so as to not be relegated to an instrumental role and creating 'solutions to problems defined by other scientific fields or societal interests, typically private enterprises or public institutions' (Kropp 2021: 12). In other words, although this kind of 'mainstreaming' at the EU level seemed positive, it also meant that the lines between disciplines would be less clear, and thus the rules about how the social sciences should be included and what the projected projects should look like would be less obvious.

Despite these challenges, the fact that organised social scientists were able to put pressure on the Commission in a unified push shows the degree to which the social sciences and SSH associations had organised at a European level. Still, while the SSH disciplines have become increasingly institutionalised across Europe, both through European political initiatives and academic-based associations, various inequalities between, *inter alia*, disciplines, countries, and languages are not only still present but also play a massive role in structuring how the Europeanisation of the social sciences has taken place and how it continues to do so. Inevitably, these tensions are present for the social scientists who participate in FP projects, necessarily coming together across nations, disciplines, and fields to navigate collaborations on large-scale EU-funded projects.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter provides a contextualisation of the European-specific funding landscape, both historically and in its contemporary form, with a focus on the EU FPs as politically instrumental means for EU research funding. To open the chapter, I briefly touch on the EU's shifting policy stance on science and research, highlighting the ERA as a quintessential turning point for the trajectory of the FPs and their social role and justification. In short, I underline how the EC positioned the ERA as an ambitious political narrative, guiding research and researchers towards a form of scientific European integration. In this way, the FPs were subsumed as a means for moving towards this goal. Consequently, understanding the politically shaped history around the FPs sets the stage for exploring how projects are formed and function under the contemporary FP, H2020.

In my discussion of H2020, I call attention to SC as the pillar of the FPs most subject to political shaping, thus embodying many of the characteristics of the ERA. These manifest themselves as large-scale transnational and multidisciplinary research consortia focused on finding 'European solutions' for pre-ordained, EC-defined societal challenges. In this chapter, I highlight a notably novel aspect of the SC H2020 pillar, namely, the EC's decision to reduce the bureaucratic and administrative burden on academics who apply and participate. Here, I question the ways in which the managerial and administrative shifts in H2020 may lead to key changes in the formation and unfolding of EU-funded collaborations for participating researchers.

Following this, I outline the contemporaneous development of the ERC and scientific 'excellence' in European research. In problematising a notion of excellence in the ERC that is less clear when used in relation to the SC pillar of H2020, I question what excellence might look like in FP projects if not solely defined by merit. This issue adds a dimension to my original research question(s), which centres on how researchers might navigate the various aspects of acquiring FP SC funds and participating in these projects when 'excellence' or 'the best' is represented ambiguously.

Finally, the chapter outlines the trajectory and representation of the social sciences and humanities in light of this landscape for research, which has been and continues to become institutionalised at the European level. The discussion concludes by pointing out that despite its form or organisation at the European level, the actualities of what it means to

collaborate across national borders and disciplines still bring geopolitically informed epistemic tensions that have yet to be unpacked or explored.

CHAPTER 3 POSITIONING THE DISSERTATION WITHIN EXISTING LITERATURE

This chapter positions the dissertation within four broadly defined and overlapping research areas: science and technology studies (STS), including feminist STS; Global South and post-colonial studies; the anthropology of policy and neo-liberalised academic governance; and social studies of science in Europe. In doing so, I identify the spaces in which this dissertation forges connections within and between these ongoing discussions and the contributions that my research can offer to these bodies of literature. I have chosen to bracket off and define these four fields as both a form of boundary work in my own research and, in some cases, as a form of critique—rendering specific gaps in these research areas and making their epistemic boundaries more visible. In other words, these fields constitute the boundaries around the literature I employ and how I make sense of it. However, it is worth noting that there are sometimes clear or polarising divides within these bracketed research areas—for example, between STS and feminist STS—which I will only briefly touch on as they come up in my own research. Finally, I have included Paper 1 in this chapter, written by myself, Aton Grau Larsen, and Kristoffer Kropp. This paper is an introduction to an edited volume entitled *The Social Sciences in A European Space–Changes in Institutions, Disciplines, and Ideas* that initiates a discussion about transformations in the social sciences in Europe and how these changes shape and become shaped by Europeanisation. For this dissertation, it serves as an expansion of the literature addressing the social sciences in Europe in relation to political institutions, and thus, I briefly introduce the paper by drawing out the themes with which I interact in my research.

3.1 STS and Feminist STS

Social studies of science and knowledge production have a long and fragmented developmental history and trajectory—one that necessitates a short introduction in order to aptly present my usage of science and technology studies (STS) and the gaps in the existing literature that this dissertation contributes towards filling. Whether it is called the 'turn to practice' or the 'reflexive turn', a major shift in knowledge culture has taken place over the last few decades. This shift represents a growing awareness of the ways in which 'mundane' and everyday scientific practices 'enable and constrain the bodies of knowledge that

scientists produce as well as the social worlds in which they work' (Camic, Gross, and Lamont 2011, 1). This paradigm shift has contributed to the development of the young and dynamic interdisciplinary field of STS.

STS is perhaps best described as having its origin in Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996) and his emphasis on 'the communal basis of the solidity of scientific knowledge, the perspectival nature of that knowledge, and the hands-on work needed to create it' (Sismondo 2008, 14). Kuhn's book essentially did the work of opening up the possibility of studying scientific knowledge production as a social activity. As Sheila Jasanoff (2013) writes , 'All STS work recognises science and technology as human and social enterprises, separated from other domains of modern labour by boundaries that are in important ways socially constructed, and hence partaking to greater and lesser degrees in the dominant myths and imaginaries of particular times, places, and cultural conditions'. In other words, STS and the reflexive turn to practice came to light with a serious consideration of the notion that *people do science*. As this dissertation continually reiterates, the social and material conditions for knowledge production and the everyday practices that constitute it in the field of STS are essential for studying and understanding scientific knowledge itself.

Until recently however, the relatively young field of STS has focused almost exclusively on the natural sciences, pure and applied, taking its point of departure in the early work of scholars such as Latour and Woolgar (1986; Latour 1987), Knorr-Cetina (1999), Stephen Turner (1994) and in edited volumes such as the 2007 *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies* (Hackett et al. 2007). During the 1970's and 1980's, these scholars were preoccupied with the *construction* of scientific knowledge; meaning the focus was less on demarcating what is science from what is non-science, and more-so on studying the acts and processes of demarcation as the object of study.

In their edited volume *Social Knowledge in the Making*, Camic, Gross, and Lamont (2011) take up and critique STS's exclusive focus on the natural sciences, arguing that the field has neglected to approach the social sciences in the same manner. As they state in their introduction, 'the topic of social knowledge making has for several generations led a fugitive and splintered existence on several disconnected islands of scholarship' (2011, 4). Many of these 'disconnected islands' have roots in various other pockets and clusters of research, namely fields such as the history of ideas, the history of philosophy, the history of anthropology, and, most prominently, the sociology of knowledge—a subfield specifically

dedicated to studying social knowledge making. Specifically, in reference to the sociology of knowledge, Camic, Gross, and Lamont refer to 'the subspeciality with this name that took shape in Europe in the 1920s', influencing the work of scholars such as Robert Merton ([1949]1968) and C. Wright Mills (1959) and, more recently, *inter alia*, Bourdieu (1975, 197; 1988b; 1988a), Steinmetz (2007), and both Gross (2008)(2008) and Lamont (1987).

While the field of STS seems to continually neglect the social sciences and social knowledge production as sites and topics for studying practices, it is also true that sociologists of knowledge have actively marginalised the study of the daily routines of knowledge production, evaluation, and usage—the very aspects of science with which STS is concerned. This side-lining fuels not only a deep epistemic divide between the two fields but also the idea that the everyday practices of social knowledge production are 'monolithic and enclosed' (Camic, Gross, and Lamont 2011, 8). In other words, neglecting to study the everyday actualities of social knowledge making as social and political power-laden activities contributes to the misconception of the activities of reading, thinking, and writing as a 'black box' of knowledge production.

This dissertation exists at the nexus of this epistemic divide and engages with an STS approach and the 'turn to practice' in studying the social and political processes of social science knowledge production, particularly in collaborative research. I take up and engage with work such as, *inter alia*, Becher and Trowler (2001), Bozeman et al. (2016), Lamont (2009), and Strathern (2007) in exploring the conditions and practices that contribute to the academic vocation and subsequent social scientific knowledge collaborations.

In contributing to closing this epistemic gap in STS, I also situate the dissertation within feminist STS—a different but often overlapping strand of critique of 'mainstream STS' (Lykke 2010) that extends past simply a lack of engagement with the social sciences. This strand, led by scholars engaging with feminist and critical anti-racist perspectives, calls for a reflexivity that acknowledges the 'self' and identity politics when doing science on science. Feminist epistemologists such as Linda Alcoff (2000; L. Alcoff et al. 2006), Lorraine Code (1995; 2006), Patricia Hill Collins (1990), Miranda Fricker (2009), Sandra Harding (1991; 2008), Emma Whelan (2001), and Maria do Mar Pereira (2019) still align with the claims of mainstream STS—namely, that discovering and granting normative status to scientific knowledge is a socio-political project shaped by the situated process of its production. Yet these scholars, among others, criticise mainstream STS for turning a blind eye to socio-

historically re-enforced power structures and global hegemony when it comes to the intersectional politics of self, such as gender, race, and nationality, particularly in terms of how these aspects shape the re-production of various forms of inequality in science and how scholars can both critique and participate in this. In illustrating this critique, Emma Whelan sardonically holds up Bruno Latour's position that '[s]cience is politics by other means' (Latour 1988, 229). She writes that 'many mainstream STS scholars seem to suggest that their work is immune from this charge and that they are politically disinterested investigators of science, while feminists are "just" politicos' (2001).

While the symbolic divide between these strands of STS is not inevitable, it is often (re)created and (re)enforced through a form of boundary work when it comes to what is considered acceptable and unacceptable science (Pereira 2017, 46), e.g. 'navel-gazing' as a critique of auto-ethnography. As Laura Nader writes, "These authors are keenly aware that boundary battles about what to include and exclude [in demarcations of scientificity] are often arbitrary, rarely neutral, and always powerful"(1996, 4). Acknowledging that this boundary work takes place in STS is a way to highlight that further work needs to be done in de-marginalising feminist STS. Thus, this dissertation also acts as a point of connection—engaging with mainstream STS while also considering the politics of the self as not simply an add-on but as genuinely shaping what Lorraine Code (Code 2006) calls the 'ecology of knowledge production'. In other words, taking seriously the local particularities and specificities of how structures and hegemonic relations of power manifest themselves and become articulated in ways of knowing and doing, which can also be mapped across wider heterogeneous epistemic terrains. This is most explicitly articulated in this dissertation by thinking through the lens of Maria do Mar Pereira's (2017) theory of epistemic status, which I will unpack in the next chapter. Further, while Institutional Ethnography (IE) is not often explicitly considered as part of the feminist STS field, the ontology and mode of enquiry include several features that run parallel to this strand of critique. IE was born from the women's movement, meaning that its methodology of working was originally intended to unearth the tacit underpinnings of gender by considering the grounded knowledge people have by virtue of their experience as knowledge of the local practices of everyday worlds (Smith 1997). In conducting IE fieldwork and analysis, particular attention is paid to how actual everyday experiences and practices can provide insights into various forms of larger

trans-local relations of power and how these manifests in, for example, collaborative knowledge work.

3.2 Global South and Post-Colonial Studies

Much contemporary post-colonial studies and research critically studying the politics of academic knowledge production in relation to the Global South takes its point of departure from a critique similar to feminist STS scholarship—namely the call to acknowledge the intersectional politics of the self in academic knowledge work and how these shape and transform the knowledge produced. I have chosen to separate my discussion and subsequent contribution to this broadly defined field of research from the previous section on feminist STS, since this dissertation speaks to post-colonial and anti-colonial work from a different critical vantage point.

Through the work of scholars such as Chakrabarty (2000), Connell (2007; 2011), (Connell et al. 2018), Go (2013) Marton Demeter (2020), Muñoz-García (2019; 2018), and Santos (2018), a growing body of research has problematised the ubiquitous Global North hegemony and Eurocentrism in the studying, theorising, and teaching of the social sciences. Raewyn Connell's (2007) book *Southern Theory* locates the Global South in Africa, Latin America, India, and Iran; Jean and John Comaroff's *Theory from the South* (2011) looks at Africa; and Ananya Roy's *New Geographies of Theory* (2009) at India. Their work, among that of others, is most often based on a post- or anti-colonial perspective, and rightfully identifies and critiques the pervasive ways in which global epistemic inequality is reproduced in contemporary university settings and epistemic cultures.

However, this dissertation contributes to these discussions by echoing and engaging with the work of a number of central and eastern European scholars such as (Olechnicka, Ploszaj, and Celinska-Janowicz 2019; Sabzalieva, Martinez, and Sá 2020; Kuzhabekova 2020; Müller 2020) who stress that associations between geopolitical and epistemic inequalities are not limited to the countries and regions with colonial pasts that are typically considered part of the Global South. In other words, within Europe, epistemic inequality is not absent; rather it takes on different forms and logics in regard to countries that have complicated

pasts—with eastern countries often including both colonisers and colonies, aggressors, and victims, and sometimes both at the same time[6].

Similar to how the Global North and South are not so much geographical regions as epistemic spaces, Martin Müller (2020) deems the 'Global East' a liminal space or 'black hole' created by the established binary way of thinking about global differences that has become the Global North and the Global South. The East is too rich to be a proper part of the South, but too poor to be a part of the North. It is too powerful to be the periphery, but too weak to be the centre. As he writes, 'this is no small black hole: it encompasses those societies that took part in what was the most momentous global experiment of the twentieth century: to create communism' (p. 736).

Because regions such as Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and parts of southern Europe are excluded from the category of the Global South (Boatcă 2015; Müller 2020), the extent to which relationships of epistemic inequality and power are woven into social science knowledge production and collaborations has yet to be unpacked. This is particularly true when it comes to the social sciences in these countries and regions (in comparison to many natural sciences) due to the effects of both the rise of the Soviet Union and its subsequent collapse. As the social sciences were assessed to have the potential to negatively influence the communist political movement, they were marginalised and monopolised by the political leadership, and scientific careers were more heavily influenced by political loyalty than scientific prestige. Later, even with the introduction of more scientific cooperation and collaboration with the West, the era had and continues to have a significant impact on how the social sciences function within CEE countries, as well as in collaborations with non-CEE countries (Kovács and Kutsar 2010).

This is not to say that the Global East has been ignored completely, especially when considered through a politico-economic lens. For example, Immanuel Wallerstein's (1976; 1997) three-tier world-systems theory is an instance of complicating the configuration of East, West, North, and South by the idea of an economic core, periphery, and semi-

[6] For example, Madina Tlostanova (2015a; 2015b) discusses this dual role for the case of Russia

periphery. Still, post-Soviet eastern Europe and certain regions and countries in southern Europe have not been examined with the same nuance as that of the North–South binary when it comes to epistemic inequalities and collaborative knowledge production. Whether the 'Global East' should be incorporated into studies of global epistemic inequalities through the lens of the Global South, or whether these countries and regions should be taken up using different language and concepts is still a question for debate.

This dissertation contributes to the understudied area in the literature that explores epistemic inequalities within Europe and how social science knowledge continues to function within broader socio-historical and geopolitical relations of power, (re)producing relatively well-established geographic asymmetries within Europe. In particular, these discussions are taken up in Paper 4, where my co-authors and I look at how geo-epistemic inequalities within Europe shape the knowledge produced in transnational European social science collaborations.

3.3 The Anthropology of Policy and Neoliberal Academic Governance

As I unpack my usage of Transnational Institutional Ethnography in the following sections, it will become clearer how running through this dissertation is a red thread that advocates approaching FP participants and their work practices as organised from multiple vantage points. This means seeing their work as simultaneously coordinated by everyday material settings (including technologies of university governance) in concert with trans-local and often transnational forms of governance, policy, and social organisation. Therefore, I find it necessary to position the dissertation within the literature studying changes in policy and research governance from an anthropological perspective, both in relation to the academic vocation and the neo-liberalised knowledge economy.

The relatively new field of the anthropology of policy recognises policy as a significant organising concept in Western societies and serves as a continuation of the anthropological work on organisations initiated in the 1980s by the British Association for Social Anthropology in Policy and Practice (Shore and Wright 2003). The field's foundation rests on the premise that policy at multiple administrative and political levels has become one of the most significant organisers of Western and international governance, yet it has scarcely been analysed by anthropologists, while other disciplines and fields frequently treat policy

as if it were politically and ideologically neutral or apparent. In studying policy, anthropologists ask how policies 'work' as instruments of governance and thus consider how policy is increasingly being repackaged, codified, and referred to by workers and managers as guidelines that legitimate and organise their work and consciousness around work practices (Shore and Wright 2003, 4). Here, I am particularly interested in the subset of this field of research that deals with the changing governance of academics, universities, and research and how these people, places, and practices of knowledge production are politically and administratively organised.

When the idea of academia as a vocation is invoked, it is usually accompanied by Max Weber's (1958) classic lecture(s) on science as a vocation. However, while Weber's work is still relevant, the academic vocation has gone through a marked transformation, both in terms of what academics' everyday work looks like and in its relationship to governance, political action, and expectations for innovation. Specifically, when it comes to the FPs, many participants are situated within or affiliated with some form of nationally based university. This means that they are subject to persistent and pervasive discourses positioning universities as drivers of the global knowledge economy. Relatedly, neoliberal technologies of administration and management have become instrumental in the way universities and other institutions of higher education have 'defined and justified their existence' (Olssen and Peters 2005) and thus how academics understand and practise the scientific vocation.

Deem (1998; 2003), Deem and Brehony (2005), and Deem et al. (2008) discuss these technologies of power and management in light of transformations in policies in higher education and research, as well as more specific organisational regimes in individual institutions. Deem terms these management reforms in knowledge work 'new managerialism'—an ideologically steered managerial concept akin to New Public Management (NPM). This form of cementing power and dominance in university settings includes techniques such as fostering competition between academics, the marketisation of public sector services, and the monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness through the measurement of outcomes and individual staff performance.

Susan Wright, in collaboration with Cris Shore (1999), discusses these competition-fostering measuring systems as a constitutive example of 'audit culture', in which 'the techniques and values of accountancy have become a central organising principle in the governance and

management of human conduct'. These kinds of performance indicators and audit technologies—which are meant to measure and standardise—proliferate a reliance on illusory meritocratic evaluations and often work to actively shape aspects of everyday academic work such as teaching strategies, criteria for promotion, and publishing research (Morley 2003; van den Brink and Benschop 2012). As Davies and Bansel (2010) write, 'academic subjects are re-shaped and re-shape themselves, singly and collectively, through technologies of management and self-management, including the technology of audit.'

Notably, although the genre of new managerialism is primarily discussed in relation to universities and institutions of higher education, this approach to managing knowledge work is also increasingly present when it comes to managing and administering science funding that comes from outside the university structure. This was clearest during my fieldwork after interviewing a number of project coordinators and project managers participating in Horizon 2020 who brought up the concept of *trust* to describe both how they chose collaborative partners and their relationship to the Project Officer representing the EC. As I touched on in the previous chapter with reflections from a seasoned project manager, the concept of trust was most often used when there was the impression of more freedom and autonomy from the Commission. This was accompanied by a sharp uptick in accountability, quantification of knowledge products, and monitoring if consortia stuck to the deliverables promised in the application. Again, echoing Young (2015), the acceptance of more accountability as a prerequisite for greater autonomy, as embodied in trust, is a sign of an audit culture that is deeply rooted in the NPM narrative; it is a management design that not only thrives on trust but necessitates it (Power 1999, 126). For example, even before academics apply to a call for projects, the EC is obliged to trust that certifying, labelling, and benchmarking quality—giving the impression that excellence is quantitatively and ubiquitously recognisable—will also encourage competition between consortia to be 'the best'.

This anthropological approach to policy is a theme throughout the dissertation, but especially in relation to how different forms of policy, texts, and criteria pervasively organise and govern not only the everyday practices of academic work but also consciousness around the quality of this work. This literature, used in concert with that of Institutional Ethnography (IE), which I discuss in the following chapters, helped to inform my analysis of the FPs as a transnational institution in Paper 2. Through an approach to policies and

texts as technologies that coordinate, inform, and quantify work practices, I was able to argue for the FPs as an institution that shaped ways of knowing and doing in EU-funded social science collaborations. Furthermore, this field of literature also plays a role in Paper 3 in my conceptualisation of 'navigational work' as work that allows academics to bend or navigate around these audit technologies, thus shaping their relationship to both their university context and the FP project.

3.4 The Social Sciences in Europe in Relation to Political Institutions

The last of the four broadly defined fields to which this dissertation speaks touches on the social sciences as they relate to and are entangled with political processes and institutions in Europe. The existing literature discussing this field is situated primarily between the fields of social studies of science and higher education and EU studies, engaging from the perspectives of the sociology of science and political science. Within this research area, scholars such as Boncourt (2017), Deem (2006), Evans and Nixon (2015), Fleck and Hönig(2014), Gengnagel et al. (2019), Georgakakis and Weisbein (2010), Geuna (2001), Kastrinos (2010), Kauppi (2018), Kropp (2018), Louvel (2010), Ryan (2015), and Wedlin and Nedeva (2015) argue and expand on the notion that social research and higher education are shaping and being shaped by the multifaced processes of Europeanisation. Many of these discussions are addressed in Paper 1 of this dissertation; thus, I will engage with this paper in my discussion of the literature.

As an entry point into this broadly defined field, I will highlight the work of Johan Heilbron (2014a; 2014b; Heilbron et al. 2008; Heilbron et al. 2018) who hypothesizes an emerging transnational European field in the social and human sciences, "largely created from above through European funding schemes, [and] structured by a growing number of programs, organizations, and more loosely organized networks" (Heilbron 2014a, 70). His hypothesis draws on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of fields (1993; 1977; 1988; 2016), and offers an approach to understanding European social science knowledge production as a transnational, semi-autonomous social sphere with its own self-governing ways of being and doing, gradually being institutionalized, and professionalized at the European level (Albert and Kleinman 2011; Büttner et al. 2015). Notably, Bourdieu's theory of fields tends to be the dominant theoretical approach in the work that studies Europeanisation of the social sciences and it is

featured in Paper 1 which directly follows this section. In chapter 4, I will briefly discuss the influence that Bourdieu has had on this work and ultimately my reasons for not theoretically relying on his theory of fields for this dissertation.

This dissertation speaks to two different gaps within the existing literature exploring this relationship between the social sciences in Europe and European political institutions—a methodological gap and an empirical gap. First, methodologically, I address the neglect for exploring the everyday practices of EU funded and facilitated transnational collaboration and network building as form of Europeanisation.

Indeed, the relationship between Europeanisation and the social sciences is well studied in the field of sociology of knowledge; it is generally recognized that 'scientific knowledge is neither a mere reflection of society nor the product of a detached and disinterested accumulative development' (Adler-Nissen and Kropp 2015). However, to date, this relationship is almost exclusively approached from 'above', analysed through political processes (ERA, ERC, etc.) or aspects of EU funding distribution and policy or disciplinary representation with little emphasis on the relationships and practices of the scholars themselves. In other words, contrary to the approach in STS, this field is most often studied through its products rather than its practices.

A similar assessment can be made regarding how political science and EU studies scholars study and write about the processes of Europeanisation—both on its own and in concert with the social sciences. Within EU studies, there has been a more general political science conceptualisation of Europeanisation with scholars, for example, the work of Featherstone and Radaelli (2003) and Schimmelfennig (2003; 2012). Additionally, scholars such as Adler-Nissen and Kropp (2015), Georgakakis and Weisbein (2010), Lynggaard et al. (2015), Manners (2015), and Rosamond (2007) have begun to reflect more systematically on their own role in the production of knowledge about the EU and, conversely, the role that EU integration has in shaping social science. Yet, as Adler-Nissen (2016) points out, although there have been a number of approaches to studying EU integration, these have largely focused on the institutional and regulatory dimensions of the EU system—leaving the everyday routines and intricacies of the people and practices that constitute Europeanisation understudied. Fligstein (2008) describes these experiences of 'doing' Europeanisation, writing '[they] have ended up affecting how people think of themselves and others […] The overall effect of these interactions is to change the identity of organisations and individuals.

People who travel and work across borders do not have just national identities but come to see themselves as Europeans.' In other words, Europeanisation is not simply a top-down monolithic process but a living, multifaceted process of bricolage that should be studied as such.

The second gap within this research area to which this dissertation speaks is one created by the disproportionate amount of research focused on the ERC and the construction of 'excellence' within Europe. Although more funding is allotted to the SC pillar of Horizon 2020 than the ERC pillar, the latter continues to be the main focal point for scholars and research exploring EU funding structures and EU research. The work of scholars such as Bautista-Puig et al. (2019), Cruz-Castro et al. (2016), Fleck and Hönig (2014), Gengnagel et al. (2019), Hoenig (2017), König (2015; 2017), and Luukkonen (2014) has analysed, *inter alia*, topics such as the formulation of the ERC, the CVs of recipients, and its geographic distribution and financial breakdown. This preoccupation with the ERC is, in part, due to the prestige that this funding scheme holds among academics. In a climate for academia that is widely recognised to be constricting due to organisational regimes and administrative procedures, the large sums of money awarded to individual scholars represent not only a degree of academic autonomy but also a pan-European-level stamp of meritocratic 'excellence'.

By contrast, the less clearly branded SC pillar has a different reputation—hinging less on the academic merit of individual researchers and more on the infrastructure, academic capital, and knowledge available to a given coordinator and or consortium in order to successfully navigate the cumulative and politically laden funding criteria. Thus, as I discuss in Paper 3, positioned later in the dissertation, scholars are unequally positioned when it comes to learning and practicing the knowledge required to successfully navigate this funding scheme. Consequently, the question of why critical explorations of the FPs are seemingly absent in this literature compared to the dense scholarship on the ERC naturally arises. This is especially relevant when considering the numerous careers and research centres that have been sustained by coordinating and collaborating on non-ERC FP projects for decades—rotating the PI position among different members of a research network and employing full-time project managers to help secure FP grants. This dissertation helps to address this gap in the scholarship studying EU-funded research by shining a critical light on how academics navigate the work of winning funds and collaborating within these non-ERC projects.

PAPER 1 THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN A EUROPEAN SPACE – CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONS, DISCIPLINES, AND IDEAS

This paper is an introduction to an edited volume titled *The Social Sciences in A European Space–Changes in Institutions, Disciplines, and Ideas* and written together with co-editors Kristoffer Kropp and Anton Grau Larsen. The chapter functions as an extension of the preceding introduction to the broadly defined field of literature dealing with the social sciences in relation to political institutions. The paper addresses sub-question 1 of the research questions that frame the dissertation through an introductory overview of the social sciences in a European space and the numerous and transformative facets of Europeanisation that have shaped the related institutions, disciplines, and practices of producing social science.

Within the dissertation, this introduction represents a somewhat distinct style of paper when compared to the other three papers I have included. It is written in a style customary for a book introduction—using broad statements to address the transforming state of the social sciences and employing a somewhat monolithic socio-historical lens. i.e., it does not shine a particularly bright light on people and practices in relation to these processes and thus could seem misaligned with my approach in this dissertation.

Rather than serving as a standard analytical paper, this paper primarily acts as a state of the art for the field—giving critical insight into how this field of scholarship currently looks and setting a forward-looking research agenda for the epistemic community it engages with. In it, we map out the landscape for changing EU research and Europeanisation in the social sciences. The chapter details how Europeanisation looks in areas of SSH that I do not address in my ethnographic work.

Critically, the content included in this paper introducing the work of scholars at the forefront of this research field, further emphasising my critique of the field it engages with. The introduction, and much of the work it serves to introduce, mainly approaches the relationship between the social sciences in Europe and European political institutions from 'above' — through its products rather than its practices. In this way, the gap in the literature that my own ethnographic research contributes to filling becomes even more visible.

Conclusion

This chapter works to position this dissertation within four broadly defined and overlapping research areas—contributing to these scholarly discussions, addressing gaps in the literature, and drawing connections between them. In outlining my critique of 'mainstream STS', I point out that the STS turn to practice effectively overlooks studies of the social sciences. I also draw a connection in my work between 'mainstream STS' the related subfield of feminist STS, aligning my research approach with the work of scholars reflexively acknowledging the 'self' and intersectional identity-politics when doing science on science. I then move to a discussion and critique of Global South and post-colonial studies, emphasizing the gap in this literature that misses an engagement with the global East and regions within Europe where geopolitical and epistemic inequalities go understudied—positioning this dissertation in dialogue with critics of this gap. Following this I briefly outline and position my research within the field of anthropology of policy. Specifically, I highlight this fields engagement with academia as a vocation and neoliberal technologies of administration and management have become instrumental in the way that academics engage with universities and other institutions of higher education. Finally, in positioning this dissertation within the literature of the social studies of science in relation to Europe, I point out two gaps my research contributes to filling. First, analogous to my critique of STS, I contribute to this field by working with ethnographic methods—focusing on scholarly experiences and practices. This is in contrast to much of the literature in social studies of science and EU studies which takes a macro, perspective 'from above.' Second, I point out the disproportionate amount of scholarly work conducted about the ERC and contribute to this research field by producing sorely needed knowledge about how the SC pillar of the FPs functions and subsequently shapes research and research practices.

I conclude this chapter with Paper 1 of the dissertation, which functions as an extension of the broadly defined field of social studies of science in relation to Europe. The paper addresses sub-question 1, posed in the introduction, which asks: *What does Europeanisation look like in relation to the social sciences in Europe and the institutions that house and govern them?* This is done through a discussion about the transformations in the social sciences in Europe and how these changes shape and become shaped by Europeanisation.

CHAPTER 4 ONTOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

This chapter introduces the ontological and epistemological positioning for this dissertation as well as concepts that have aided in the development and analysis of my empirical material. I begin by discussing Institutional Ethnography (IE) not specifically as a theory but rather as an ontological mode of inquiry. IE functioned as my primary lens when it came to formulating and approaching my research field, guiding how I produced and analysed data. Although IE as a sociological approach also includes methodological implications, I will separate my discussion of these and discuss my usage of the methods in IE in Chapter 5. After I introduce the ontological positioning of IE, I will move towards discussing how Maria do Mar Pereira theorises epistemic status and the theory's relationship with geo-epistemic terrains. This theory plays a large role in this dissertation, not as a top–down theoretical approach but as a situated tool for unpacking interactions and practices in the light of global socio-historically re-produced hegemonic relations. Finally, I will introduce my own concept of navigational work that I employed in Paper 3.

4.1 Institutional Ethnography—an unconventional mode of inquiry

When I began this project, the idea of working with IE was unconventional for a several reasons. As I mention in the previous chapter in section 3.4, the majority of scholars who study the social sciences in relation to the EU and Europe do so by taking up Pierre Bourdieu's field theoretical approach. The hypothesis among sociologists in this field is that European social science knowledge can be considered a Bourdieusian field, which is gradually constructed as a semi-autonomous social sphere with its own manners of lawfulness and organized around various spaces of social struggle for symbolic resources—something Bourdieu terms 'capital'.

As I continued to read a number of articles discussing this field, many of which are cited in Paper 1 of this dissertation, I recognised that the analyses were not focused on people and practices and, as a result, I came away still wondering what participating in the FP's actually looked and felt like. Some papers depicted what was being called Europeanisation through *inter alia,* associations or journals, but few works described the details about how Europeanisation was 'done' or 'performed' when it came to scientific collaborations. I was

left wondering how these FP consortia were put together across Europe and how researchers learned what it entailed to participate in them. How did participants learn to what it meant to collaborate across disciplines and countries in these projects? How did they learn what to do and not to do when it came to interacting with the commission? Most importantly, I was unsure if I was even asking relevant questions. And, while it was helpful to have a theoretical overview of a European field of social sciences, seen through the lens of Bourdieu's field theory, I could not answer my questions by entering into interviews assuming that participants were 'struggling over academic capital', or that these struggles might amount to what was being dubbed Europeanisation[7].

I found the pragmatic and grounded approach that I sought out in Institutional Ethnography, a 'new sociology' or a new 'ontology of the social' created by sociologist Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990, 2005, 2006) as a 'method of inquiry into the social that begins and always stays with actual people and their doings'(D. E. Smith and Griffith 2022, 3). IE was formulated by Smith as a result of her search for a feminist research strategy that could be useful to other feminist activists and that is based in the everyday/every night[8] lives and experiences of actual people and the issues they raised[9]. She grew critical of other forms of pre-established sociology and sociological theory and the way these approaches tended to impose forms of theoretical organisation that not only situate the sociologist as an actor outside of these conceptual forms but also renders the everyday knower invisible—thereby objectifying people, their knowledge and their experiences (D. E. Smith 2005, 53). Smith agreed with Marx and Engels(1973, 14; 1976, 473) in their critique that standard qualitative methods in sociology employ objectifying language practices that displace people with concepts. Smith's central argument asserts that *knowing* is always a situated and social act

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[7] I do not use field theory when it comes to my ethnographic work because I think, for ethnographic purposes, the concepts such as habitus and capital are not as helpful in framing an inquiry as IE can be. That said, the concept of academic capital has helped throughout the discussions of how academics navigate the EU research landscape.

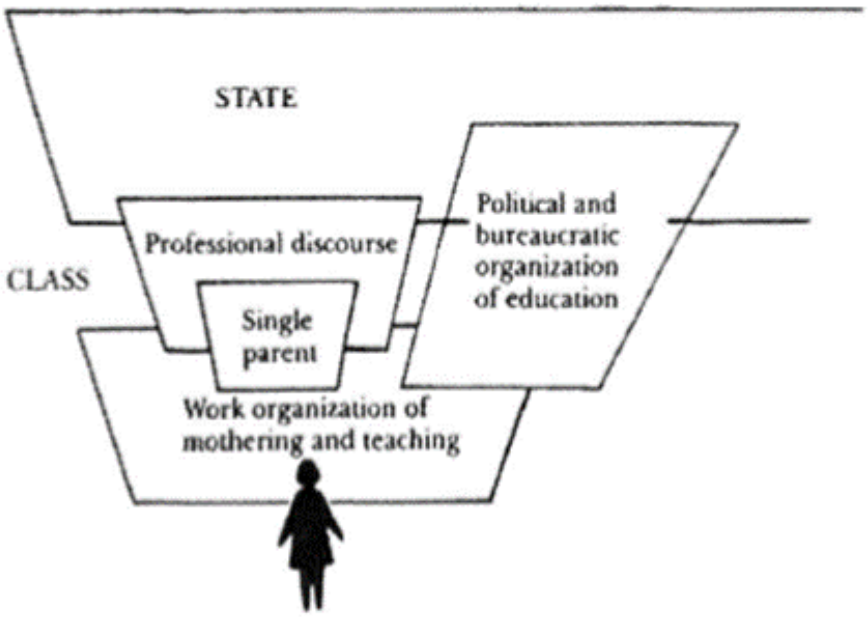
[8] Starting from the 'every day *and* every night lives of people alludes to the fact that interactions with an institution, and the ways an institution can coordinate practices and consciousness, do not simply begin and end when people, for example, arrive or depart from work.

[9] IE was originally formulated by Smith as 'A Sociology for Women.' She later rephrased the approach to be called 'A Sociology for People,' in (2005) because the approach "does not identify a position or a category of position, gender, class, or race within the society, but it does establish as a subject position for institutional ethnography as a method of inquiry, a site for the knower that is open to anyone" (2005, 10).

and the systematic movement from *knowing* to *knowledge* is characteristic of the tendency in much of sociology to objectify subjects as knowers and position knowledge as independent of the presence and activities of subjects.

The intention with IE is for researchers to start from and stay with the particularities and actualities that exist around them. However, this is not to say that IE researchers are only interested in understanding the local. Rather, the social is understood to mean people's activities as they are coordinated with others. Thus, people's everyday activities and practices are studied in order to discover and make visible how and where their lives and activities are 'hooked into' and organised by trans-local relations of governance beyond their own experience and understanding. Smith writes that the project of IE "is to extend people's ordinary good knowledge of how things are put together in our everyday lives to dimensions of the social that transcend the local[…]" (Smith 2006, 2).

To visually represent IE's approach to the local/trans-local, a 'hero diagram' is used, that is meant to depict the vantage point of people and the forms of trans-local coordination that enter into their lives. As shown in figure 7, Dorothy Smith's original diagram (2006, 3), depicts a simplified picture of the different ruling relations and discourses that mediate the everyday life of a single parent. Here, the "small hero, active in the work of mothering as a



A Woman's Standpoint: Single Parenthood and Educational Institutions

Figure 7; Smith 2006, 3 'Small hero' figure

single parent, is implicated thereby in a complex of relations beyond her view". However, the point of such a diagram is not to show a top-down directionality or *how* these forms of coordination organise the social. Rather, the diagram is used as a way to visually depict 'the strange forms of power that are at once present and absent in the everyday' (Smith 2005, 41). In my own version of this diagram, which I have included at the start of this dissertation and again in my methods chapter, I adapt Smith's original to help me visualise how participation in the FP's can look for academics[10]. As an IE researcher, I take up my inquiry from the site of the everyday work located at a university setting or research centre— looking up through the complex of ruling relations and coordination from this standpoint. Though it is impossible to avoid preconceptions and the introduction of some concepts when producing and analysing data, it is the job of an institutional ethnographer to avoid overlaying grand all-encompassing theory and systematised procedures for building generalised abstractions out of accounts as they are experienced, spoken, and written (D. E. Smith and Griffith 2022, 4). For this dissertation, instead of assuming Europeanisation takes place with participation in FP projects, I asked how, and in what ways academics were participating and navigating these collaborations. IE then became a way to study how the actualities of this work are 'put together' and socially organised from the vantage point of the academics who participate.

4.1.1 Taking a Standpoint Within an Institution

In practice, IE is best described as ethnography of complex institutionalised social relations, rather than ethnography of specific companies, organisations, or sectors. Thus, it is important to note here that a*n 'institution' is not the object of study but merely a well framed, empirical heuristic tool that integrates complexes of relations that are present and observable through discourses and organisations focused on function*. Smith writes that, "[institutions] come into view only partially as they are explored from the standpoint of people who in one way or another are involved in them. Indeed inquiry may reach into intersections or interconnections of more than one functional complex or of the more

[10] Although I take up Smith's tool of the 'small hero' diagram, I tend to steer clear of the 'hero' nomenclature, as I feel that it can potentially feed into the misconception that IE glorifies standpoint data as ultimately true and normatively good—which is a decidedly wrong usage of the notion of standpoint.

inclusive ruling relations" (Smith, 2005, 68). For example, in my own version of Smiths 'hero diagram' (Introduction), it is clear that academics are not singularly interacting with and being coordinated by *either* their university *or* the FP project that they are participating in. This means that, although I am particularly interested in FP project research, 'looking up' from the standpoint of participating academics is to also acknowledge how other institutions e.g., a university context, can co-shape a researcher's consciousness around their work, including their participation in the FP project. This notion that academics are coordinated by multiple institutional belongings is addressed more thoroughly in Paper 2.

Taking a standpoint in IE allows for the researcher to maintain an anchored relationship with participants and their work practices—even when the investigation moves upward towards relations that transcend and inform these practices. Interestingly, many readers of Dorothy Smith's usage of standpoint (including me, in earlier readings of her work) have conflated her meaning of standpoint with Sandra Harding's (1986) usage of feminist standpoint theory. In fact, Harding's introduction of feminist standpoint theory was not proposed as a new theoretical approach, but rather as a tool to analyse both the merits and problems of contemporary feminist theory, which sought to locate knowledge and inquiry in women's experiences. Although IE at its core was created as a sociology associated with the women's movement and as a feminist research approach starting from women's experience, it bears little similarity to what is now associated with feminist standpoint theory. Smith has clarified that the women's movement and its methodology of working from experience was important in its time for unearthing the tacit underpinnings of gender. However, she writes, "[in current times,] when experience is summoned by what women can find they have in common, it is being translated into the universalizing discourse of a movement making political claims across a variety of fronts. It has seemed to me that in the women's movement, some women have wanted to be able to go directly from what we know by virtue of how we participate in social relations to claims to knowledge at the level of a universalizing discourse" (Smith 1997, 392).

By contrast, taking a standpoint in IE helps the researcher to locate a starting point for their inquiry and to continually return to the actualities and local particularities of the everyday/everynight worlds. As I write in Paper 2: "Analysing standpoint material specifically calls for the lack of privileging or valorising informant knowledge, treating it as ultimately empirical. Informants are considered 'experts' on their daily activity and work

practices, however their knowledge is explored not as a stable truth, but for its social constructions and embedded contradictions (Rankin 2017)" (Fishberg 2022). In other words, delineating a standpoint is not about grouping and universalising experiences. Rather, it is about locating a vantage point within a 'complex of relations focused on function' from which a researcher can explore how work is 'put-together. "In doing this, IE recognizes and takes seriously the real (not just theorized) social organization of people's lives by 'the strange forms of power that are at once present and absent in the everyday' (Smith 2005, p. 41). This means, an inquiry in IE is intended for making visible, de-naturalizing and, de-neutralizing taken-for-granted forms of social organization, hierarchies, and objectified structures" (Fishberg, 2022).

I struggled with taking a standpoint during this project, even when I considered it to simply be a vantage point to begin my inquiry from. Ultimately, I chose to take a 'loose standpoint'—starting and analysing from the broad vantage point of academics participating in FP SC research projects. I discuss this struggle in paper 2, detailing the difficulties I faced in trying to delineate a standpoint when working with a transnational institution.

4.1.2 Concepts Rather than Theory - Discourse, Texts, and Work

While grand theories are seen as an imposition to understanding how institutional life is socially organised, concepts in IE can be helpful in unpacking the social as practices. Concepts are simply used to bring into focus the aspects of people's doings that we might not otherwise be aware of or recognise as significant for organising their social world (D. E. Smith and Griffith 2022, 29). I found that the concepts of ***discourse***, ***texts***, and ***work*** were helpful during fieldwork and analysis.

Discourse, according to Smith and Griffith (2022, 33), can be defined as "a complex of what those involved in the field write, read, talk about, present at conference, and so on, as well, of course, as the concepts and terms we have become accustomed to using." While the concept of discourse in IE builds on Foucault's (1972, 41) account of discourse, Smith's approach differs with regard to the emergence of discursive objects that operate in universalising or standardising ways. Where Foucault's attention to objects of discourse is stationed at the level of statements and concepts, Smith directs attention to how people actively take up and engage in discourses—specifically the practices ordered by discursive

language, and how discourses are produced and reproduced by people situated in their local actualities (D. E. Smith 1999).

A focus on how discourses are acted on and reproduced directs our ethnographic attention to how and when specific concepts that originate in discourse can enter into the real textual and social organisation of institutional practices. An example of this during my fieldwork was the extensive presence of 'internationalisation discourse.' This discourse entered into talk and texts for participants as a way to objectify and neutralise the relationship between global geopolitical inequality and epistemic inequality that is taken for granted when people speak about 'good science' and what it means to do good science.

During an interview, one researcher commented critically regarding colleagues at her university who do not engage internationally or with EU-projects. She said:

> "[It's] almost like not natural, because [researchers] know it has added value, that it's easier to publish, to get points. Internationalization is something that seems as natural as air to [me], but some people are not interested in it. It seems to me that this is the only way we can reform science and society, transferring knowledge, learning and so on, which goes hand in hand with doing this international research. We have plenty of international students. We teach in English, from BA until the PhD. [...] Providing internationalization is one of the major indicators of success."

This researcher actively defines what it means to be international as not only to mean teaching in English, but also as an indicator of success for the university. It is a discourse that does not exist somewhere 'out there' on its own. It is instead actively reproduced by people who are situated in university contexts in specific and unique ways, shaping aspects of their work such as where they publish, their language of publication, and their teaching strategies. This concept of discourse comes up again in section 6.1.1, where I discuss how EU excellence discourse is invoked by participants, influencing for example how consortia are formulated or project work is designed and carried out.

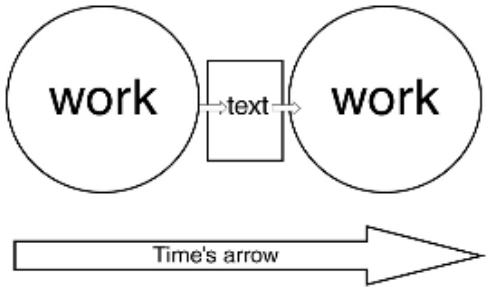


Figure 8: (Smith and Griffith 2022, 52)

Recognising certain discourses can be slippery to grasp when the ethnographer is a partial insider in the field that they are investigating. This was the case in this project, as I studied academic work whilst also participating in it. I detail this further when I discuss my positionality in section 5.3. I am often exposed to a similar discourse in my everyday work,

making it easier to take for granted the discourse that a participant may be referring to or invoking.

Texts act as another helpful conceptual tool in IE. While various postmodernists and discursive theorists might define texts as "simply assemblages of discourse that are combined together to produce a dominant meaning" (Stevenson 2006), texts take on a more central role in IE, which defines them as "definite forms of words, numbers, or images that exist in a materially replicable form" (Smith 2001, 164). Through the exploration of institutional complexes from the standpoint of lived experiences and work practices, a world of language is made tangible through texts of numerous mediums and technologies. As a politico-bureaucratic technology, texts provide a method for standardizing the appearance of words, numbers, and images in multiple local sites. Texts provide recognisability to people's doings as organizational or institutional and describes their coordination across multiple local settings and times (Smith 2001, 160). Text provides a medium for institutional ideology and discourses to exist tangibly beyond particular times and places—hooking up people's practices with the practices of others and with the larger directional focus of an institution. The text-reader conversation is an active one, where texts are seen as 'activated' by people and taken up in some way—but not always as the maker or writer intended (McCoy 1995). However, unlike other conversations, the majority of text-reader conversations are not observable and do not continue to build and take shape between both parties as the conversation goes on and the text remains the same no matter how many times it is read (D. E. Smith 2005, 104).

Smith's conceptualisation of texts is similar to how Bruno Latour (1987; 2007) describes the relationship between texts, people, and their practices. Latour classified texts as a type of "immutable mobiles," meaning they can be relatively stable and constant whilst also becoming mobile in the sense that their content can travel unchangeably from the time and place where they were originally created. However, there are some points of distinction between Smith and Latour when it comes to dealing with texts. As Del Rosso and Esala (2015) point out, "textual realities have organizational histories. They are constructed things that circulate from one site of claims-making to another." In Latour's work, he is primarily focused on tracing or following texts through their organisational histories as links in chains of representation, which are circulating sets of texts that contain the representations that constitute reality and link up sites of social activity. While Smith *is* interested in following

texts and how they coordinate reality, the focus is less on the texts themselves or the construction of intertextuality realities. In IE, following texts is done to discover how texts coordinate people's realities and actions in relation to trans-local forms of power.

As I have written in Paper 2: "By paying attention to how and when texts are consulted and invoked by people, institutional ethnographers can discover how individuals interact with and organize around discursive artifacts which mediate actions and ideology. Texts in their many forms (pictures, symbols, words etc. electronic and otherwise), then become a window into how trans locally formulated concepts and ideology permeate into everyday life" (Fishberg 2022). In other words, studying texts provides a window into how various 'ways of knowing and doing' that are present in language and discourses can shift from the perspective of the specific individuals or groups to a 'view from nowhere', providing the terms under which practices become institutionally accountable (D. E. Smith 2006, 224). Such is the case with many policy and bureaucratic strategies that, when reinterpreted, recontextualised, and institutionalised, become specific guidelines, standards, and goals that organise and coordinate around how people work. Texts conceptualised in this way are useful in the field of anthropology of policy, which I have outlined in the previous chapter.

Throughout this research, I found that the most tangible example of texts coordinating practices was in the FP project grant agreements (GA)'s made with the commission. These contracts not only represent reinterpreted and recontextualised aspects of political strategies such as those associated with the EU policy for fostering a European Research Area (ERA), but also directly coordinate research practices throughout an entire FP project. The grant agreement conceptualised as an important coordinating text is further discussed in Paper 2.

Finally, ***work*** is an important concept in IE that has significance for my approach to this research. Learning about how people use and incorporate references to texts as a part of their work provides instances for discovering how work practices are hooked into work-text-work sequences, like figure 6 illustrates above. Further, institutional discourse and texts tend to highlight those aspects of people's work that are accountable within institutionally delineated boundaries. For example, within new managerialism and audit culture, the work that *counts* in a higher education institution is often the work that can be *counted*—representing quantifiable work with tangible results and value in the global knowledge economy and the institutional discourses around academic success (Wright 2014).

In IE, rather than conceptualising work as simply paid labour that can be measured in its productivity, work is conceptualised in a 'generous sense'. This means work extends to anything intentionally done by people that takes time and effort, using any tools or means that they have at their disposal (Smith 2005, p. 151). This kind of generous conception of work appears to have taken root in Smith's extensive reading of Marx and her criticality towards the value of work and its invisibility from the vantage point of those in power, particularly within a capitalist mode of production (D. E. Smith 1987, chap. 2). However, Smith's notion of work in a generous sense fully materialises through her thinking with a feminist group originating in the women's movement called Wages for Housework. In short, the group put forward the notion that housewives do work that sustains and makes possible the paid work in society that, in turn, sustains capitalism (D. E. Smith 1987, 165)[11].

Thinking about work in this way gives ethnographers the means to acknowledge the many activities people do which cannot be quantified or recognized and are not formalized in institutionalized language (Smith 2005, p. 152). For example, the work of preparing notes for lectures, commuting to an office, dealing with university bureaucracy, or filling out expense reports are all activities that take varying amounts of time and effort, yet are not formally acknowledged as vital aspects of work within the discourse of academic success. Considering work in this generous sense also provides ethnographers the ability to incorporate individuals' subjectivity and experience rather than simply what is observable and objectified as work. For an institutional ethnographer, asking participants about their experiential knowledge of work can give a distinctive view of not only their work practices, but also their thoughts around how work *can* and *should* look. This is also another window into how an institution is 'put together' and the ways a participant has come to learn this. I will discuss my usage of work in this dissertation more specifically later in this chapter, when I introduce the concept of 'navigational work.'

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[11] In my own reading of feminist epistemologist's dealing with Marx, I found that Dorothy Smith's contemporary Kathi Weeks' (1998) work particularly resonated with me. Weeks touches on how "the determination of the value of labour-power contains a historical and moral element" (Marx 1977, 275). In other words, the value, specifically the *social* value of work is culturally and socio historically specific to its context. Additionally, Weeks echoes Paul Smith(1978, 213, 215) who points out that 'it is not Marx's theory of value which marginalizes domestic labour, but the capitalist mode of production'.

4.2 Epistemic Status as a Theoretical Tool

While IE is a mode of inquiry that does not set out to explain human social behaviour with an all-encompassing theory, many practitioners of IE still find it helpful to utilise certain conceptual and situationally grounded theoretical tools in order to develop empirical material.

After I began speaking with academics, I found the need for a pragmatic tool to make sense of situations that regularly came up where participants highlighted the complexities of how they evaluated and assessed 'good' research and researchers. This was specifically the case when it came to the way EU collaborations formed and functioned. These situations were particularly observable during the process of selecting consortia members, as I found that academics were frequently selected to join the project even before a research design was formed and decided on (this process is further explained in section 6.1.1). This indicates that *who* a person was played a large role in how their potential participation and knowledge contributions were assessed. In other words, the way specific researchers were chosen to join consortia and the ways in which they were able to contribute throughout projects seemed to be contingent on *who* and *where* they were, rather than their specific knowledge contribution to the project. There were a number of indications of this occurring in various circumstances that were not always synonymous or self-evident. For example, it was repeatedly the case that a well-known researcher who brought with them the name of a respected institution (in a wealthy EU country) might be asked to head a work package or university-based team. Yet, their expertise did not entirely suit the work package, or they did not have the necessary time to devote to the EU project. In these cases, they might bring another lesser-known colleague onto the team or hire a postdoc and/or PhD to complete the work required for the deliverable. I also occasionally observed the correlative situation happening. If a project coordinator assessed that the geographic or gender distribution of the project was too skewed, based on the perceived implicit requirements for winning SC funds, they might lean towards hiring a female scholar or a CEE scholar and/or tweaking a work package to include their expertise. While I will go into a richer analysis of these dynamics in following chapters, I want to highlight here that the production of knowledge, the people who participate in it, and the places and spaces they are associated with are rarely situated on a level-playing field.

To open up and make sense of these observations throughout the fieldwork and analysis I think with Maria do Mar Pereira's (2017) theory of epistemic status, which she defines in her 2017 book as "the degree to which, and terms in which, a knowledge claim, or entire field, is recognised as fulfilling the requisite criteria to be considered credible and relevant knowledge, [with these criteria] defined in specific spaces, communities and moments (Pereira 2017, 48). Epistemic status is a tool through which scientific activity can be considered as more of a socio-political endeavour rather than one set out to determine formal criteria of rationality detached from particular circumstances (Code 1995, 233). The theory hooks into the feminist and anti-racists critique of mainstream STS, which generally advocate for acknowledging the situated politics of the 'self' in the production of knowledge. In other words, people and places "tend to be located differently in structural hierarchies of credibility and so their claims about epistemic status do not have equal authority and do not command the same level of assent" (Pereira 2017, 56).

According to Pereira (2017, 47), the theory of epistemic status weaves together Michel Foucault's approach to epistemes (1970[1966]), truth and power (Foucault 1980 [1976]), Lorraine Code's feminist epistemology of rhetorical spaces (1995) and Thomas Gieryn's concept of boundary-work (1999). Pereira approaches Foucault as an author that continually examines the structure and politics of science. As Periera notes, although only casually critical of an essentialist conceptualisation of science in his earlier work (1970 [1966]; 2010[1969]), Foucault's later work focuses more on scientificity and its production by examining historically specific and discursively constituted epistemes. An episteme is the '[strategic] "apparatus" that makes possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterised as scientific' (1980[1977], 197). Importantly, Foucault centres his analytical gaze less on the content of knowledge claims and more on the political process of categorisation and separation of scientific claims from non-scientific claims. In this way, the focal point is fixed on how power shapes the production and degree to which claims are associated with truth. Still, while the concept of episteme helps to conceptualise the historically specific and socio-political standards for assessing scientificity, Pereira critiques the homogeneity of these standards, writing that 'the same set of standards is applied in roughly similar ways to assess the scientificity of all statements in a given context' (Pereira 2017, 49). Further, she echoes critics of Foucault in pointing out his neglect to offer instruments with which to explore how the sources of

statements and various politics of the 'self' work to shape the recognition of statements as scientific.

Consequently, Pereira takes up the work of feminist theorist Lorraine Code as an interlocutor for Foucault. She is drawn both by Code's argument for an 'epistemology of everyday life' (1991) that draws an 'inquiry "down" on the everyday "ground" where knowledge is made, negotiated, circulated' (2006, 5–6), and her focus on geographical-ecological-material locations and relational hierarchical social orders that work to 'enable, structure and/or thwart' these processes. Pereira highlights how Code's main focus differs from Foucault. Like contemporary feminist theorists, Code makes connections between knowledge and power not by focusing on identifying *which* statements are considered to be scientific, but rather *whose* statements. In this regard, Code aims to examine how spaces are mapped so as to (re)produce uneven possibilities for people as producers of science. However, to adequately engage with epistemic status as an on-the-ground tool to explore an 'epistemology of everyday' life at a contextual level, a reading of Foucault and Code is supplemented by turning toward the field of STS.

Thomas Gieryn's discussion of boundary-work (1999) provides the third thread to Pereira's formulation of epistemic status, and a means for grounding her theory as a tool for studying everyday practices, which is an essential cornerstone of its usage and of STS as a field. In his writing on boundary-work, Gieryn examines how science is differentiated from non-science activities by using an analogy of cartography and map-making. He argues that the boundaries of science are shaped by local contingencies and will vary depending on who draws the map (and for whom the map is drawn). Further, he makes the point that, while these context-specific cultural maps of science are pliable and can be stretched, there are limits to how far and in which directions (1999: 5;21). Gieryn's focus was not on finding these boundaries but rather on the ongoing exploration of processual boundary-work that people perform. Maria do Mar Pereira refers to this as "the ongoing work of doing and redoing epistemic status [which also requires] asking how the field's status is announced, displayed, performed, and accomplished on a daily basis" (Pereira 2017, 54).

Although these theorists do not explicitly speak to one another they are used in concert in order to fully realise Pereira's intent with epistemic status. Gieryn's work provides the basis for studying the local and contextual relationship between claims to scientificity and the sociohistorical and political factors that enable and constrain such claims. However, in order

to understand these factors, Foucault's macro theory of epistemes works as an avenue through which it can be appreciated that 'some boundaries have been fixed for a long time, and that the likelihood of change is directly related to the untying of a discourse that is currently isomorphic with the dominant world political and economic structures of multinational corporations and nation-states' (Nader 1996, 26). Further, Codes work provides the much needed intersectional perspective to Gieryn's boundary-work in practice, which Pereira writes 'lacks engagement with the gendered, racialised, Eurocentric or classed nature of epistemic authority (2017, p.55).

To clarify, and in order to work with this theoretical tool on the ground, it is essential to note that epistemic status is not intended by Pereira to embody a type of status that is owned by particular people or researchers. "Being able to display or access valued professional resources – e.g. a reputable institutional affiliation, established contacts with other scholars, or influence in academic decision making tends to increase the chances of having one's claims acknowledged as authoritative" (Pereira 2017 p.59). As we write in Paper 4, "epistemic status is formulated not as something statically owned by scholars or nations but as continually recognized and negotiated with respect to academic context and relational professional power. For example, the country from that a researcher comes from might be overshadowed by or considered in relation to where they currently work or how recognized they have become in their field." (Fishberg, Larsen and Kropp, forthcoming). In other words, professional power plays a large role in the negotiations and assessment of 'good quality,' both when it comes to researchers and their work. I provide examples of struggles over 'good quality' and the boundaries of science in section 6.2 of this dissertation.

4.2.1 The Epistemic Status of Nations

As Thomas Gieryn (2006; 2018) notes, the *where* of science plays a critical role in the production and credibility of knowledge. To this end, epistemic status is most clearly used as a tool in my dissertation in moments when I recognise and examine how boundary-work takes place in relation to geopolitical spaces[12]. In her work, Piera thinks with her theory of epistemic status to explore the local status of global knowledge hegemonies and how they

[12] This is not to say I am not thinking about other intersectional factors such as gender or ethnicity, or that the relative weight of one is heavier than others. However, for the purpose of this dissertation I have chosen to hold geopolitically informed epistemic inequalities in my direct view.

are negotiated and reproduced by scholars in (semi) peripheral geographic locations and communities, shaping daily work locally and in international networks and collaborations. She takes ques from Gieryn in that she looks towards the *where* of science by asking how global academic relations shape, and are shaped by, local boundary work—considering factors such as field, department, and discipline. Pereira argues how the global link between geography and epistemology is visible in the observation that "places, countries and continents have epistemic status – i.e. they are seen to be more or less able to produce proper scholarly knowledge" (Pereira 2017, 48). And, although epistemic status is continuously being recognised and situationally renegotiated, "certain people and groups are tendentially in a better position to have their claims to epistemic status accepted as true and justified" (Pereira 2017 p.56). These observations are also grounded in a major legacy of postcolonial and feminist theory—that epistemic status is unequally distributed across the globe and that proper scholarliness and science is usually being associated with certain Western countries and the English language (Pereira 2017, 630). The work of scholars such as (Alatas 2003; Connell Raewyn 2007; Collyer 2018; Spivak 2006; Halvorsen 2018; Lykke 2004; Stöckelová 2012; Cerwonka 2008; Kašić 2016; Jokić, Mervar, and Mateljan 2019), argue that certain Western countries are often thought to produce more 'exportable' or widely applicable knowledge. Consequently, academics and the work produced outside of these contexts do not receive the same kind of esteem, credibility, or international attention.

We addressed the idea that knowledge *from* and *about* certain countries is often considered more 'exportable' in Paper 4. Referencing Monika Krause's (2016) use of the concept of model systems, we write that Krause "asserts a link between the inequality of nations and the continual implicit privileging of places, topics, and theoretically canonized objects of study.[…]Krause relates the discussion of model systems with a critique of eurocentrism, echoing scholars such as (Boatcă 2015; Chakrabarty 2000; Go 2016; 2013; Wallerstein 1997;) in saying that the West has served as the model system for 'modern' or 'developed' societies and even within Europe, and that particular countries have servedas model systems" (Fishberg et al., forthcoming).

I would argue that this issue is especially crucial when studying the social sciences as opposed to many natural and technical sciences, because the social sciences are grounded to a lesser degree in the illusion of an elusive 'placeless lab' or space where science is conducted in a uniquely controlled natural and social environment. The construction, presentation, and

objectification of 'place' in relation to social science knowledge production is frequently (but not always) depicted as crucial when it comes to the formulation and unfolding of research and consequently, of epistemic status.

Additionally, it is interesting to note how certain groups of marginalised scholars develop "not just despite [their] marginalisation, but also in ongoing (critical) dialogue with it" (Pereira 2017, 58). In other words, it is often the case that these groups are aware of how and when they are being marginalised and can potentially generate or leverage this marginalisation. This was emphasised during fieldwork when CEE scholars would discuss instances when they knew they were being invited into EU projects in order to indicate some sort of geographic balance to the commission. Yet, rather than eliciting a negative response, these situations were sometimes framed as a positive because it meant that they always had money flowing into the department without continually having to seek it out or use resources to apply for the funds themselves. This is all to say that, during this studying, considering epistemic status was a useful tool for making sense of the various situated and contextual factors that played into and shaped EU funded knowledge collaborations.

4.3 Navigational Work

I formulate the conceptual tool of navigational work in Paper 3. The concept takes its point of departure in Dorothy Smith's generous conceptualisation of 'work– and was partially inspired by the anthropologist Tim Ingold's (2011, 148) notion of *wayfaring*, which he describes as acquiring knowledge by following trails through a social and material landscape, growing a bricolage of tacit familiarity forged through experiences.

I broadly define *navigational work* as the *less visible practices or hidden labour, done as a function of bridging fields or institutions with separate rules, social orders, or forms of authority, that entails continually acquiring and strategically acting on the conglomerated knowledge of one's environments, both locally and trans-locally*. Navigational work is meant to generally categorise a form of less visible work when compared with work that is most often recognised as tangible and productive. However, for this dissertation I employed navigational work to specifically mean any intentional work academics do within FP projects and the EU-funding landscape at large that bridges their participation and role in both the scientific or academic order and geopolitically shaped forms of EU political authority.

As I elaborate in the Paper 3, many of the researchers I spoke with had a difficult time gaining an intricate and informed overview of the EU-research landscape. Their knowledge was most often limited to their experiences from past and present projects, in concert with second hand accounts from colleagues. I wanted to communicate and further understand what I found to be a kind of continual growing of tacit knowledge that academics were *conglomerating* and *strategically acting on* as they participated in FP projects. This knowledge extended beyond that which exclusively applies to conventional aspects of the academic vocation and scientific knowledge production and a type of manoeuvring that required a command of EU science bureaucracy and the interwoven facets of European sociohistorical and geopolitical relations. Although the actual activities and practices of this kind of work frequently went unformalized and unquantified, they often led to other forms of production that are deemed aspects of work that 'count' in academia e.g., winning grant funding or producing publications, which contribute to the narrowly defined attainment of 'successes for European academics.

I found the imagery invoked in anthropologist Tim Ingold's (2011) notion of *wayfaring* to be useful—a kind of 'wading through' in an ocean of information and growing a bricolage of knowledge forged through experience. However, as I write in Paper 3, the way I employ the concept of navigational work departs from Ingold's wayfaring in two major ways.

> "First, in terms of cadence at which this work takes place. Wayfaring assumes continual and inevitable 'carrying on' of knowledge acquisition coupled with continuous movement. To be wayfaring simply requires an individual's attention, with no goals or objectives other than continuing the journey of path-following. (Ingold 2015, 132). Navigational work, by contrast, emphasizes directionality and *intention* rather than simply *attention*. To navigate, implies the continual acquiring of knowledge punctuated by points of decision making and strategic movements predicated on preceding experiences and decisions
>
> The second difference relates to the spaces being navigated. For academics who participate in the EU research landscape, there are distinct hierarchies and ecologies of knowledge and power. Navigating, as opposed to wayfaring, acknowledges a normative pursuit of some version(s) of success within EU-research spaces—contributing both to motivation for participating and the unequal ways in which participation takes place. This is all to say, navigational work does not imply academics simply moving through institutional, and EU-level research spaces and letting a career grow around them. The concept describes the work of actively gaining knowledge and normatively applying it in ways deemed useful. Importantly, I do not intend to highlight the correct and incorrect ways of participating in the EU research landscape. Rather, I aim to point out the convoluted and undefined nature of this space that prompts dissimilar navigational work for different academics" (Fishberg, Forthcoming)

The metaphor of a kind of 'wading through' a sea of information and experiences, strategically growing a bricolage of knowledge and putting it to use, also illustrates what Dorothy Smith points out, and what is depicted in my 'hero diagram.' That is, individuals experience these strange forms of trans-local coordination (whether they be political or otherwise) from certain standpoints or vantage points, as they enter into their everyday/everynight lives and coordinate the thoughts and practices of work.

Conclusion

This chapter ontologically and theoretically unpacked how I approached both producing and analysing the empirical field for this research. IE is an ontological approach with methodologic implications and specificities. The ontological and theoretical aspects of IE were discussed in this chapter, while the methodological aspects are discussed in the next. In my explanation of IE, I clarify that while grand theories are not helpful for understanding how institutional life is put together and socially organised, concepts in IE can work to unpack social practices. In this light, I discussed three concepts: discourse, texts, and work, which have guided and contributed to this study and dissertation. I then introduced my usage of Maria do Mar Pereira's theory of epistemic status, specifically the epistemic status of nations, as a useful theoretical tool for studying the complex manifestations of epistemic inequalities in the everyday setting. Pereira's theory is further identified as helpful for mapping epistemic inequalities onto a larger global scale and subsequently thinking about how these inequalities are potentially entangled with EU research and Europeanisation. Finally, I introduced my own concept of navigational work as a means through which to describe how academics take in knowledge about the EU research landscape and strategically employ this knowledge in relation to an EU-specific aspect of the social science vocation in Europe.

CHAPTER 5 REFLECTIONS ON METHODS, ETHICS, AND POSITIONALITY

In this chapter I reflect on the research design for this dissertation, my methods for carrying it out, and my own positionality and ethical implications during the project. As I have written in chapter 4, my choice to think with Institutional Ethnography (IE) entails both ontological as well as methodological implications. Thus, throughout the chapter I weave in a discussion of IE with consideration to the ways in which this approach has shaped the research design and subsequent methods. I detail how social science projects were selected to be studied and discuss how I gained access to projects and participants. I also recount how interviews were conducted, how I used texts, and carried out participant observations—primarily taking place against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. Following this, I discuss my own positionality during this research and the PhD process, not only as a native English-speaking researcher located in a wealthy Western EU country, but also in relation to the larger project, funded through the Danish Research Council, to which this dissertation contributes. Finally, I reflect on the ethical implications of this research, my responsibility towards my participants and the normative tone this dissertation takes. To close this chapter, I have placed Paper 2, titled 'Thinking with Transnational Institutional Ethnography: Moving towards Spatially Conscious Methods for Studying Geographically Dispersed People and Institutions'. The paper was published in the *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* in May of 2022. In it, I explore my experiences of doing transnational institutional ethnography and discuss how practitioners of IE might work differently when studying institutions which are neither physically centralised brick and mortar, nor nationally bound.

5.1 Research Design

To start this research, and typical in an IE inquiry, I had to first ask *enough* questions to ask the *right* questions. In other words, in order to relevantly problematise how participation in FP projects took place, specifically in relation to the overarching goals of the European Commission (EC), I needed to have a practical idea of what this work actually looked like on an everyday basis. It was fundamentally a matter of 'extend[ing] people's ordinary good knowledge of how things are put together in our everyday lives to dimensions of the social that transcend the local […] (Smith 2006, 2). Therefore, before deciding on a research

design, I conducted preliminary interviews and casual discussions with members and coordinators of FP SC projects. These conversations alerted me to what I already suspected—speaking to various members of different projects (as opposed to the same project) that have started and stopped or were ongoing was *not* going to work for the fieldwork. Although this made the pool of potential participants very accessible, this approach did not allow me to situate people and their practices in relation to the overarching temporal processes of collaboration. Additionally, I did not have access to the grant agreement text, which is the formal and legally binding agreement with the commission that also acts as the scientific roadmap coordinating each person's work. As I later came to realise, this text was not only essential for understanding how work practices were shaped but was also relatively protected—meaning that gaining access to these internal project texts would not always be easy. At this point in the project, I decided to select specific social science projects to follow and study.

5.1.1 Project selection

For project selection criteria, I worked with Anton Grau Larsen and Kristoffer Kropp's findings from sub-project 1 of the overarching project to which this dissertation contributes. Their findings were produced with data from CORDIS EU research projects from more than 80.000 projects in eight framework programmes (for more on this see also (Kropp and Larsen 2022)).We describe this process in paper 4, writing:

"The CORDIS database contains all EU-funded research projects funded through the FPs and the European Research Council (ERC). The register is maintained by the EC and is publicly available. Our initial sample covers more than 80.000 projects and 435.00 participants from the first framework programs until the H2020 projects, which were funded since early 2019. From this sample, we identify 2.829 social sciences projects. We base our selection of the SSH projects on reports produced by The Directorate-General for Research and Innovation since FP4 and the committees in the ERC. The EC collects projects funded under calls or schemes designated specifically for SSH projects with the assumption that these calls are not "polluted" by non-SSH projects. In using the EC's list of SSH projects, we miss out on those SSH projects that are undoubtedly present among other funding calls. However, this approach gives us a relatively stable and consistent sample covering an

extended timeframe (1988-2019) across considerable institutional changes." (Fishberg et al., forthcoming)[13]

Working with Larsen on case selection was an abductive process throughout June and July of 2020. The processes of case selection was useful not only as a means of locating relevant cases, but also as an essential aspect of this research. This work provided 'macro' and 'meso' level knowledge of EU funded social science projects and further informed how I was considered the 'micro level' ethnographic contribution that my project would provide. For example, statistical data on frequently EU-funded institutions or nations (macro), or information on the EU project websites about the partners and demographic make-up of particular collaborating teams within a discipline (meso).

First, we began defining which projects qualified as producing social science knowledge and thus, meet the requirements as a potential case within the SC pillar. We narrowed our pool of potential social science projects to SC 6, the goal of which is to address 21st century issues such as social inclusion and stability, radicalisation and migration, the preservation of culture heritage and European identity in an interconnected and interdependent world. Although there was ambition for Horizon 2020 (and its follow-up Horizon Europe) to integrate the social sciences and humanities across all the challenges, SC 6 was dedicated to the social sciences.

I decided to limit my inquiry specifically to EU FP projects under the Societal Challenges pillar. First, practically it was helpful that there was a challenge directly engaged with the social sciences, making project selection an easier task. After my preliminary interviews and some discussion with Kropp and Larsen, it also seemed that there was not only less prestige attributed by European academics to this pillar of the FPs, but also a strange lack of empirical data focused on it. Most importantly, it was evident after our preliminary research of these projects that the politically shaped 'EU language' from the calls were clearly present in the objectives of those projects that received funding. Yet, the criteria for winning funds still seemed to promote the idea of 'excellence' and the highest quality of research. In other

[13] For a sample of how Larsen and Kropp have mapped these CORDIS projects onto a field of SHH in Europe, see Appendix 1.

words, I was curious about how politically shaped 'excellent' research in the SC pillar was carried out.

It was important for me to choose ongoing projects and many of the projects in Larsen's data were from FP's that had already ended e.g., FP 6 and FP 7 which narrowed the selection pool from hundreds of projects to roughly one hundred. Reflecting on Lyall et al.'s (2013) empirical work, which similarly examines case studies representing long-term, multi-national interdisciplinary research projects with external funding, I chose projects at different stages of completion. This was to ensure that my analysis focused on practices and processes rather than outputs from each project in various forms e.g., publications, networks, collaborative dynamics etc. Additionally, because all selected projects were at different phases of development and completion, it helped to avoid falling into a comparative analysis.

Together with Larsen, I created a network from this smaller pool of ongoing projects based on geographic locations of the coordinating institutions. The intention was to choose projects sharing at least three or more geographic links—whether that be a city or a member state region— in order to maximise efficiency of data collection. I hoped to speak to more project members, more often and at different research stages, if I already planned to be in a nearby location. However, the best laid plans rarely work out, and while this strategy might have been helpful, Covid-19 travel restrictions ultimately rendered this idea unsuccessful.

After narrowing the projects to roughly 100, the criteria shaping further project selection included the country of coordination, the number and the geographic distribution of partners, main disciplinary alignment of the proposal, and phase and processual development of the research. This criterion is annotated in table 1 below. I narrowed the potential projects down to six, and further looked into the project managers and primary investigators at the coordinating institutes whenever possible, sometimes reaching out to these individuals with an introductory email explaining my research and my interest in conducting ethnographic work. I elaborate on this preliminary exploratory phase in the following section reflecting on gaining access. Finally, three social science SC 6 projects were selected. The projects had separate consortia, different disciplinary make-ups and were coordinated out of different institutions across Europe associated with varying university rankings. One project had recently started, and two were already underway.

Table 1 Case selection criterion

Geographic Location(s)	Geographic location is important for considering socio-historical and geo-politically influenced relations. Also factors into nationally bound policy exerted on institutions and researchers
Prestige of Coordinating Institute + Partners	Interested in institutes with varying ranking to explore how this might factor into collaborative relations
Degree of Pre-Established Collaborative Relationships	Have members worked together before? In what capacity and with how much frequency? Is it a pre-established team or network?
Number of Project Members	In order to look at how different sized projects function
Disciplines Included	Interested in how different social science disciplines work together in the separate EU projects
Empirical Subject Matter	The empirical subject matter of the project may influence members or institutions included and how collaborations unfold. Fx- a project about MENA includes and involves a different partner network and dynamic than an EU governance project.

5.1.2 Gaining Access to EU projects—Open Social Science Research, Behind Closed Doors

Why has it been so hard to access the relationships between social scientists? In STS, ethnographic work is usually focused on researchers and research that takes place in laboratories and within the natural science. Work is ethnographically constructed as a visible activity, and work practices are physically observed. If collaborative partner teams and consortia are not meeting so often, what kind of work am I looking to observe and study? Is it the work of reading and emailing and staying inside an office

> *to write up reflections? There are no physical spaces to watch the troubleshooting of reading about theories, writing reflections and thinking through ideas. I don't know if there is documentation or presentation of practice when it comes to the research practices that I am interested in.*
>
> Excerpt From Fieldnotes, 2020

The above expert from my fieldnotes acts as a window into some of the issues I faced attempting to gain access to EU-funded social science collaborations. There were some legal concerns of course e.g., confidentiality of the grant agreement as a legal contract with the EC. However, unlike certain ethnographically observable work practices within the natural sciences and in lab settings, many social scientists seemed to assume that a degree of privacy was inherent to their work, even when it was collaborative. Thus, I ran into difficulties both initially, when reaching out to coordinators of projects, and also after initial access was granted— requiring continual negotiations throughout the fieldwork.

My issues with access began before Covid-19 was a consideration, when I first started reaching out to project coordinators. I chose to start by asking for access at 'the top' of a project, although I knew that gaining access in this way could come with its own set of issues. For example, partners might feel uncomfortable speaking openly if they assumed I was aligned with the coordinator through whom we were connected.

I began by writing a mail to the coordinator listed on the EU project website, explaining the research and asking to conduct an extended stay at the department or research centre to carry out interviews and participant observations. These mails received different responses, but the majority of the requests were declined at first. For example, one of the project coordinators explained that many of the partners would be excited to 'help a young researcher', however it was the university's lawyers that objected to me being given a copy of the grant agreement and conducting ethnographic work during consortia meetings. However, later during a more casual conversation, other reasons for declining my request surfaced. I asked some questions about the first consortium meeting, and the coordinator explained that the purpose of this meeting was to smooth out any issues between the partners around defining the main concepts within the research design. She described this as sensitive and private work that took place before the collaboration, because they were still getting to know each other. She said that she 'didn't know how they would collaborate yet', thus she and they felt it would be better if they didn't have an external researcher observing.

Her hesitance provided insight into the delicate work of transnational collaborative research in the social sciences. I was aware that access would be difficult to negotiate when it came to getting copies of official EU contracts. I found it interesting however, that the sensitive work she described did not seem to fall under what this coordinator defined as 'collaborating' but rather, the intercommunication and epistemic troubleshooting that took place *before* the collaborative research could begin. Her response caused me to question when collaborative work started and stopped and what kind of work did and did not fall under this moniker.

Another example declining the request to conduct fieldwork was sent by a project coordinator who explained that she found it strange to observe social scientists sitting in their office doing their work. She wrote:

> "Thank you for your email. An extended stay here is not appropriate for this purpose. We have two post-docs working on the project and a project manager who keeps an eye on all of our commitments/deliverables. I would find it strange to have someone sitting in their office as they do their work and observing what they are doing [...] I do not think this is in any way effective."

She later invited me to observe a consortium meeting instead, as these were the only times during which the partners would meet together. Still, the struggle of gaining initial access and permission to observe the work of social scientists in their offices was not considered an effective approach to studying collaborative work. The offer to let me observe the consortium meeting once again evoked the question, when does collaborative research take place and how can we observe it in the social sciences. This has become an especially relevant question now, when so much of collaborative social science relationships are virtual— over the phone, e-mails, and video calls.

The resistance and confusion from these coordinators strongly parallels Lisa Garforth's (2012) observations in her article exploring in/visibilities when studying the social sciences. She writes that, collaborative teams 'seemed to function in protective and inward-looking ways, and observations during fieldwork or in their office spaces would not only be disruptive but could compromise participant and collaborative relationships. Further, when researchers did allow observations, the question of what was to be observed, and where, had to be continually renegotiated. Observation was occasioned rather than ongoing and without the methodological convenience of a lab, 'knowledge practices were rarely on show but rather retreated into solitary spaces or coalesced fleetingly in meetings' (p. 271). Latour counsels that the work of following scientists need not stop at the office door, or because

'they are handling paper and pencil instead of working in laboratories or travelling through the world' (Latour 1987, 235). Yet, as Garforth explains this was a very difficult position to perform—the work of a "courageous, combative ethnographer-figure ready to follow the practical scientist-at-work into the office and at the desk" (Garforth 2012, p. 273).

In other words, to ethnographically study social science work is to find ways to get at the practical and concrete practices of reading, writing, and 'thinking'. And, like Garforth, I had a very difficult time continually negotiating and insisting on access to offices or meetings. As I will discuss later in this chapter, my approach to studying these less visible practices started with asking how they are coordinated and mediated by texts such as a grant agreement or the research design.

Eventually, with extended negotiations and data confidentially agreements, I gained initial access to three projects. Meaning, I was given a copy of the grant agreements and the permission of the coordinating team to start reaching out to other project members to conduct interviews and observations in the various institutes. However, this notion of needing to continually renegotiate access came up often during the fieldwork. Each project was different, and some coordinating teams and partners allowed more open and continual access to meetings, emails, and documents. In the following excerpt from my fieldnotes I describe an instance during which I was assured that fieldwork would be welcomed, yet access was still limited.

> *'The project manager kept reassuring me that the project was publicly funded and open to study, and I was welcome to study it, but the logistics of how I will do this are still clearly making [the coordinating team] hesitant. I asked again about sitting in on planning meetings and being included in consortium meetings. I mentioned being potentially cc'd on emails about the coordination of the project and collaboration between members. [They] said they needed to have a group meeting discussing each ask, before saying yes. They also said they were having a small coordination meeting the next day and perhaps I could come. So, I walked in [the next day] at around the time the meeting was going to take place. I had to pass the meeting room and the door was open. I said hello to some of the members of the project before the meeting started but the door promptly closed on me when they began. It was awkward.'*

It is highlighted here that the project, as a publicly funded research collaboration, was presented as open for studying. Still, *when, where,* and *how* I could conduct fieldwork

required continual negotiation. The above indicates that, while these early experiences gave insight into the in/visibility of social science work, the wariness and resistance I came up against was not solely a matter of these activities being less visible. Meaning, collaborative practices in these projects are not only difficult to observe but also can be protected in various ways—not least because much of scientific collaboration is based in interpersonal relationships. To borrow again from Garforth (2012), "It seemed clear that the researchers' knowledge of qualitative methods in the social sciences meant a high awareness of the practicalities of observation research; we were perhaps 'too close to be welcomed' (Wöhrer 2008 quoted in Garforth 2012)".

5.2 Doing Transnational IE During Covid-19

Although my methods are discussed throughout Paper 2 in relation to transnational institutional ethnography, I will elaborate on the methodological details and logistics that were not included in this paper—particularly the ways Covid-19 affected the fieldwork. The Covid-19 pandemic began in the first half of my fieldwork, putting a halt to the travel of both me and my participants. Ethnographic fieldwork often does not go to the original plan, but a pandemic was a particularly disruptive curveball. It was a period of deep uncertainty not only when it came to the continuity of my own project but also those that I studied. Due to this lack of travel, I tried to find creative ways of conducting fieldwork that could represent how collaborative relations continued during the pandemic whilst still acknowledging the everyday material conditions that academics encounter at their university or research centre. Consequently, a large part of this fieldwork took place virtually, but I did visit universities and research centres to conduct fieldwork when possible. I travelled to approximately 10 research settings and conducted more than 50 semi-structured interviews in total (virtually and in person) with scientific coordinators, project managers, and researchers in the projects. Additional interviews were also conducted at the EU Commission in Brussels with policy officials involved in formulating the EU's policy stance and strategies for H2020.

5.2.1 Participant observation

During the early selection of projects, before the Covid-19 pandemic began, I planned for this fieldwork to be heavily reliant on traveling—visiting multiple partner institutions across Europe and spending extended periods of time to conduct fieldwork when possible. As I

wrote in my original research design, “multi-sited fieldwork is not only necessary, but also itself becomes a form of participant observation by virtue of the research having similar characteristics as the participants (Clifford 1992; Falzon 2015). Although travel was limited, I was able to visit institutions before the pandemic became more serious and after, when travel partially opened up again. I did multiple shorter stays at participant institutions and an extended multi-month stay at one of the coordinating institutes. I sat in on project meetings, ate lunch with project members, and participated in conversations about the EU-project work and funding scheme. Additionally, I sat in on a number of virtual meetings between coordinating partners and entire consortia when it was possible.

Virtual participant observation can be very limiting. When I was in person, I was able to go out to dinner with the team after meetings and have side conversations with members. I could watch, for example, how team members sat, who sat next to each other and who worked in the same offices as opposed to on a different floor. All of these things are not possible during virtual fieldwork. However, I was surprised to find that when I was invited to virtually observe consortia meetings over Zoom, it worked well. In a virtual room, being present but off camera afforded me a different perspective on what it meant to participate and observe. It felt as if I occupied some in-between space—present, yet potentially less intrusive than if I were to be sitting in a meeting room. It also gave me the space to take as many notes as I would like without continually alerting the members of the meeting. Still, this brought up my own questions about ethics. I thought about if participants would say the same things if they saw my face on camera or saw me taking notes.

5.2.2 Interviews

Conducting interviews are an essential methodological tool in IE. As I mention, I began this project by first conducting preliminary interviews with scholars in my own network, to get a feel for the issues that came up and the kinds of questions that resonated with project participants. Following this, I conducted both formal interviews, as well as informal conversations with scholars involved in each EU funded project, as well as other scholars in their department and/or discipline and administrators at relevant levels. These occurred on

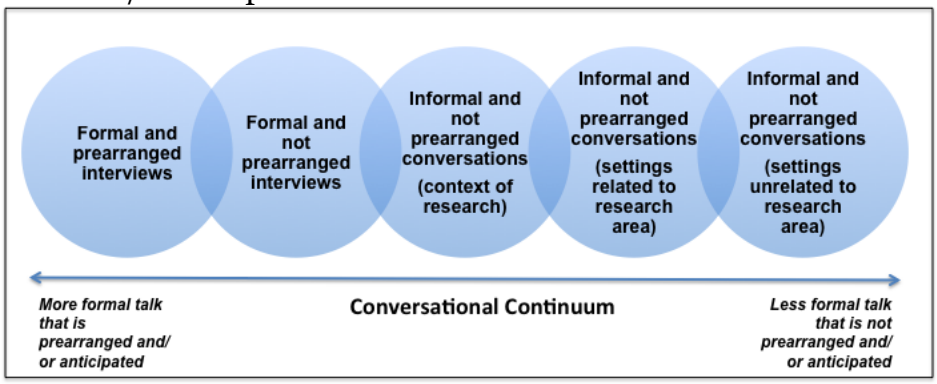

Figure 9: (Grace 2013)

a continuum, aiding in the discovery process (see figure 9).

After already selecting projects, finding and selecting participants to interview involved a combination of approaches. The first approach was a snowball-type referral system from the network of participants I had already been introduced to in each project. Most often I would be referred to a work package leader at a partner institute by the project coordinator. Through some trial and error, I found that it was most helpful when the project coordinator was willing to introduce me through a joint email. This functioned not only as an endorsement in some cases, but I suspect it also put pressure on the academic to respond and participate in an interview[14]. Following this, I would ask the work package leaders to put me in touch with the other project participants at their institute that they often collaborated with, slowly branching out within each partner team. It also alerted me to discrepancies between the formal research design and the actualities of collaborating. For example, if a work package formally calls for two partner teams to collaborate on data

[14] Sometimes, I would specifically avoid asking the coordinator or work package leader to make these connections if I suspected there was conflict within the team, or a vulnerable early career researcher might feel pressured through these means.

collection, I would ask for my interviewee to connect me with members from this institute for further interviews. This situation would sometimes open up a conversation about the nature of the collaboration e.g., who communicated and how often. The second way I found participants involved a more systematic process of looking up project members in each institute, cross referencing their project role in the grant agreement, and then reaching out to ask for an interview. This would take place if there was not a more natural liaison between us. In these cases, I would often ask more pointed questions about the project member's role within the project, sometimes referring directly to the grant agreement text.

One of the biggest challenges I faced methodologically in this research was finding ways to virtually study local practices and how they hooked into trans local processes. It is essential in IE to stay grounded in practices and the actual surroundings of participants. The social is understood to mean people's activities as they are coordinated with others. Thus, people's everyday activities and practices are studied in order to discover and make visible how and where their lives and activities are hooked into and organised by trans-local relations of governance beyond their own experiences. This was already a challenge in this research as participants were conducting collaborative research scattered across Europe whilst simultaneously participating in the everyday surroundings of their own university and department setting. Understanding and asking the right questions about each of these local contexts became particularly difficult without the option of traveling.

To deal with this issue, I employed what I am calling a 'divided interview technique', which I further explain in paper 2. An excerpt from the paper clarifies this briefly:

"Ordinarily, in IE I begin interviews asking participants to describe an actual day, from start to finish, to quickly get a fuller sample of their daily work. However, EU project work is punctuated and sporadic and this approach would give me a fragmented picture of their project work and how it intersected with material surroundings like their university setting. My strategy was to explicitly split the interview into two parts, treating the local context and the EU project as separate institutions. Although many academics saw their work as intertwined in these spaces, I separated these lines of inquiry so that it became easier to understand how and when these contexts overlapped, aligned, or disjointed in values and coordination" (Fishberg 2022, 8). A sample interview guide can be seen in appendix 2.

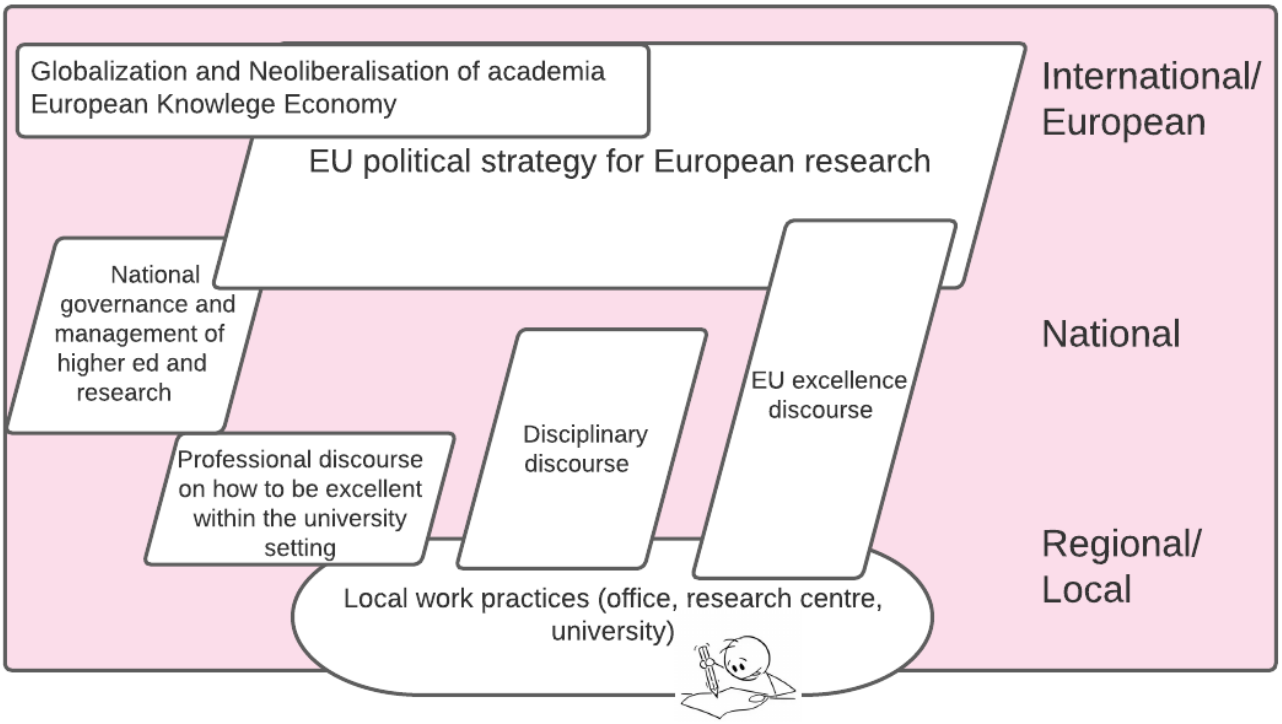

Figure 10

Conducting divided interviews in this way helped me to understand the links between everyday practices and the various trans local discourses that manifested in these actual settings. To visualise these relationships, I have again placed the 'hero-diagram', to heuristically show what this looks like for participants in EU FP projects.

PAPER 2 THINKING WITH TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY: MOVING TOWARDS SPATIALLY CONSCIOUS METHODS FOR STUDYING GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS

A large portion of the methods for this research are discussed in Paper 2 of this dissertation, which I have positioned as a part of chapter 5. Writing this paper represented an important turning point for the dissertation, namely thinking through and questioning if IE could work as an approach to this research field and how some of the methods that accompany IE might need to be rethought in order to truly embody the approach whilst staying true to the empirical realities that I encountered.

The paper, which has been published in the *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, speaks to two separate academic communities and discussions. First and foremost, the position I take for building on a more frequently employed approach to IE is relatively uncommon in the IE community. I argue for rethinking the methods in IE to be more geospatial conscious when studying institutions which are neither physically centralised brick and mortar, nor nationally bound. While this is not an abnormal position to take, my approach is unique — advocating for defining the FPs as a transnational institution and studying highly dispersed heterogenous members within their separate locales. I consider IE to be not only capable of dealing with expanded geographic space, but also advantageous when it comes to doing largescale ethnography in socio-administrative and bureaucratic settings. Specifically, studying transnational and global processes without losing a view of everyday experiences and practices. I wrote this article because the literature on IE at the time of doing my fieldwork did not seem to adequately address the complexities that I was facing in attempting transnational IE.

The paper also speaks to the body of literature studying the relationship between EU science funding and knowledge production—primarily the fields of social studies of science and EU studies. As I mention previously when briefly touching on these research areas, the approach to studying knowledge production is almost exclusively 'from above.' As I mention in the paper, this is potentially due to the heterogeneity in these projects —one of the few uniting factors these scholars share is the politically fuelled funding scheme shaping their work practices. By studying the FPs through the lens of TIE, I could approach EU funded research

as a single field 'from below,'—consequently adding ethnographic value and insight into how EU funding programs organise scientific knowledge production.

In addition to its relevance within these two discussions and bodies of literature, the paper also has a specific function within the context of this dissertation. Here, through conceptualising the FPs as a transnational institution, I am able to illustrate how practices of knowledge production across the FPs, regardless of empirical subject matter or discipline, are socially and intellectually coordinated and thus contribute to an EU schematised form of Europeanisation through factors such as evaluation criteria for receiving funds, EU-language like deliverables and work-packages, and the relatively streamlined format of a grant agreement in the FPs.

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Thinking With Transnational Institutional Ethnography: Moving Towards Spatially Conscious Methods for Studying Geographically Dispersed People and Institutions

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Abstract

Institutional ethnography (IE) is a valuable ontological approach for investigating the coordination of social relations, both locally and trans-locally. However, much of the work utilizing IE remains within the confines of a local or national empirical field. This means there are limited accounts of IE exploring geographically dispersed institutions that cross borders and span regions. This paper makes the case for critically thinking and building on Transnational Institutional Ethnography (TIE). In it, I argue that TIE requires adapting the methodological toolbox of IE to deal with expanded geographic space and diverse bodily locations. By drawing on empirical work exploring scholarly participation in the European Union Framework Programs for research, tensions are illustrated that surfaced while working with TIE. In this discussion, I examine the ways in which interpreting an empirical field as a transnational institution, constituted of geographically dispersed people and organizations, caused a re-examination of the methods in IE to acknowledge institutional experiences shaped by diverse material surroundings and differing geopolitical locations. The paper argues that working with spatially conscious methods in TIE contributes positively to both fieldwork and analysis.

Keywords

transnational institutional ethnography, epistemic status of nations, standpoint, text, interview, European Union research, qualitative methods

Introduction

Institutional Ethnography (IE) as an ontological point of departure is useful for exploring how individuals' 'ways of knowing and doing' are shaped within politico-bureaucratic systems of organization and administration. The approach was formulated by sociologist Dorothy Smith, with an explicit reliance on feminist standpoint epistemology as a means to ask questions from the perspectives and concerns of people who are located distinctively in institutional processes. IE and its associated methodological toolbox are intended to ground the inquiry in everyday practices with the aim of exploring the local actualities of daily work, and how it becomes coordinated by trans local processes (Smith, 2005).

Although a growing body of work utilizing IE continually adapts and transforms in concert with emerging methodological and epistemological conversations, the approach has been primarily used to study institutions which are locally or nationally concentrated, employing national borders as intuitive boundaries to the field of inquiry. During the 2020

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Institutional Ethnography business meeting for the Society of Social Problems at Work, Dorothy Smith, made a rallying appeal to practitioners of IE, saying "We do not lack the capacity in Institutional Ethnography to explore aspects of global organization as it is being brought into being by actual peoples work […] we are caught up in aspects of organization that are international and we don't fully understand how they are put together, how they enter into our lives and how they shape them […] We can discover aspects of how people organize [globally], and we should not hold back" (Edlinguist Solutions, 2020).

Smith was emphasizing that the ontological approach of IE has the built-in potential for investigating transnational ruling relations, although many examples tend not to articulate this scope. In principle, it was an invitation to consider leaning into IE as a valuable approach for exploring how large-scale international and global processes can organize and be organized by the everyday work of people.

In this article I offer an illustrative acknowledgment of Smith's invitation to think differently with and about IE. In it, I advocate for IE as a point of departure to conceptualize and study institutions which are neither physically centralized nor nationally bound. Subsequently, I promote building up and framing transnational institutional ethnography (TIE) as an expansion of a more commonly favored approach to IE that tendentially confines inquiries to the national scale.

The article is an opportunity to question if TIE is simply IE of an institution that is geographically dispersed, or if a geospatial shift to both an empirical field and the locations in which people are embedded require aspects of IE's methodological elements to be reconsidered. The contribution with this paper is thus twofold. Primarily, I offer an account of working with TIE as a tool for sense making in a complex geographically dispersed social landscape. Additionally, the article contributes to the theoretical and analytical discussion of TIE by using empirical material to show that spatially conscious methods for studying transnational institutions can lead to more nuanced and fruitful analytical dimensions during and after fieldwork.

The discussion takes shape in relation to multi-sited empirical research carried out over a 2-year period. During this time, I studied collaborative practices and the development of three large-scale transnational, and multidisciplinary social science projects funded under the 'European Framework Programs'. The programs, established in 1984 and more recently known as Horizon 2020 or currently Horizon Europe, are the European Commission's primary tool for science funding. I position the Framework Programs to be a transnational institution for knowledge production, considering each project and its corresponding consortium to provide a window into the multifaceted relations of institutional social coordination.

The paper is structured such that it first provides a brief overview of IE as a feminist epistemology and methodological approach. I discuss TIE as an extension of IE, building on existing IE work taking a global or transnational perspective and problematizing challenges that surface with this lens. Specifically, I question how practitioners of TIE can methodologically meet these challenges and how TIE can require more spatially conscious methods of inquiry. In what follows, I introduce the empirical research and the EU Framework Programs as a critical case of a transnational institution. I illustrate some central obstacles that surfaced while working with TIE and explore how developing pragmatic solutions contributed positively to both the fieldwork and analysis.

Institutional Ethnography

Developed by sociologist Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990, 2005, 2006), IE is best described as ethnography of complex institutionalized social relations, rather than ethnography of specific companies, organizations, or sectors. Smith established the approach as a feminist methodology organized around standpoint theory, an epistemology aligned with other contemporary feminist scholars at the time such as Sandra Harding (1991, 1992, 2008) and Nancy Hartsock (1998). Starting from a standpoint in IE means that ordinary daily activity becomes the basis for an investigation of social relations and forces that transcend and inform these activities; later the approach was sometimes referenced as doing 'sciences from below' (Devault, 2006; Harding, 2008).

In IE, grouping individuals together in a standpoint becomes a tool to understand how institutional order is 'put together' through a specific vantage point, rather than a tool for universalizing experiences. Analysing standpoint material specifically calls for the lack of privileging or valorizing informant knowledge, treating it as ultimately empirical. Informants are considered 'experts' on their daily activity and work practices, however their knowledge is explored not as a stable truth, but for its social constructions and embedded contradictions (Rankin, 2017a). In doing this, IE recognizes and takes seriously the real (not just theorized) social organization of people's lives by "the strange forms of power that are at once present and absent in the everyday" (Smith, 2005, p. 41). This means, an inquiry in IE is intended for making visible, de-naturalizing and, de-neutralizing taken-for-granted forms of social organization, hierarchies, and objectified structures.

Additionally, the concept of 'work' is important for understanding practices through the lens of a standpoint. Smith (2005, p. 152) gives a definition of work explaining, more than simply paid labor, work extends to anything intentionally done by people that takes time and effort, using any tools or means they have at their disposal. This generous concept of work gives ethnographers the means to acknowledge the many activities people do which cannot be quantified or recognized and are not formalized in institutionalized language.

Field-Making and Methods in Institutional Ethnography

As Coleman and von Hellermann (2011) emphasize, research fields are created, rather than naturally occurring. Opting for mapping the field as a function of the fieldwork itself means recognizing that people are continually 'sense-making' as they go along, the ethnographer included (Marcus, 2011). Dorothy Smith would likely agree, as neither she nor other practitioners of IE have conclusively defined the concept of an institution or delineated many institutional boundaries in their work—particularly none limiting an institution to a brick-and-mortar presence. Without an authoritative definition, an institution cannot become a priori portable or static object of inquiry. However, the concept of an institution in IE is not void of meaning. Institutions are considered to be merely bracketed off, well-framed, empirical heuristic tools that integrate complexes of organizations and discourses focused on function (Smith, 2005, p. 68).

The methods in IE are most effectively employed to do this 'field-making' through the triangulation of interviews, participation observations and textual analysis. Interviewing in many ways resembles that of other methods of inquiry in terms of gaining access, building rapport, narrowing down interests and focus, and active listening (Flick, 2002; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, specific to IE interviews, "the purpose is to reveal how the accounts, experiences and activity reported has become socially organized" (Lund, 2015, p. 87). For example, asking 'how did you learn that?' rather than 'Why did you do that?' gives insight into the 'ways of knowing and doing' for an institution and how these are instilled and naturalized. As Devault and McCoy (2006) note, "the process of IE is like grabbing a ball of string, finding a thread, and then pulling it out […] ethnographers know what they want to explain, but only step-by-step can they discover whom they need to interview or what texts and discourses they need to examine". This is to say, the process of finding participants to interview and speak to is also entangled with participating and observing in a space, continually unpacking, and discovering how it is socially organized.

In concert with interviews and participant observation, institutional ethnographers rely heavily on texts and textual analysis in order to critically map out complex, trans locally coordinated social terrains (Campbell, 2006; Smith, 2001). Texts in IE are considered a valuable avenue for exploring how administrations and bureaucracies manage people through standardizing and objectifying mechanisms (Smith, 2006, p. 67). By paying attention to how and when texts are consulted and invoked, institutional ethnographers can discover how individuals interact with and organize around discursive artifacts which mediate actions and ideology. Texts in their many forms (pictures, symbols, words etc.) then become a window into how trans locally formulated concepts and ideology permeate into everyday life.

Mapping or tracing texts in IE is sometimes used to make visible the way that seemingly banal symbols and documents can quietly and pervasively govern the everyday social world. It involves observing and sequencing participants' actions and work to understand and how various extra-locally produced texts and policy are 'activated', and how institutional practices are learned (Griffith & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2005; Talbot, 2017). The mapping of social relations through text can also take on various forms and functions, depending on what the ethnographer intends to show. Sometimes, the intention is to show informant specific maps, while other times the purpose of mapping can be to show a larger flow of work processes (Talbot, 2017; Turner, 2006). I will discuss shortly how mapping worked during my fieldwork as a helpful organizing tool for pictographically showing complex and diverse landscapes.

Transnational Institutional Ethnography: Building on the Discussion

Doing IE that crosses borders or spans regions is infrequent, as Dorothy Smith's introductory address alludes to. For institutional ethnographers, national borders can be conceptual boundaries, but also a material empirical reality. There are real national policies and legislation, such as national labor or education laws and policy goals, that coordinate and guide how institutions formulate and function; this affects how people are institutionally organized by certain administrative texts and bureaucratic norms. For example, in Janet Rankin's (2017b, 2017a) practical guide to conducting an analysis in IE she uses the demonstrative example of a wound clinic and explains that the researcher could adopt the standpoint of either the nurse or the patient but must make a choice about which empirical location or vantage point will be examined within the institution. However, this example is useful not only because there are clear demarcations between the institutional roles of patient and nurse, but also because the institution in question is locally based and nationally contained. This means, although another nurse might evaluate a patient differently, their actions are still coordinated by a shared understanding of hospital nursing in a specific locale, mediated by national labor laws and norms of nursing in that context. Thus, concentrating IE within national borders or condensed physical locales is often helpful, as these provide an apparent empirical boundary for an inquiry and a reasonable 'end-point' for analyzing trans-locally coordinating texts. This is frequently the case in examples of IE that create text maps, with policies such as national labor laws or guidelines acting as boundaries for the field.

Still, IE has significant potential for bringing novel dimension to global and transnational questions, and a slow growing number of institutional ethnographers have signaled a move towards acknowledging this. Lauren Eastwood's (2006, 2018, 2021) notably questions how the ontological approach can be used to study the intersections between the local and the

global. In her research exploring practices of UN Environmental policy formation, Eastwood explicates how IE allowed for an empirical focus on localized connections and practices whilst studying transnational and global policymaking. Additionally, institutional ethnographers such as Liang and Lin (2021), Spina and Comber (2021) and Rudrum (2016) have contributed to this methodological discussion, all of whom call attention in some way to geography or national and transnational policy in their work. To date, the most explicit use of TIE comes from Daniel Grace's (2013) multi-sited exploration of HIV 'model-laws'. Grace investigates cross-border diverse institutional settings, moving beyond a state-based or nationally confined norm usually associated with IE whilst discussing challenges that arose as a result.

Nevertheless, TIE remains underexplored both in the advantages it offers and challenges it presents. For Smith, understanding work practices with consideration to bodily situatedness is essential for exploring institutional social organization. She writes, "individuals are there [in time and place]; they are in their bodies; they are active; and what they're doing is coordinated with the doings of others. That is the four-part package that is foundational to the institutional ethnographic project" (2005, 59). Her emphasis on bodily and physical space implies an inextricable relationship between material location and how people are positioned and coordinated within an institutional landscape—a component which has not been fully explored in IE inquiries that take the global or transnational into consideration. To take this seriously is to also ask how the methods of TIE need reshaping when geographic space is widened and the multiple material locations in which people are embedded increase in heterogeneity. In other words, it is necessary to critically engage with the concept geographic space, and its potential to disrupt the methods of IE. This is particularly true when employing the approach in highly complex and bureaucratic landscapes, where the transnational institution is comprised of multiple institutional settings and the inquiry crosses local or regional institutional spaces in addition to national legislative boundaries.

In the sections that follow, I introduce the multi-sited empirical field of Horizon 2020 as a part of the EU Framework Programs and describe how this instrument for EU science funding functions for participants. I then introduce some opportunities and challenges that arose from studying the Framework Programs as a transnational institution and elaborate on how these were considered during the fieldwork process.

The European Union Framework Programs: Horizon 2020

As I approached the empirical landscape of EU-facilitated science funding, I was drawn to the methodological tools of IE as instruments for sense-making. The EU geopolitical space is unique in that academic careers are heavily concentrated in national institutions of higher education and research, yet a significant portion of research funding comes from a geographically dispersed range of inter alia regional, national and EU sources.

When it comes to the EU science funding, the European Framework Programs are the most tangible manifestation of systematic political effort towards fueling a European community for science with the explicit intention to 'blur national borders and barriers to scientific knowledge' (EU Commission, 2014). Subsequently, the programs are known to fund large-scale, transnational research collaborations with consortia that include researchers and institutions scattered across the EU.

The fieldwork centered on how academics continually maneuvered between two distinctly coordinated institutions, sometimes multiple times per day via video calls, emails, and other forms of textual communication—one being material locale of their university work with its own social order, coordinating texts and national policies and the other being the trans local, transnational institution of EU knowledge production.

Choosing Projects to Study

While EU projects are most often coordinated out of one research center or university, there are usually several affiliated partners and institutions across Europe. I chose three projects with separate consortia and conducted geographically spread out, multi-sited fieldwork. This was not only a methodological necessity for providing a fuller depiction of the transnational institution, but also itself became a form of participant observation by virtue of the research having similar characteristics as the participants (Clifford, 1992; Falzon, 2015). The fieldwork involved visiting four institutional contexts and conducting approximately 40 semi-structured interviews with scientific coordinators, project managers, and researchers in the projects, both virtually and in person. Interviews were also conducted at the EU commission with policy officials involved in formulating the EU's stance and values for what kind of work would be funded and contributions to the criteria for funding a proposal. During this period, the global Covid-19 pandemic was at its height, so doing participant observation was limited, but I observed and sat in on meetings, on and off-line.

Transnational Institutional Ethnography: Opportunities and Challenges

Although thinking with TIE to study the EU Framework Programs proved analytically productive, the process of adapting certain features of IE to a geographically dispersed empirical field presented challenges throughout the project. First, conceptualizing the Framework Programs as a transnational institution was neither theoretically nor empirically self-evident, and the process of transnational 'field-making' was both a critical opportunity and a challenge. While the programs represent a central funding body with rules and regulations, each project is generally considered to be stand-

alone, without continuity or connection to other funded project. Ultimately, as I will show, thinking with Smiths loose definition of an institution as an empirical heuristic tool led to considering the Framework Programs as a transnational institution—with each project functioning as a window into the institutional coordination of people and practices.

Nonetheless, studying various projects as a single empirical field was pragmatically challenging. Geographically dispersed participants were constantly interacting with differing and overlapping organizations and texts that shaped their work and permeated into the formulation and function of the EU Framework Programs. Everyday practices were coordinated not only by participation in EU research, but also by other forms of coordination, such as university requirements or national policies that directly entered into daily life. Thus, studying multiple projects as a single transnational institution meant sifting through and tracing entangled texts and policies as both a method for locating practical boundaries for my inquiry and outlining the values and ambitions underpinning the Framework Programs. As I will elaborate further, this process not only aided in a form of 'field-making', but it also led to a deeper exploration of the less visible work that constitutes participating in EU-funded research alongside other institutions and organizations for knowledge production.

Additionally, the emphasis put on standpoint epistemology as a central feature of IE presented challenges both practically and theoretically. Taking the empirical realities of EU research into account meant considering how experiences and practices of collaborating academics grew increasingly heterogenous as the geographic contexts from which partners worked broadened. This pertained not only to how people navigated their project role and tasks, but also in how contributions were made and received by other project members. In short, I was challenged to critically engage with standpoint epistemology when studying a geographically dispersed transnational institution.

Still, thinking with TIE provided an opportunity for studying transnational issues that other forms of global ethnography lack. First, it offered an ontological alternative to, for example, Buraway's (2001) and Burawoy et al., 2000) global ethnography or Wilding's (2007) take on the transnational, both of which draw the inquiry and data upward towards more transportable conceptual categories. In contrast, TIE provided the means to ask and explore questions that illuminate trans local coordination without losing focus on people, practices, and materiality— even as the investigation widens to include forces that transcend, coordinate, and inform these.

The process of critically working with TIE also offered an avenue to think differently about a 'field' in IE by widening the scope of empirical issues that can practically be analyzed as single institutions. For example, the EU Framework Programs are almost exclusively studied 'from above', focusing on themes such as national funding distribution, science policy, or disciplinary representation. Less emphasis is put on practices of participating scholars, mostly likely due to their heterogeneity—one of the few uniting factors these scholars share is the politically fueled funding scheme shaping their work practices. By studying the Framework Programs through the lens of TIE, I could approach EU funded research as a single field 'from below,'—consequently adding ethnographic value and insight into how EU funding programs organize scientific knowledge production.

Defining a Transnational Institution Using 'European Union-Language'

Consistent with typical IE research, I began my inquiry by speaking with people about their work practices. After conducting preliminary interviews with policymakers, administrators, and academics, I chose to take the broad standpoint of researchers participating in transnational and multidisciplinary Horizon 2020 projects. Over time, I noticed a shared jargon for describing the research process and particular ways of categorizing time or tasks that seemed naturalized and ubiquitously understood by project participants. These were not scientific or discipline-specific terms in social science, nor were they simply bureaucratic. These terms that seemed fundamentally administrative and unique to EU projects, such as 'deliverable', 'work-package', or 'person-months,' would also permeate into non-administrative, scientific aspects of the research. For example, the formulation of collaborative teams and research questions, correspondence throughout the project, and the final outcomes of the work (e.g., books articles, conferences) all were shaped by what one researcher called 'EU-language'. Although the three projects I studied were largely heterogeneous in their theoretical and disciplinary alignment, with partners distributed across distinct institutions and geo-political spaces, collaborative work was systematically organized between all three around almost identical language. In other words, using 'EU-language' was a natural part of working with transnational EU knowledge collaboration and although it was neither nation dependent nor discipline specific, all project members were seemingly fluent to various degrees. In this case, there was clearly a coordination of people and discourses in EU project work. However, it was unclear the extent to which peoples work was organized as a function of the goals and values of a transnational institution, and how this entangled with their local institutional setting. Thus, I began 'mapping' texts that I encountered as they were involved and made actionable by participants.

Tracing Entangled Texts

The choice to follow three projects closely allowed me to analyze scientific practices as they were shaped and coordinated by the project grant agreement (GA). In EU funded projects the GA is a legally binding text between the EU commission and the participating partner institutions. It is most often formulated by the project coordinator and details not only legalities of timeframe and budgets, but also acts as a

detailed roadmap for the process and direction of the work. It sets in place the projects main disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological framing with relative firmness. For mapping texts in TIE, this was the text that most closely coordinated project work across all projects I studied.

One scholar described her relationship with the document saying,

> "It's a reference that I go back to quite often, especially the theoretical conceptualization behind it. I kind of keep on going back and connecting what I'm doing […] to think, why are we doing this? what are the ideas behind it? So, I do have it kind of on tap. And people reference it all the time."

This researcher describes how she and many other project members utilized the GA as a text that prescriptively guided work practices and consciousness around knowledge production. Although each project differed in their content, the project proposals and eventual GA were structured in similar ways. Thus, the way academics learned and engaged with the 'EU-language' was relatively standardized and paralleled across each of the projects. Consequently, 'field-making' became a function of analyzing how documents like the GA coordinated social organization, language, and practices and allowed me to trace these practices and discourses up to various governing EU policy texts and their underlying funding values. Illustrated in Figure 1 is a simplified representation of the Horizon 2020 EU Framework Program. It shows how texts such as EU research policy and discourse directly and indirectly shape the formulation and language present in a GA. For my purposes here, many details of this map are omitted.

Navigating Between Multiple Institutions

In addition to the GA, participants regularly mentioned intersecting or entangled forms of textual coordination that fell outside the scope of their project role, yet still shaped their participation and collaboration. This meant relevant texts were not limited to those relating directly to EU knowledge production, because other texts such as university policies and national research norms worked in concert to shape everyday work directly and indirectly, and by extension their participation in the Horizon 2020 project. Although the function of these policies often aligned, this was not always the case. For example, one researcher explained that her university, located in an EU country infrequently receiving EU-funding, did not have the infrastructure to support participating or coordinating large EU projects. She described an implied discouragement

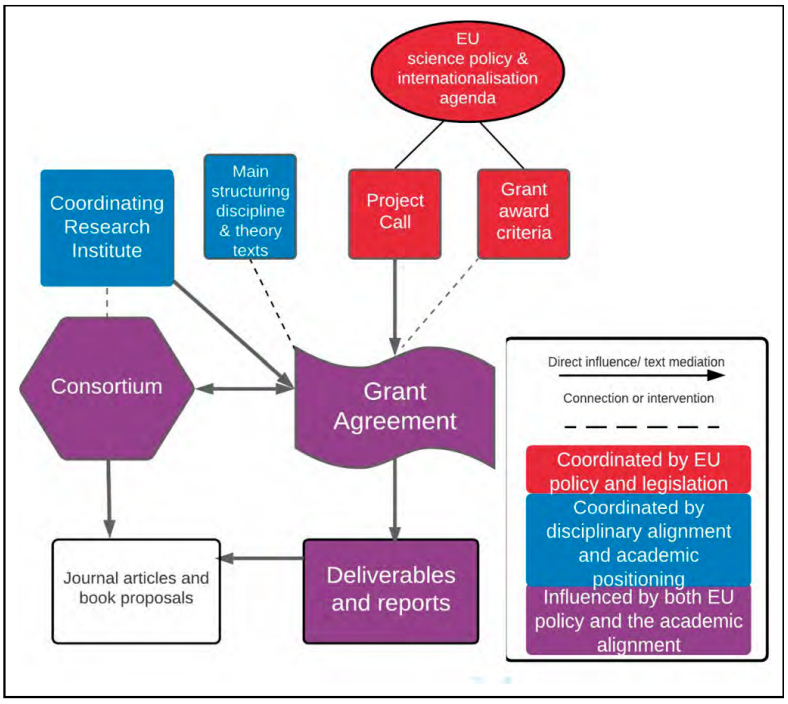

Figure 1. Simplified map of the Horizon 2020 European Union framework program.

from her administration to participate in EU projects, because her institute would neither cover her many teaching hours nor offer other incentives to join. So, although she was regularly subject to discourse from all directions about the importance of internationalization and transnational collaboration, the actualities and policies governing her everyday university context implied opposing values to those perpetuated in her networks and in the EU collaboration. Her experience showed how the complexities of the daily spaces that researchers were embedded and participated in also shaped how they related to the transnational institution.

Exploring tensions between academics' multiple institutional affiliations was a methodological challenge that meant constructing loose boundaries for my inquiry. I was specifically interested in the transnational institution but found it necessary to explore a researcher's local context to untangle how it shaped their experiences with the EU Framework Programs. It was through this continual 'field-making' that new analytical dimensions took shape. I noticed the various kinds of navigational work academics were doing between their institutional alignments, specifically when there was disjuncture between underlying institutional goals and values. It was clear that some people were in a better position to do this kind of navigational work than others because their local context more closely aligned with the goals and values underlying the transnational institution.

For EU knowledge production, the majority of work took place in each partners' respective university setting and national context. Few meetings were conducted in person or even formally scheduled between whole consortia. This was the case even before the Covid-19 pandemic, when national borders became a significant barrier for academics traveling across Europe. Project members primarily interacted through on-line spaces, quickly moving between their different institutional roles and affiliations. This constant virtual navigational meant a strong focus on electronic documents and texts as a primary tool of coordination and practical alignment. For this reason, text-mapping was essential in TIE for pragmatically deciding how the local and national levels entered the lives of participants and how coordination from these spaces practically overlapped and disjoined. Although this kind of navigational work is not unique to participants of transnational institutions, it proved to be a significant aspect of their work. 'Transnational' is not a location but instead functions as a processual concept; something to be done. Transnational institutions frequently entail a degree of physical or virtual mobility and some form of multiple institutional connections, requiring people to navigate the social organization and coordination of these different belongings as a natural part of their everyday work, here utilizing Smiths generous definition of the concept.

In the following section I highlight an additional and related methodological challenge. That is, how the landscape for these work practices represents an historically shaped and geopolitically unequal playing field and how this affected my inquiry in TIE.

The Epistemic Status of Nations: The Relationship Between Geographic Location and Institutional Positioning

The transnational institution became most evident when there were disjunctors between its bureaucratic or textual representations and the actualities of scholarly collaborative work. Conversations with participants underlined clear associations of how 'good' or 'proper' knowledge production in EU-projects looked and where it came from. Sometimes it was a question of disciplinary or epistemic alignments but frequently these disjunctors were related to geographic positioning of people and their associated universities. For example, the researcher quoted below from a central European country explains the long-term collaborative relationship her institute forged with another research center in a wealthy western EU country. She said:

> "We've been trained in how [the coordinating university] applied. This is kind of their everyday work, and we choose to try to look and learn. A lot of our contemporary potential is something that we've learned from them… and they were doing this for us as a center that was coming from a country that joined the EU fairly recently and had still a lot of things to learn… We still are treated here on the local market as an 'avant garde', because we've learned from the best."

Here, this researcher calls attention to the notion that not all nations are equally considered as potential spaces for knowledge production in EU-funded projects. She is underlining the relationship between geopolitical history and perceptions of 'proper' EU knowledge production and sheds light on how this contributes to experiences in both a transnational institution and her subsequent positioning in local institutions.

The notion that geographic positioning shapes how individuals are positioned in a transnational institution can be explored through Maria Do Mar Pereira's (2014, 2017, 2019) concept of the epistemic status of nations. This is the idea that 'proper' scholarliness is associated with certain geographic locations, most often wealthy western or global north nations. In her work, Piera explores the local status of global knowledge hegemonies and how they are negotiated and reproduced by scholars in (semi) peripheral geographic locations and communities, shaping daily work locally and in international networks and collaborations. She clarifies her position, writing that although epistemic status is continually recognized and negotiated with relation to context and professional power, rather than something owned by particular scholars or fields, certain people and groups are tendentially in a better position to have their claims to epistemic status accepted as true and justified (2017, Chapter 2). Pereira addresses a central theme in the feminist approach to studying the intersection of science and power, suggesting who makes a claim and where they are associated with carries just as much or more weight than the

claim itself. It emphasizes that individuals within a transnational institution may have vastly different experiences of navigating their work and institutional positions, regardless of similar professional titles or career trajectories.

This conceptualization of epistemic status presents a unique challenge for working with TIE. Attempting to approach fieldwork grounded by the standpoint of collaborating academics grew increasingly difficult as the geographic contexts from which partners locally worked broadened. Experiences and practices became not only more heterogeneous regarding how participants navigated their project role and tasks, but also in how contributions were made and received by other project members. This was the case regardless of similar career stages or formal titles like 'work package leader' or 'professor'. Taking this seriously meant considering how these different geographic contexts and the epistemic status of nations would necessarily affect the fieldwork and what this meant for taking a standpoint. In principle, I had to consider that scholars are embedded in locales which are not trans local or transnational, even when participating in institutions that *are*. Put differently, scholars are still being coordinated by the texts and policies of the transnational institution, even when they go back to their respective universities. Thus, I found it important to explore the experiential discrepancies that come with being at similar 'locations' within the institution but occupying different geographic locations.

Conducting Divided Interviews

I was both interested in how local context structured everyday work in addition to how this was entangled with participation in the Framework Programs. However, I faced the practical question of structuring the fieldwork with limited time and travel ability. Covid-19 restrictions affected not only my travel opportunities but also those of my participants. Thus, I primarily approached the challenge of participants heterogenous geographic locations through making use of interviews and texts.

Ordinarily, in IE I begin interviews asking participants to describe an actual day, from start to finish, to quickly get a fuller sample of their daily work. However, EU project work is punctuated and sporadic and this approach would give me a fragmented picture of their project work and how it intersected with material surroundings like their university setting. My strategy was to explicitly split the interview into two parts, treating the local context and the EU project as separate institutions. Although many academics saw their work as intertwined in these spaces, I separated these lines of inquiry so that it became easier to understand how and when these contexts overlapped, aligned, or disjointed in values and coordination.

First, I directed my questions to their local institutional affiliation, their university or research center. I asked about their career trajectory, current position, and how their days were structured in relation to the breakdown of their formal workload. I also asked about details such as their office location, who they ate lunch with, and how often they collaborated or socialized with their university colleagues. Additionally, I discussed with participants any textual or formal guidelines that came up for things like gaining research hours or securing a tenure track. Finally, I asked pointed questions such as how their colleagues, or an immediate supervisor reacted when they joined the Horizon 2020 project e.g., was there an email sent out? Was there a reaction by colleagues?

Following this, I moved to the participants relationship to the EU project and the transnational collaboration. I began by asking questions about past experiences with EU-funded collaborations and how or at what stage of the project formulation they joined the current project(s). Sometimes, I would ask participants to walk me through the last Horizon 2020 project related meeting they attended. At times, I came with copy of relevant texts and sections of the GA and asked questions directly about how participants approached specific tasks and how EU terms like 'work packages' and 'deliverables' were learned and written.

Employing this style of interview worked to underline and shed light on how heterogenous institutional coordination and participants actual material locales strongly affected their position in the EU project. It clarified both who did this navigational work and how it differently affected practices. It was evident that some academics' local context *was* the transnational context. This is to say, their everyday work context almost completely aligned and overlapped with the values and practices of participating in the EU project work. In contrast, some project members found large disjuncture's in these different spaces and thus were in a less advantageous position to skillfully navigate the transnational space and, as a result, be acknowledged as an equal knowledge contributor. While this method of interview was a necessity during the pandemic, it also has potential to open possibilities for working with TIE despite limited travel capability.

Trouble With Taking a Standpoint

Although conducting divided interviews proved helpful, acknowledging how geographic location shapes institutional positioning still presents a puzzle for adopting standpoint epistemology in the study of largely geo-dispersed transnational institutions. This challenge during the fieldwork ultimately led to the decision not to take a firm standpoint.

The value of a standpoint can only be considered with respect to the researchers' purpose for employing it. In IE, standpoint epistemology is a heuristic tool; a 'way-in' to a location within an institution and used as a mechanism to ground research in experiences and practices. In this fieldwork, attempting to locate a group of people with a similar institutional vantage point became problematic when actors were working from largely different politico-historical contexts, (in) formal institutional roles and material conditions. Adhering to a rigorous standpoint without significant adjustments meant undervaluing experiential discrepancies of

the institution. Instead, I chose to loosely define a standpoint and focus on experiences and practices of academics as a broad category. It meant limiting the scope of findings and choosing not to follow other lines of inquiry as they presented themselves. For example, despite having opportunities to speak with EU officials, their interviews were useful in this project only insofar as they informed how EU research policy might coordinate academic practices.

The choice to forgo a firm standpoint is not unprecedented in IE, particularly when taking a global or transnational perspective. For example in her institutional ethnography studying UN environmental policy formation, Lauren Eastwood (2005) did not adopt a clearly defined standpoint, choosing instead to situate herself and her work within a thoroughly reflexive vantage point. This is to say, while this article does not advocate for simply omitting standpoint epistemology, practitioners of TIE might move towards critically evaluating how to productively work with this device when an institution is constituted of dispersed people or organizations in heterogenous material locations.

Conclusion

Despite being a geopolitically specific funding body, this paper considers the EU Framework Programs to be an opportune case for critically discussing TIE. Transnational institutions, predominantly large political and bureaucratic institutions with multiple locations such as the UN, the World Health Organization, or the World Bank, continue to adapt and take on various forms and functions. This is especially true in the light of an ongoing climate crisis and the digital post-Covid-19 era, making virtual work commonplace and giving the concept of 'local' new meaning. Now more than ever, people take part in integrated transnational institutions from their living room or office, with everyday work practices directly and simultaneously shaped by several forms of institutional belongings, textual coordination, and material surroundings.

As Dorothy Smith emphasizes, the ontological approach and methodological tools of IE do not lack the capacity to explore aspects of global organization—addressing the trans local is built into the objectives of IE. However, with this paper I have illustrated added value in revisiting certain features of IE to account for materiality and bodily location when defining and studying geographically dispersed institutions. In this, I focus particularly on global and cultural knowledge hierarchies and their role in the social organization of work and knowledge production.

The account of TIE I provide entails not only studying spaces where members of an institution come together under one roof, but also requires acknowledging the 'negative space'— when people are apart. For example, individuals returning to their national organizational headquarters after a global summit or participating in international meetings over video call, followed by lunch with colleagues down the hall. In other words, considering how different locations and physical surroundings diverge, and exploring how dissimilar locales shape work and relationships with and to transnational institutions. As I found, studying navigational work for academics between institutional belongings not only helped to define the Framework Programs as a transnational institution, but also facilitated exploring how work practices can be organized by sometimes disjointed forms coordination.

While the global state of climate and technology continues to transform, so should our approach to studying people and their everyday work. A geospatially conscious approach to TIE offers the capacity to explore the unseen and underestimated ways that people are connected and coordinated in transnational and global processes without sacrificing an essential focus on materiality and everyday practices. Moving forward, this article invites continued thinking with and about TIE as a 'way-in' to inquiries that cross borders and span regions and advocates for TIE as an underutilized point of departure for ethnographically studying organized work as a part of largescale global coordination.

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5.3 Researcher Positioning

Throughout this project, the ways I have positioned myself (and have been positioned) can be discussed on two layers. First, I will reflect on my position within my own research milieu and as a PhD researcher situated in a three-person, mixed-methods research constellation. Then, I discuss the positions I took in relation to the field and project participants that I studied. Notably, while I separate my discussion of these two aspects of positionality throughout the research, I understand them to be intertwined and to inform each other.

This PhD research makes up one third of a larger research project called The European Field of Social-Scientific Knowledge Production. The research is funded through the Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond (DFF) with Kristoffer Kropp as the PI and Anton Grau Larsen contributing as a postdoc. The overarching purpose of the project is to explore a field of European social science and was created around a Bourdeusian field theoretical approach, which I discuss in section 3.4 as the most frequently used approach in the sociology of science to theorise this particular empirical field.

To do this, each of the three team members made up an integral role. Kristoffer Kropp studied the political history of the FPs and the processes of advocating for the social sciences in relation to this funding scheme. Anton Grau Larsen worked quantitatively with CORDIS data from over 80.000 FP and ERC projects to map out a Bourdieusian field of European social science. My contribution came in the form of ethnographically studying how these social scientists in these EU FP consortia came together and collaboratively worked.

At the start of this work, the majority of my previous research experience was within the discipline of anthropology, working exclusively with other qualitative researchers. My bachelor level anthropological foundation comes from the American context, where the discipline is taught using a four-fields approach—cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and archaeology. This is a contrast to the continental European approach, primarily representing sociocultural anthropology. And, although I studied anthropology for my master's degree at a Danish institution, I had by this time become more specialised when it came to who and what I was reading. In other words, joining a project and working closely with two sociologists who were both specialised in Bourdieusian theory *and* using the language of quantitative methods was an epistemic shock. I was surprised to find that although we were all trained social scientists speaking

about the same topics, the early days of the project felt like I was speaking a different language. From the research we read and cited to the way we crafted arguments, every meeting felt like we were bridging gaps in disciplines, epistemologies, methods and sometimes cultures—as an American working exclusively with Danish researchers. The irony was not lost on me that the work of navigating within my own multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural research team of social scientists was the very work I set out to ethnographically study in EU funded collaborations. This position-taking that I learned to do in my own research helped to shape and inform my approach to the fieldwork—particularly how I considered early to mid-career scholars and the work they did in their own collaborations to position themselves.

Nonetheless, when it comes to positioning myself during the fieldwork, my own experiences both in a collaborative project and in academia in general, were not always an advantage. Smith and Griffith (2022, 27) write about how it can be a special problem to be interviewing someone who works in the same professional area as the ethnographer, commenting that it is all too easy to take our own knowledge for granted and "ignorance is a great advantage in IE research". In line with their observations, my positioning during fieldwork often took on what I thought of as an abnormal role. In working with academics, as an early career academic, I found myself continually 'othering' and 'creating sameness' between me and the participants (Pink 2000, 102). Erving Goffman problematizes this, writing about individuals taking on social roles with already established fronts or social perceptions and expectations. If the individual not only takes on a new social role but also attempts to alter the light in which it is viewed, often there are already several well-established fronts among which one must choose (Goffman 1959, 17). I found this to be the case in my own work. Many participants had been involved in research studies, and/or had supervised or dealt with PhD fellows but were unaccustomed to taking on the participant role, with the PhD fellow as the interviewer studying their work. Frequently, the researchers I interviewed suggested I join the PhD groups within the projects I was studying, assuming I was a visiting PhD researcher that came for a research stay.

One example of this kind of misunderstandings occurred with the project manager of one of the three projects I studied. I met her at an event and, after explaining my research, asked if I could come to the institute for an extended stay to do fieldwork. I followed this up with an email extensively describing the research I did and my intention of conducting fieldwork

during the stay. Still, when I arrived and began trying to schedule interviews and sit-in on meetings, I was called into the project managers office where it was explained that the coordination team did not realise I had come to study *them*. Promptly, the winds of cooperation shifted, and it seemed I was considered differently—less of a fellow academic and more of an outsider and an 'other.'

At a simplified dichotomic level, I considered myself an insider-outsider in regard to the fact that I am part of academia with investment in knowing 'the rules of the game,' however I am still an early career scholar who has not fully felt the weight of academic capitalism and the pressure to apply for and win funds. I was most aware of this aspect of my positionality when presenting work to other academics and asking for feedback from other researchers on my writing. Notably, when I presented details of the project and my findings, comments came in the form of personal experiences of participating in EU-funded collaborations—explaining how their experiences were similar or different from my findings. Other times, I was met with excitement and interest in my knowledge about the funding schemes and asked if I had tips on how to win funds or why certain researchers or institutions were repeatedly successful. In other words, I found that it was often difficult getting constructive feedback from my academic peers because the topic so closely touched on the ideals and pressure that the majority of academics face. Interestingly, I most often received helpful comments related to my writing from other insider-outsider figures, such as fellow PhD researchers and senior well-established academics with less precarity or pressure to participate in writing grant applications.

Finally, it is important to note that my position as an American native English-speaker based in a wealthy western EU country inevitably shaped the way I was perceived by participants—affording me certain privileges as well as disadvantages. It is a simple fact that much of the discourse of internationalisation in the majority of European academia effectively equates to the usage of English as the written and spoken language. Thus, writing and speaking in my native language of English would often put me in a privileged position for navigating the fieldwork and the various epistemic terrains I studied. However, it also became clear to me that being a young woman speaking with an American accent whilst studying elements of European geopolitical dynamics created complexity with how participants perceived me. More than once, European academic dynamics were dismissively explained to me as 'nothing like the United States, you can't compare them,' though I had in no way indicated

that the research was comparative or that the US was an analytical element in the project. I understood these moments to indicate that for some participants, my American identity took up unintended space in the (virtual) room and it was important to be aware of when and how this happened.

5.4 Reflections on Ethics

Throughout this project, various ethical dimensions were considered and encountered both during and after fieldwork. First, the issue of anonymity is one that follows me throughout the project, from data collection to publishing. The research asks critical questions about the structures through which many academics find their funding. Particularly in the societal challenges pillar, there is an aspect of geographic inclusion or balancing that is often implicitly worked into the criteria for funding. Problematising how this funding scheme works and presenting potential findings about the creation and reproduction of epistemic inequality in these collaborations has potential to do harm to the careers and relationships of both the scholars who unknowingly participate in reproducing this inequality and the scholars who I understand to be marginalised.

Regarding anonymity in interviews and the presentation of data- I am only working with three projects, two of which are aware that I have selected the other as cases. Publishing anything that would reveal details about who said some potentially harmful quotes would be unethical. However, often to make my analytical point, there are details about the type of research centre a researcher comes from, their gender or other identity categories such as nationality that must be included. It is a common ethnographic dilemma and a very fine line between giving enough information to create analytical dimension and preserving enough anonymity that the participant will not be recognised. To deal with this, I have sometimes changed names or occasionally the gender of the person I am quoting when it is not directly relevant to the analytical discussion at hand. My focus is on practices of knowledge production and the trans local processes these hook into. Thus, details about particular people can be left out if they are not significant for the analysis.

The more complicated ethical issue was how to present certain situations as unequal or unbalanced to the individuals who I understood as being in marginalised positions—even if they were not aware of this marginalisation or potentially disagreed. I noted that in some cases, pointing out to academics their own experiences of inequality or injustice was both

not my place and also naïve— assuming this warranted pointing out. Taking cues from Maria do Mar Pereira's (2014) observations about the modern foreign, many researchers were able to finds ways to use the geopolitical inequality present in the realities of EU FP projects to their advantage e.g. leveraging time and funds within a project. On the other hand, I sometimes felt that discussing how certain academics were successfully navigating the EU research landscape could be useful information to pass on to other participants. Further, this ethical question sparked another related question around my positionality—how to present my work when I asked to interview potential participants. Although I was approaching the research interested in epistemic inequality, introducing the research in this way would not only shape how interviews would transpire but also the people who agreed to be interviewed. For example, one researcher from an eastern European country began her interview explaining she almost declined to be interviewed, because she did not want to contribute to the exhausted narrative of the east-west divide. Her comment made me reconsider how I approached academics for interviews and the language I used to describe my research.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I reflect on the research design for this dissertation, my methods for carrying it out, and my own positionality and ethical implications during the project. Through a discussion of the research design, I recount my plan for commencing this research and the realities of selecting projects and difficulties in gaining access. Following this, I took up my discussion of IE again, this time specifically in relation to the methods I employed and in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic which occurred during the time I planned to conduct fieldwork. To follow this, I introduce Paper 2 in this dissertation, primarily a methods paper, that accounts for my experiences and reflections on working with transnational IE. This paper makes two overall contributions. First, a contribution to the literature on IE arguing for rethinking aspects of the approach to be more geospatial conscious when studying institutions which are neither physically centralized brick and mortar, nor nationally bound. Second, by studying and conceptualizing the FPs through the lens of TIE, I could approach EU funded research as a single field 'from below.' In this way, I was able to contribute insight on how EU funding programs organise scientific knowledge production in otherwise heterogenous research fields. In addition to its relevance within these two discussions and

bodies of literature, the paper functions within the context of this dissertation in addressing sub-question 2— *How can the EU FPs be understood as an institution that is organising knowledge production practices?* Finally, to close the chapter, I reflect on both my multiple positionalities throughout this research as well as the ethical dilemmas and implications that arose.

CHAPTER 6 EMPIRICAL NARRATIVES FROM THE FIELD

Writing an article-based dissertation was a choice that I found overall advantageous. The cadence at which articles can be written and published is not only valuable for the timely communication of my findings but can also aid in breaking up the at-times daunting task of writing a PhD dissertation. Still, the article format can be constricting when doing ethnography and most often does not allow for ethnographic descriptions, long interview quotes, or many excerpts from field notes. As a result, I miss the opportunity to bring to the forefront the stories, experiences, and thought processes that underly the fieldwork and analyses.

My intention with this chapter is twofold: First, I aim to provide the reader with an overall impression of the 'life-cycle' of EU funded social science projects— how they form and function. I have positioned this chapter before papers 3 and 4, so as to provide a fuller contextualisation of the empirical area when reading these papers. Additionally, the chapter offers a richer picture of my experiences of the field. I highlight narratives, interviews, and observations that shed light on what I understand to be an unequal playing field of transnational social science collaborations funded through the EU FPs and how it looks for academics who participate in it. I have chosen to organise the chapter through strung-together narratives from field notes and interview quotes that loosely follow the different phases of project development and analytically relevant themes of the dissertation.[15]

Although this chapter is meant primarily to provide windows into the empirical, I will briefly note how the material connects with the different aspects of the 'hero diagram' that has been used throughout the dissertation. I also touch on how each occasion added direction and dimension to my time in the field.

[15] To be clear, because each project was in a different phase during my time in the field, this chapter is not structured chronologically based on my fieldwork but rather the empirically relevant phases of project development that participants told me about.

6.1 Building a Consortium — The Call

Even during the first experiences of participant observation and interviews, it was made clear to me that understanding the process of building a project consortium was going to be essential to unpacking how the collaborations progressed. Sometimes, when I introduced my research to potential participants, they were confused as to why and how I planned to ethnographically study ongoing EU projects. It was once noted that I had missed the most significant and conceivably observable portion of the project—the formation of the project proposal and consortium. I was cautioned that after these early days, when people came together to hash out the details of the project and align their direction, it would be difficult to observe 'collaboration' because the consortium members would be going back to their respective countries, universities, and local teams.

This indication led my inquiry in two regards. First, it directed my attention sharply to what happened during these early days and why they were so important. Second, it sparked questions about the less visible practices of collaborating transnationally in the social sciences and how to do ethnography when people collaborated without being in the same local setting. Interestingly, as I later came to understand, this process of formulating a project and consortium starts even earlier than when calls for projects are released by the commission and thus the 'collaboration' starts even before any members join respective consortia.

I started the fieldwork with a general idea of the distribution of projects and funds across Europe. After going through the quantitative data that Anton Grau Larsen produced, we periodically discussed as a team the different universities and centres that received the most EU FP funds in the social sciences. I knew this distribution was skewed towards certain countries and centres, but after visiting a few coordinating research centres, it became clearer how this skew occurred so frequently.

When it came to winning EU funds, the most prolific centres seemed to function like well-oiled machines—finding calls, creating international networks, then using these networks to

win more funds for future project collaborations[16]. In an interview with one of the career project managers I spoke with, I asked about the financial breakdown of the centre he worked at and how his job fit into the division of labour there for project managers. He explained that, besides some basic infrastructure support, the centre he was located at 'basically lives on external funds.' Describing their strategy, he said:

> "[The project managers] all produce a newsletter every month where we dig into funding opportunities. We have split up a little bit in countries [based on our nationality and language skills] and at the European level as well. So, we're always screening part of the world and screening the landscape for funds […] and obviously the Framework Program of the EU is key to our funding strategy because it does not only mean you get funding but also it's instrumental for collaborating with colleagues all over the world. These are central activities that we always want to take part in. We always have a record of coordinating those programs and it helps us also attract colleagues from others."

As he notes, this centre developed a system for finding external funding and the EU FPs are a key piece to his strategy. In addition, it is common for well-established institutions who frequently get EU funds and have access to EU funding offices and resource building to receive knowledge about a call some months in advance before the call is released. It often starts fairly early in the call process, with research managers at these institutes communicating with the representative from their national ministry, who does a version of lobbying or advocating work in Brussels for the relevant research centres in their national context. Affiliates and project managers from these centres are frequently getting to see early drafts of calls in order to give comments to send back with the national research representative.

Another project manager from a well-established institution explained this process saying:

> "For the social sciences, there is a person in the [national] research council that we know quite well, and she sends drafts to us and all the relevant institutes in [country] under the understanding of confidentiality that we are not allowed to share this. But I mean a lot of people see these…we are then allowed to comment on the first draft and then she brings that back to the meetings in Brussels, so we knew and prepared a long time before the actual call came out. It was clear to us that this was a call we should be involved in, and which projects and consortia were forming."

As I continued to speak to project managers and coordinators, it was apparent that this process of applying for FP projects did not start with the release of the calls and more importantly it did not start at the same time across various European universities. In

[16] Of course, while some of the elite institutions that win EU FP funding function in this way, many coordinating institutes do not.

particular, what stood out to me was this notion of 'relevant institutions', which I understood to mean the universities that had the infrastructure and capacity to not only be well informed of the FP calls before their release, but also to *lobby for their interests in the early call drafts*. This early information already positions certain institutions with a time advantage to start preparing a proposal and consortium and, as the above project manager notes, they had an idea of which projects and consortia were forming.

Here, these accounts touch on the connection between national research governance and management and the close relationship to the EU political strategy for European research that enters into the work of individuals who are endeavouring to both shape and win EU research funds.

6.1.1 The Draft and the Snowballing Period

Even with such a head-start, I was surprised that a research centre could get a realistic sense of which projects and consortia were forming during an application period. At first glance, the opportunities and combinations for potential universities and consortia across Europe that might come together to apply to a FP SC call seemed enormous. However, as the fieldwork continued, the communities of social scientists in each discipline that coordinated and applied for these projects started to seem small.

During an early interview with what I assumed was a project coordinator, I asked a researcher how he decided to formulate the project and to apply for the funds. He quickly corrected me by explaining that, although he was one of the leading scholars in this field, it actually was not his idea to apply, and he was specifically the *scientific coordinator not the project coordinator*. I had not heard this distinction before, so I pressed him to explain further. He clarified that, although the project website lists him as a coordinator, he made an agreement with the head of the research centre (where he was a fellow) that he would lead the *scientific* coordination with none of the administrative burden—he did not even know the name of the project officer. As he said, he had previously declined other offers to coordinate consortia forming around the call but 'he basically wrote the book on this topic' so when the head of centre said they were formulating a consortium and asked him to participate he felt obligated to at least coordinate the scientific aspect. He made it a point to explain that the experience felt uncomfortable and awkward because former colleagues and

researchers located at another well-known research centre had reached out and also asked him to take part in competing consortia that was forming.

At this point in my fieldwork the conversation suggested that, although calls released for the FP SC pillar seemed to cast a wide net and the commission supposedly invited a broad range of proposals, the prolific centres that most often-received funds were tendentially vying for the same group of researchers—the 'leaders in the field'—at least in these early days of formulating a project[17].

This experience among others, directed my attention to what seemed a critical point in these collaborations. Even before the project and the work-packages are formulated, a well-timed recruitment process for the 'core' members of the consortium takes place. During this early period, sometimes before the call is officially released, the coordinators I spoke to describe a type of 'mad-dash' to concurrently create a consortium and nail down enough detail of the project design to create a draft of the proposal and work packages. One project manager explained this process:

> "Well, you need to make sure that you have some core people on this particular topic [and] there are some people that are kind of insiders on the theme that you really need to have on board […][Researcher 1] is one and [Researcher 2] is another…we contacted the two of them, because they have been working on this for a while and we didn't get [Researcher 2] because he had already signed on with [another coordinating institute]. I mean, you don't know who the competitors are, you know, at that stage, you basically just develop as strong a team as you can, but that team also must be composed of people that will be pulling in the same direction as you […]. Some people you know really well, so you don't need to do more than simply contact them and say, look, we're doing this. Do you want to be on board? […] [Researcher 1] was drafted very quickly, because he's a big name in the topic, and a colleague so it was clear we would work with him. And then I think because of the mass of colleagues [in our network] dealing with aspects of [the topic], we also made a call within [our] community to see who would be interested in taking part in that."

As it was explained to me, the process of navigating how to attract 'top researchers' or the 'core people', and also create a balanced proposal with a red thread is far from straightforward. In other words, this period of time requires a significant amount of speedy strategising—attempting to appease several researchers on various fronts[18].

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[17] This was as especially prevalent when it came to the research centres that frequently received EU FP funds.

[18] It is important to note that although each project I explored seemed to formulate around a few 'core people,' not every project was formulated around what members of a field might consider 'top researchers.' However, according to participants, these groups tended to have at least some overlap.

Due to the added time constraint for forming a proposal and creating a consortium, this process is messy and not always chronologically very clear. To make sense of it here, I understand the process as taking place in two approximately consecutive phases: ***'the draft'*** and the ***'the snowballing phase'***.

First, '***the draft***' works similar to a sporting team draft and involves selecting and contacting these 'core people' in a given field and brainstorming a 'convincing narrative' for the project. This manoeuvring also involves considering which researchers based in Europe might get 'drafted' by another project.

Of this process, one coordinator said:

> "The writing up bit is always delicate in terms of how it's not always clear whats the most successful strategy. There are some people where it's extremely top-down and who basically write the entire application and proposal and say, 'you're doing this and this and that'. Then there are people you are basically sending out information to, like 'this is a template for work packages', send it back to me in three weeks and we'll see what we'll do'. I remember one proposal where this was actually the biggest problem. The coordinator got all these big names - and she was not able to create a coherent proposal out of that. It was simply too scattered and too diverse. And it was then an issue getting a red line into that. Literally everyone important was involved in that consortium. It was a bad proposal because of [the coordinator's] strategy with leaving too much space to everyone because that leads to having to say you can't do that because it doesn't fit [...] So basically, it's about accommodating the interests of those who are involved and finding a compromise between those interests and the call text and then you have to be able to have a convincing narrative. [...] that's why in this case we had two preparatory meetings because one was brainstorming and the second one was getting coherence into the project."

Here, this coordinator highlights the strategising that takes place during this period—balancing between attracting the top researchers and bending the research design and work-packages to appease certain researchers who push for aligning their work-package with the work they want to do. It stood out to me here how he explains that giving too much freedom to the various partners leads to an unsuccessful proposal. That being the case, he also makes it clear that inviting top researchers from well-known institutions means many of these researchers will have their own agenda for what the work should look like and who they would like to collaborate with. He implies that the best strategy is to come with a theoretical and conceptual puzzle already in place, and then brainstorming the work packages and putting coherence into the project. It was a strategy that I found other successful coordinators employing for planning large-scale, multi-partner proposals.

An example of this early negotiation process was described to me during an interview by another researcher:

> "Obviously, [he] was saying if you want me on the project then I need this and that and et cetera, and then he claimed a big chunk of money and resources and partners in order to do what he wanted to do with the project. But it was okay because it culminated in a sense… but that was something that needed to be explained – [that we adapted] the way we were selling it, so the inclusion of those work packages made sense."

Following the draft, a ***'snowballing phase'*** takes places. In the development of a project, this is the phase when the work packages are fleshed out and other partners join. Certain core partners are already on board and most of the theoretical and conceptual framework for a project is defined. The research puzzle is then pitched to potential partners in their networks to be fleshed out and unpacked. Often these networks are made up of alumni, former research fellows or associates. However, sometimes the partners brought in during this phase are unknown to the coordinating institute or coordinator, making the 'marketability' of the research puzzle that much more important. When these second phase partners start to join the project, sometimes they are given templates for a work-packages or there is a large discussion about what a work package could look like using their expertise, but the theory and 'research puzzle' are already in place meaning much of the projects 'ethos' has been decided on.

One researcher I spoke to, who had worked with the coordinating institute on a previous project, was asked to join a consortium after the main elements of the project were in place. She illustrates how this snowballing phase can look:

> "[The coordinating institute] have this unique quality of sending a very good puzzle. So, we got attracted by the puzzle essentially. I think they did not send in an email who was already on board, but we had that discussion in our first conference call, and they said that we have those people and those people. Ultimately, that was maybe the core group of the consortium that we also knew from [the previous collaborative project] […] When we met for this consortium building meeting, we had more or less everybody on board already."

This is crucial, because it means that those scholars who are coordinating the research are the ones who generally define the project's scope and trajectory. This is especially true in H2020 collaborations, because as I mention in section 2.2.1, once the grant agreement is signed with the commission, it acts as a contract; meaning it is fairly important that the project runs as designed. The consequences of this issue are touched on in Paper 4, where we point out how the inclusion of various partners from across Europe in a consortium does

not necessarily transform knowledge production due to the rigidity of the grant agreement and the partners and countries that most often coordinate projects[19].

For me, concentrating on these beginning phases of project formulation provided a 'way-in' during the fieldwork. Exploring these phases introduced the early dynamics between the partners, informing how the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the projects were set in place. Additionally, these phases helped me to understand how work packages were constituted and divided and how each partner's working agenda was coordinated.

I also find it relevant to point out the different discourses and forms of coordination pictured in the 'hero-diagram' that enter into the work of designing a proposal and creating a consortium. For example, EU political strategy and excellence discourse shapes how people and universities conceptualise and organise how to answer an EU research call and what a 'good' proposal should look like. Additionally, aspects of professional and disciplinary discourses are involved in shaping how academics decide to join a consortium and how they are perceived by the other members—considering the relationally shaped and perceived forms of professional power.

6.2 Establishing 'Good Quality'

One of the themes that continually re-emerged during the fieldwork was the different kinds of empirical boundary work around how good quality research was defined and characterised within FP collaborations. Although this is by no means a novel question in STS or the sociology of science, there were a select few experiences during interviews and observations that shed light on some of the ways these negotiations took place within FP social science projects. I will briefly touch on three lenses through which I observed 'good quality' being negotiated: **disciplinary differences**, **specialisations within disciplines**, and **good quality defined by the European Commission**.

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[19] For further discussion of this issue, linking epistemic inequality to *when* partners join a project, see (Fishberg 2020). https://doi.org/10.51428/tsr.gxjk8699.

6.2.1 Disciplinary Differences

Inter and multi disciplinarity within largescale EU-funded projects is inevitable, but in the SC pillar it is also a requirement. As I have pointed out in my review of the STS literature in section 3.1, most of this work has a preoccupation with understanding how the natural sciences and the social sciences work together—highlighting major and observable ontological riffs within the research process, scientific intentions, or expected outcomes. It is less common to find work that specifically explores the way that different disciplines within the social sciences find epistemologically common ground. This could be attributed to the invisibilities of doing social science work that I highlight in the previous chapter—making these disciplinary riffs between the social sciences less accessible for study. After some time in the field however, it became clearer how these disciplinary differences manifest in FP projects.

I noticed that each project I studied held a type of 'kick-off meeting' which was written into the project plan. It seemed to be a good idea—having all the partners meet in person to get to know each other and to set the plan for collaboration in place. Though, after I began speaking to coordinators and partners it was explained to me that this meeting was not only filled with an exciting potential energy, but also laden with tensions.

> "I had written the proposal myself, and I had shared it with them and asked for comments and feedback [...] So, the purpose of the kick-off meeting was the transfer of the ethos and values of the project to the project partners [but] ultimately, I am much more Machiavellian than that. I made sure that if it gets to a vote, the centre of gravity in the project is [in my own discipline]. Of course, we have incorporated the [others] But they are not in charge, and they have no control of the levers [because] it's written into the work packages. [...] There are disciplinary tensions, but this is the barrier of the European projects, putting all of these people in a room together to solve a problem. So, the starting point is when people sit around the table it's like playing poker. Everybody is watching everyone else trying to read them but trying to be unreadable themselves. And then through the presentations and the language games they use, you can see their ontological and epistemological bases, and who they are and how they view the world [...] There will never be an accommodation because we have fundamental differences about what constitutes [data] [...] So, everything that I think is [data], they feel is to be extinguished from their [data] universe."

Here, this coordinator is highlighting both how ontological divides present themselves between social science disciplines *and* how he plans to deal with these divides. His statement is interesting from a disciplinary perspective in the way he conceives of how these disciplinary differences will play out. Yet for my purposes, it stood out more so as a moment during the fieldwork that the grant agreement was being considered not as a constricted

agreement but as a tool used by a researcher to assert control within the project. For him, good quality was defined in this project through his own discipline and by ensuring that the outcomes of the project align with this— this meant maintaining 'control of the levers' within the research design.

Another example of academics setting disciplinary boundaries came during an interview with a legal scholar who was part of a project that was primarily anchored in political science. He recounted a break in his usual way of working when he and another legal academic on the project were attempting to work with a term that was central to the project's theoretical foundation. The concept worked well in political science but could not be adapted to academic legal studies because it carried different meanings and implications that were too difficult to standardise for the EU deliverable. So, they had to work with the project's definition of the concept, meaning publishing in legal journals would not be possible or would require substantial reworking of the material.

6.2.2 'Turf Wars': Specialisations

Boundary work also took place between specialisms within the same discipline. Indeed, 'Turf wars' and 'battles of territory' are the words used by one academic I spoke with to describe the relationships between two very prominent scholars in the same discipline.

At one point during the fieldwork, in an online consortium meeting, I noticed an awkward moment between work-package presentations. A long comment was posted in the chat box by one of the researchers who headed a main work-package. In it, he brought up a few critical comments regarding the central theory around which the project was constructed. There were one or two comments expressing agreement with his critique, but the comment was not taken up aloud like most other comments made in the chat box thus far.

Later in the week, during an interview with a post-doc that was also in attendance, I asked about this moment. The researcher who posed the critical questions in the chat box, I will call him Researcher 1, was a mentor for the post-doc I was interviewing throughout his PhD and now his work package leader for this project. The postdoc laughed and remarked that he had his suspicions tensions might be in the very core of the project's foundation but now he knew for sure.

Recounting the consortium meeting I asked about, he said:

> "[Researcher 1] raised the issue of how to treat [the critiques he had with the guiding theory for the project and how it relates to the goals of the EU project] towards the end of the sessions and there was tension there because some people said, 'thanks for bringing this up it's, a good idea', and the others said OK we can discuss this separately but not now. Basically, [the coordinator] didn't want to go in that direction because [this theory] is his baby…so if you start taking away stuff from it, you know, I think there was some sensitivity… so of course people cannot tell [researcher 1] to go away, they have to find ways to try to do that. [….] I actually think it should be a selling point for the project […] It would be sensible for such a big project towards the end to engage in possible alternatives or limits of the core approach but it's a controversial position because on the other hand you have [the coordinator] who is the [theory] person, so of course you have these battles of territory"

The coordinator and the researcher questioning the foundational theory of the project both operate in the same discipline, and both are well known academics in closely related fields of study. The story highlighted for me how aspects of professional power might be exerted in these large collaborative projects that include multiple well-respected researchers across Europe, operating within similar disciplinary networks.

6.2.3 'Good Quality' Defined by the European Commission

There is also this definition of good quality that comes from the contract made between the consortium and the commission. In a way, the EC defines and reiterates 'excellence' and 'good quality' by choosing to fund specific proposals—entering into a contract that holds the academic partners accountable to the accepted project. When this happens, 'good quality' takes on another dimension for researchers related to fulfilling contractual obligations. For example, below is a quote from a discussion that took place between two project members about the goal outcome for the project which was expected to produce an online tool as a deliverable. The conversation is about re-assessing the tool's potential effectiveness and whether or not the team should adjust the originally planned approach. Speaker 1 is explaining that even if the tool is not as innovative as they original hoped it to be, but the project accomplishes what was promised to the commission, that would be enough. Speaker 2 disagrees, saying if they *just* meet the expectations of the proposal and it is not an innovative tool, that would be 'what failure looks like' and would be 'letting [themselves] down.'

> **Speaker 1:** I think the big problem will be not having a plan B. Sometimes you think you are doing something that will have many advantages but, in the end, it is not as useful as you thought in the beginning. So, regarding the [project officer], if we have a plan B I won't say we are in trouble, but the point is that we have to have plan B. Maybe [the tool] won't be so disruptive but in the end, we will be accomplishing the proposal, I think.

> **Speaker 2:** I suppose plan B, or C, or D, is that we let ourselves down to circumstances and produce just another [tool] that doesn't really in a meaningful way help people. For me that is what failure looks like- is that we just develop another instrument. Can we make it better and what would that look like? That provokes lots of questions like what is success and what does accuracy look like?

This interaction stood out as a moment that shaped how I understood collaborative relationships and illustrates an example when discrepancies around the outcome of a project were clearly articulated. Projects that are funded under the SC pillar represent knowledge production with multiple intents for researchers who join. Indeed, there is a necessary socio-political ambition with the research, defined by the call offered by the EU commission. Yet, for researchers who participate, the work package or deliverable they contribute to is often one of many projects or just a job opportunity. This also serves as an example hinting at how the academics and their knowledge production practices are organised and shaped by aspects of EU socio-bureaucratic authority.

6.3 A Relationship to the European Commission

Finally, there were several moments and stories that stood out during the fieldwork where academic knowledge production was tangibly shaped by the researchers' relationship to the EC—whether this was through links with a project officer or how project members constructed and communicated their progress and findings.

6.3.1 The Project Officer

During a lunch break at one of the research centres I visited, one of the project managers was complaining over lunch how busy her team was, preparing for the 'mid-project evaluation' and preparing their work package reports to send to the project officer. She explained how another project that started at the same time as her own had already turned in their reports. Then, she speculated they might have a better project officer because they were able to coordinate this earlier. This kind of discussion between project coordinators and managers occurred repeatedly during the fieldwork—particularly when it came to how the administrative relationship with the project officer affected the work and flow of the project.

The role of the project officer was one that struck me as important yet seldom critically discussed by researchers participating in FP projects nor by critics studying EU-research funding. A project officer is the main point of liaison and intermediary between academic

partners and the EC. Their responsibilities include inter alia, approving any changes to work packages and budgets, setting, and enforcing deadlines for deliverables, and sometimes also providing EU-level platforms for research dissemination. In these ways, these individuals act as the brokers of EU knowledge production and one of the few consistent similarities between otherwise dissimilar EU FP projects. Subsequently, these people have a considerable amount of influence when it comes to how FP projects progress.

When it comes to how a project officer can shape the course of a project, one coordinator said,

> "It has to do with developing a rapport with the commission. It has to do with trust. If they know that you are [completing your deliverables], then they will also understand and settle for a convincing answer for why you are delayed. You develop a relationship of trust. By reputation first of course…like our project officer wanted to take on this project because he found it really interesting, and we knew each other [already] …so he knew something about us and our research centre format you develop an ongoing relationship and a PO is going to say, 'ok what kind of people am I dealing with?' and also on practical terms do they report do they follow up and you develop a relationship of trust and with this comes an element of slack and leniency because they know you are dedicated."

Here, it struck me that when this coordinator refers to 'the commission,' he is referring to a person— the project officer. He highlights another instance of invoking the notion of 'trust' when referring to a relationship to the EC (see also, chapter 2 section 2.2.). In this case, trust means the privilege of leniency and again the impression of more freedom and autonomy from the commission based on previous evidence of quantifiable knowledge products. During the fieldwork, it stood out to me how often a project officer interprets a grant agreement or the reliability of a researcher, and how infrequently these interpretations are held up as significant in shaping participation in EU research.

6.3.2 The Mid-Project Evaluation

Besides the proposal stage of the project, the most closely scrutinised moment during the 'life-cycle' of an EU FP project seems to be the mid-project evaluation. Briefly, it is the point roughly halfway through the project when the entire consortium must present in-detail the progress and findings to a board of academic peers at the EC. When I started the fieldwork, one of the projects I was studying had just gone through this, while another was in the process of preparing for theirs. More than once, the mid-project evaluation was described to me as being akin to a PhD defence, and it seemed to invoke both nerves beforehand, and pride afterword—assuming the outcome was positive.

Although it was not possible for me to observe one of these evaluations in-progress, different consortium members described their experiences participating in them. In the most recent evaluation, the coordinating institute conducted two 'dress-rehearsals,' and sent out templates for each partner to organise exactly how to present their deliverables. According to the project manager, this was to showcase how tightly the progress aligned with the grant agreement and to give solid explanations for any deviations.

A different project member described the last one she had taken part in. She recalled that the whole consortium spent days taking screenshots, practicing their presentations, putting together evidence that the app they created was functioning. Finally, when it came time to present it at the commission, the app had a glitch and was not working. She described how the board of evaluators left the room and came back with a 'verdict' and she felt like the project and the research was on trial. If it did not pass this evaluation the team would have to go back and revise months and sometimes years of work.

Overall, this process signalled to me a clear point of intervention in the progress of an EU FP project. While the evaluation of a project proposal seemed to be heavily discussed and monitored, I found very little information about the mid project evaluation on the H2020 website. It indicated even further that there are fairly large gaps in the literature about how FP projects are forming and functioning and how they are shaped by EU political authority.

Conclusion

This chapter is positioned in the dissertation to both lay out the 'life-cycle' of an EU FP project, in addition to providing a more in-depth look at the actualities of participation in these collaborations. As I have mentioned, my inspiration from Dorothy Smith and IE forefronts participants practices and experiences. Thus, before placing the following sections of the dissertation, Paper's 3 and 4, I found it necessary to put in place a type of bridge, grounding the analyses and provides the reader with more empirical context. Further, these ethnographic narratives and vignettes work to indicate areas of my empirical material that are beyond the scope of the articles included in this dissertation. In this way, I have outlined further research areas that build on these empirical insights to take up in future work.

PAPER 3 EU RESEARCH AS UNEQUAL EUROPEANISATION? EXPLORING THE LESS VISIBLE NAVIGATIONAL WORK ACCOMPANYING EU-FUNDED SOCIAL SCIENCE COLLABORATION

Paper 3 is a chapter in the edited volume titled *The Social Sciences in A European Space– Changes in Institutions, Disciplines, and Ideas*, for which I co-wrote the introduction (Paper 1). The chapter proposes the notion that participating in an EU FP project, and the EU-research landscape as a whole, represents the work of 'doing' Europeanisation and constitutes a novel layer of the academic vocation in Europe.

Participating in these collaborations involves putting into practice less-visible forms of work that I refer to as *navigational work*, here meaning the work done by academics of bridging forms of academic social coordination or order and geopolitically shaped forms of EU political authority. I argue that the practices of strategically navigating and bridging aspects of the academic and EU politico spheres in FP projects are not skills that are normally visible or formally taught, and unequal access to the knowledge required for this kind of navigational work a contributor to the deepening unequal epistemic divides across Europe.

Within the context of this dissertation, the book chapter contributes to how I problematise the notion of EU excellence discourse as ambiguously defined when it comes to the FP SC pillar. As I write in section 2.2.2, the definition of excellence in the SC pillar moves beyond simply a familiar form of academic excellence that might be attributed to the ERC—a version of excellence which is arguably merit based. Meaning, strategically winning funds and participating in SC projects includes additional navigational work in order to understand the EU-specific political and professional conditions inherent in this funding scheme.

It is important to note that, because this is a book chapter the concept of Europeanisation has already been defined and worked through in the introduction to the book and in the proceeding chapters. This means it is less necessary to go into detail about the concept of Europeanisation and more relevant to discuss here how Europeanisation might take place or become embodied in the ways that I outline.

PAPER 4 GEOPOLITICAL AND EPISTEMIC INEQUALITIES IN EUROPEAN RESEARCH: EXPLORING THE SELECTION OF COUNTRIES AS CASES IN EU-FUNDED TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Paper 4 speaks to widespread felt and studied issues of hidden geopolitical and epistemic inequality in European social science research. It picks up on works from researchers such as Raewyn Connell and Maria do Mar Pereira and contributes novel perspectives for thinking about European research and research funding. It is thus relevant not only for readers interested in manifestations of geopolitical epistemic inequality but also those interested in the interaction between governing bodies and scientific funding.

The paper first criticises the political strategies taken by the commission to create a more equal FP. (I will mention these strategies briefly here e.g., widening and teaming and the general ERA strategy). Generally, the commission focuses equality efforts on participants and partners rather than in the knowledge being produced. The paper makes the point that even if a country is present as a partner doesn't necessarily mean the country is better represented.

We problematize the dominant language of a global north and south, pointing out how these bodies of literature neglect aspects of epistemic inequality that are continually reproduced within Europe. Through addressing the 'where' of collaborative research by focusing on epistemic attributes rather than participatory optics, we comment not only on how EU funding structures are contributing to these inequalities but also make a wider critique about the conditions for producing knowledge in the neoliberal academy.

This paper has currently received a revise and resubmit from The Sociological Review.

CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

For social scientists in Europe, EU-funded research—and particularly the SC pillar of H2020—represents a specific kind of collaborative endeavour. Participation in these projects interweaves aspects of the academic vocation, such as academic and disciplinary norms, with the socio-bureaucratic and politically shaped facets of EU research funding. What's more, they represent spaces where researchers come face-to-face with sociohistorical assumptions and geopolitical dynamics that are produced and reproduced by institutions and practices across the academic landscape of Europe.

As noted in the Introduction, these inevitable European-specific dynamics and inequalities that academics face in H2020 projects are in fact a distinct manifestation of an ambitious and politically shaped form of Europeanisation, catalysed by the EU Commission. This dissertation shines a light on the EU FPs as a demonstrative example of one of the avenues through which the social science vocation and knowledge production in Europe have and continues to be uniquely entangled with the EU and, in this way, uniquely European.

My intention with this research was to unpack aspects of this interwoven relationship between the academic vocation and EU political authority, not through a top-down or macro focus on social science knowledge production in and for itself. Rather, I centred my inquiry on the conditions for knowing when to participate in large-scale transnational FP collaborative projects. This led me to explore the primary research question posed at the start of this dissertation: *How do European social scientists participate and collaborate in the EU FPs, and how can this be understood in light of Europeanisation and ultimately an epistemically unequal Europe?* To answer this question, this study has addressed four sub-questions. I will consider the contributions this dissertation makes through the lens of these sub-questions.

First, I ask, *What does Europeanisation look like in relation to the social sciences in Europe and the institutions that house and govern them?* While all the papers contribute to answering this sub-question, Paper 1 addresses this problem most directly. In this introductory book chapter, we introduce the multifaceted relations between social science research and European processes and institutions—what we are calling Europeanisation. We highlight the large-scale transformations, in both institutions and epistemological

configurations, that indicate a continual move, both politically and practically, towards Europeanisation of the social sciences. We propose that these changes reflect how social scientists participate in the global knowledge economy, and the wider changes in the political and social organisation of European social sciences. While the concept of Europeanisation is most often used in the language of EU studies and public administration, this paper serves as a comprehensive overview of the scholarship that is primarily based at the nexus of the sociology of science and the political sociology of Europe, mapping out the current conditions for studying the social sciences in Europe. In this way, it primarily functions as a state-of-the-field—contributing to a forward-looking research agenda.

Sub-question 1 is also addressed through the lens of people and practices with the inclusion of Chapter 6. In this chapter, I put practices and experiences at the forefront of how I consider Europeanisation—how it looks and feels for academics across Europe. I highlight snapshots of doing Europeanisation through, inter alia, manifestations of EU-fostered 'excellence discourse' when creating a project and consortium, struggles over what 'good quality' entails, and select interactions with and interventions from the EU Commission, ultimately shaping knowledge production. The empirical reality that I elaborate on in this chapter contributes to the limited amount of empirical data and academic literature highlighting and studying the Europeanisation of the social sciences through academic and social practices—not just within EU studies but also within social studies of science. Studying a relationship between scientific knowledge production and politically shaped forms of EU political coordination is seldom done with the main focus on the practices of scholars themselves. Most often, when it comes to social studies of science in a European space, this relationship is approached from 'above', analysed through political processes or aspects of EU funding distribution and policy or disciplinary representation.

Sub-question 2 asks, *How can the EU FPs be understood as an institution that is organising knowledge production practices?* This sub-question is primarily discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, elaborating my theory and methods, which build on IE. My choice to think with the pragmatic and grounded approach of IE opened up opportunities for more fruitful contributions to studies of both the EU research landscape as a whole and of the experiences of academics who participate in it.

Paper 2, titled 'Thinking with Transnational Institutional Ethnography: Moving Towards Spatially Conscious Methods for Studying Geographically Dispersed People and

Institutions,' and published in the *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, squarely addresses sub-question 2. The paper primarily serves as a methodological contribution, identifying space in the IE literature for more reflection on how to take the global or transnational into consideration. I build on the conventional approach to IE and argue for working with TIE to study the EU FPs as a transnational institution—taking seriously an emphasis on bodily and physical space in relation to material location. In particular, IE calls for starting from the position and experiences of researchers, even when the inquiry moves upwards towards more complex political organisation. Due to this focus, I was able to keep my attention on the standpoint of academics, specifically how EU texts and discourses entered into and coordinated their daily practices, working to organise the 'ways of knowing and doing' while participating in EU research. Through approaching EU funding in this 'bottom-up' way, I could connect and study large-scale European processes, finding links between FP projects that would otherwise only be linked through the macro, EU level (through policy, etc.), and showing how everyday practices in otherwise heterogenous FP projects are coordinated similarly within a larger EU-level institution. In light of this, Paper 2 ultimately contributes to both the IE community and the community of EU studies. By studying FP collaborations in this way, this research not only provides an example of how to study the transnational coordination of knowledge production practices across Europe for future research, but also contributes sorely needed ethnographic data about large-scale, non-ERC EU collaborations.

Sub-question 3 asks, *How do academics navigate their participation in the EU FPs and the European funding landscape?* Similar to sub-question 1, this question is addressed continually throughout the dissertation, but most explicitly discussed in Paper 3, a single-authored book chapter titled 'EU Research as Unequal Europeanisation? Exploring the Less Visible Navigational Work Accompanying EU-Funded Social Science Collaboration'. With this chapter, I draw on Dorothy Smith's generous conception of work to introduce the concept of *navigational work*. Navigational work is used in this chapter to describe the work done by academics that is less visible in light of academic capitalism and a neo-liberalised knowledge economy, yet is essential for bridging forms of academic social coordination or order and geopolitically shaped forms of EU-level socio-bureaucratic coordination. In other words, it is work that lies at the nexus between more typical academic work and the EU geopolitical arena. I discuss how this work not only constitutes a novel aspect of the

academic vocation, but also how it can be considered part of the work of doing Europeanisation for collaborating academics across Europe. In addition to the conceptual contribution made in this chapter, an empirical contribution is made by emphasising how academics are differently positioned in learning and practicing this novel and ambiguous form of navigational work, potentially deepening epistemic divides across Europe when it comes to winning funds and navigating collaborations at the EU level.

Last, sub-question 4 asks, *How does geopolitical inequality in Europe play a role in shaping forms of epistemic inequality when participating in the FPs?* This sub-question, addressing the relationship between geopolitical inequality and epistemic inequality, is a major theme throughout the dissertation. Each chapter and paper touches on this theme to some degree, but Paper 4 is most centrally focused on this discussion. In this paper, titled 'Geopolitical and Epistemic Inequalities in European Research: Exploring the Selection of Countries as Cases in EU-Funded Transnational Collaborations', we focus on the 'where' of EU-funded social science collaborations—not exclusively in regards to where collaborators are located, but rather which countries are studied as empirical cases. The paper points out that, although much of the scholarship focused on epistemic inequalities within the social sciences critiques a type of Eurocentric hegemony, there continues to be forms of geopolitically shaped epistemic inequalities that exist within Europe that are excluded from the frequently used Global South moniker. In taking seriously the forms of geopolitically shaped politics of the self throughout the fieldwork and analysis, this paper in particular aligns this dissertation with a significant strain of feminist 'non-mainstream' STS work, contributing to the literature studying global forms of epistemic inequality. Additionally, by focusing on epistemic attributes rather than participatory optics, the paper shows not only how EU funding structures are contributing to these inequalities, but also makes a wider critique about the conditions for producing knowledge in the neoliberal academy. Subsequently, we make the point that the 'conditions for knowing' for social scientists are inextricable from the knowledge produced, and that privileging specific countries or regions in various aspects of the research design can have serious consequences for social knowledge production.

Reflections, Implications, and Moving Forward

In bringing the PhD to a close, I want to think back to the researcher quoted at the start of this dissertation. She was situated in a CEE country, participating in an H2020 project, and explained that she felt it would never be an option for her to apply as coordinator for a project like the one she was in—that there was no institutional support for her to learn what the task really entailed. She then reflected on why she thought other scholars from her country context are reluctant to join FP projects—because it would mean playing 'catch up with their peers in European academia'. I understand her sentiment to succinctly bring forward some of the uniquely European issues that are manifested in and magnified by the EU FPs. For her, even though she was already participating in an SC project, aspects of the EU research landscape still felt simply inaccessible. This is not a coincidence.

After studying scholarly participation in the EU research landscape, and specifically in the SC pillar of the FPs, I have found that researchers across Europe are navigating their participation very differently. More importantly, I found that the various ways researchers participate can be considered largely a consequence of how 'excellence' and 'good quality' are constructed and evaluated within the FP SC pillar to reflect underlying political strategies for a 'European science' and reinforce European-specific epistemic inequalities—ultimately shaping the social knowledge that is funded and produced.

As I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, although 'excellence' has become a concept used in EU policy discourse and adapted by academics across Europe, the form of 'excellence' being evaluated to win funds within the FP SC pillar is not synonymous with the form of 'excellence' that is meant to denote solely academic merit. In the evaluation processes of proposals for the SC pillar, the definition of excellence or good quality moves beyond a familiar form of academic excellence that might be attributed to the ERC.

I write in Paper 3 that the socio-bureaucratic landscape of European collaborations and EU funding represents novel conditions of the academic vocation in Europe. I have found that successfully navigating these conditions requires not only skill in navigating socio-historically and geopolitically shaped European academia, but also insider knowledge of the strategic and politically laden funding criteria that accompany the FPs—all in light of a neo-liberalised knowledge economy that has only fully materialised in roughly the last 20 years. This means that winning funds and successfully navigating these novel conditions seems to be hinged less on the academic merit of individual researchers and more on, inter alia, access

to institutional EU infrastructure for learning the 'EU language', access to European networks, proximity to professional prestige, and proximity to the geopolitically shaped locales that influence the way universities and the academics associated with them are perceived. Consequently, it is not a coincidence that many of the same networks or centres seem to repeatedly receive FP SC funds. And, while these issues are arguably true of much of academia, this is a unique issue in the EU FPs because of what the funding scheme represents and how it is framed by the EU Commission.

The FPs have developed as a manifestation of the European Research Area, meant to promote an inclusive European community—an avenue through which a European science can be fostered and European-wide societal challenges can be tackled. Yet, research funded under the FPs is still meant to represent a version of excellent science. *I do not think these ideas are inherently opposed, but I do think a dose of nuance is needed.*

The excellence evaluated in the FPs is perhaps a different kind of excellence than many academics feel they can recognise and subscribe to. I hypothesise that one of the reasons the ERC is so well-regarded by European researchers is because the allure of winning an ERC grant offers the impression of achievability. If they could just work a little harder, be a little *more* excellent, then they would certainly win an ERC grant. If their proposal is rejected, it was just not excellent enough and they can work harder next time. I of course write this tongue-in-cheek, and do not believe this is true—as I point out, issues of epistemic inequality and access that shape the definition of 'good quality' science are present in all of academia. Still, excellent science in the ERC is framed as solely academic and thus *supposedly* within reach, whereas formulating a proposal and navigating within an FP SC project is a task that requires insider knowledge and experiences that, put plainly, *not all researchers have access to*.

As is the case for many PhD dissertations, the original questions are answered, but more questions materialise from the research in the process. With consideration to the underlying strategies of the EU FPs, it is worth questioning if the social science research that is produced as deliverables and policy recommendations is the Commission's predominant desired result from the millions of euros invested each year in FP projects. Perhaps, it is the researchers themselves who are the most essential outcome, collaborating, publishing together, and building transnational EU networks under the FPs—effectively doing the work of Europeanisation. Further, if navigating within this funding pillar requires knowledge and

access that not all researchers have available to them, what does this mean for the kind of unequal Europeanisation that the FPs continue to reproduce and maintain?

These are questions that require further research on this topic. To date, this dissertation represents one of the first studies exploring the actualities and practices of collaborative participation in FP projects. Throughout the PhD process, this fact has continued to frustrate me. EU research funding has become a cornerstone for academics in Europe, permeating deeply into the realities of the academic vocation. Yet so little is known about the actualities of how it shapes the conditions for academic work and the production of social science in Europe.

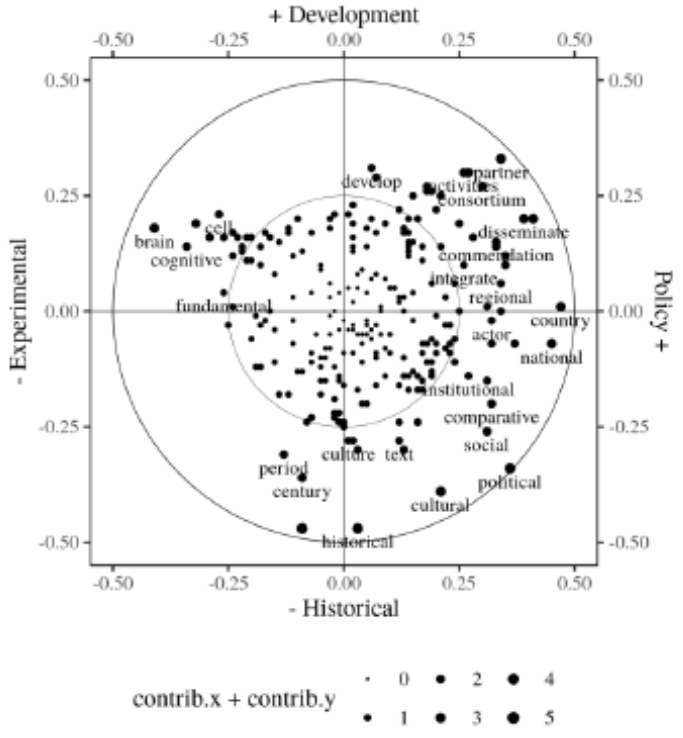
As I mention in the Introduction to this dissertation, the former European Commission president José Manuel Barroso asserted in 2014 that the EU remains 'the largest knowledge factory in the world', and the FPs are a 'flagship to strengthen Europe's innovation leadership, by fostering excellence in research and the development of new and future emerging technologies, as well as to address societal challenges' (European Commission, 2014, 1). His comments positioned science and research as an essential and competitive force shaping the future of Europe and further solidifying an undeniable move towards a neo-liberalised global knowledge economy and the accompanying prevalence of academic capitalism. In other words, these kinds of large-scale transnational multidisciplinary collaborations aren't going anywhere—especially those funded and shaped by huge bodies like the EU.

Researchers will continue to apply for and participate in these funding schemes, and the skills and work involved in doing so will thus continue to be sought after. This means that we as researchers, studying and participating in European academia, must also account for how we engage with these politically shaped systems, adapting and internalising the socio- and geopolitically shaped activities, discourses, and 'ways of knowing and doing' that accompany them in the production of academic social knowledge.

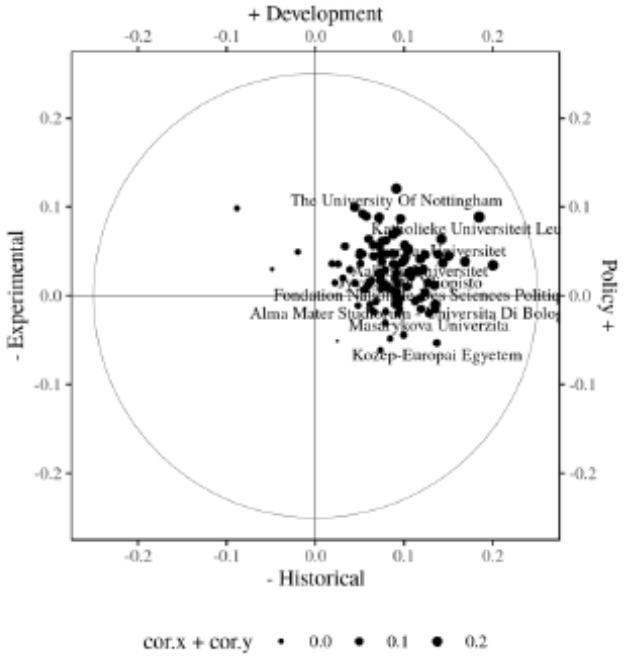
The notion of Europeanisation taking place unequally tends to give the impression of distant processes—those happening elsewhere and out of our everyday control as researchers. It is my intent with this dissertation to not only contribute to lifting the curtain on these processes, and the novel conditions for knowledge production in Europe, but also to show how researchers who participate in these systems are themselves 'doing' Europeanisation and can do so with greater knowledge of their impact.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: CORDIS Projects Mapped as a Field of SHH in Europe



- 245 common project terms
- Experimental vs. Policy
- Development vs. Historical



- A field analysis with indicators of:
  - Participation in EU projects
  - Rankings
  - Policy integration

Appendix 2: General Interview Guide

*This sample interview guide provides the baseline for the questions I asked participants. In some questions, there are multiple options for sub questions based on who I am interviewing and their position in the EU project. At times, I came with copy of relevant texts and sections of the GA and asked questions directly about how participants approached specific tasks and how EU terms.

- First tell me a bit about your position in the department here at [university setting]
- Do you know your formal work percentage breakdown? E.g., 50% teaching, 50% research
    - How do these percentages change? Does this change when you win funds or join in as a partner on a project? How did you learn this?
- Take me through your full day yesterday
        - (Or, one that you worked on the EU project---if it is applicable)
        - Questions about meetings or academic tasks as they come up
- Who are your most immediate colleagues?
    - How are they related to your field or work?
- How often during your days are you working on the EU project? How do you break up your day?
- How did your immediate supervisor or colleagues react when you got funds or were included as a partner? Was the news mentioned formally? Informally? Not at all? Explain

- Tell me about how you got involved in this EU project?
    - Who was your contact in the project if you had one?
    - How developed was the proposal or work package when you were invited?
        - If it was written, is it possible to read this early-stage proposal
    - How were the work packages designed? How did you learn produce a deliverable?
- In your team:
    - How is data collected and coded? How did you learn the ways to do this?
    - Who is responsible for analysis?

- Who are you most talking to?
    - In your larger team and in your smaller team? Can you recount your last communication?
    - What language do speak in? is it always this language even for informal settings?
- How do you delegate responsibility in the project? When did those meetings happen and what did they look like?
    - Walk me through your last team meeting within your work package
    - Is there a PowerPoint from your team and your kick-off meeting
    - How do you know the work is getting done?
- Did you have a kick-off meeting? Tell me about it.
- How do you see it fitting into your previous work? In terms of topic and discipline you're working with
- How do you know if the project is going well? Is successful?

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