INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Understanding the Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe

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For a long time European integration could be perceived as a unidirectional process. Although it was never uncontested and developments across various domains were markedly uneven, the process as a whole appeared to many as one of steady and almost irreversible progress. Since the early treatises, which created the European Coal and Steel Community (1952) and the European Economic Community (1958), economic modernization and establishing an internal market were the primary objectives. After decades of relatively slow growth, the Fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe accelerated economic integration and provoked a wave of unprecedented political expansion. The single market design was completed in 1993, the euro introduced in 1999, and the European Union was enlarged from 12 to 28 member states in little over a decade. Well before the Brexit vote of 2016, however, the French and Dutch votes against a European constitution in 2005 had already manifested increasing suspicion toward the European bureaucratic and political elites. The financial crisis of 2007–09, the Greek depression, and the economic downturn that followed not only sharpened attention to monetary and other economic problems, they also deepened awareness of the difficulties that Europe faces.

As compared to the older, more confident literature about European integration, recent scholarship has rightly insisted on the peculiarities and problems of the European Union. The most general, long-

political institution building. How can markets function under conditions of "limited statehood" (Risse 2011)? Taking up these questions from the perspective of field theory, the European Union is probably best understood as constituting a "weak field," that is a social space, comparable to other social spaces, but one defined by its limited degree of autonomy. As a transnational field, the universe of European agents and institutions is structurally dependent on more strongly integrated and institutionalized national fields (Georgakakis 2009, 2011; Vauchez 2011; Sapiro 2013; see also Fligstein 2008). One of the key questions of Europeanization is thus how the European areas of political, economic or cultural action are intertwined with, and dependent on, the various national systems on which they have been built.

One of the more salient aspects of the European political field, for example, is the much discussed "democratic deficit" (Moravcsik 2003, Follesdal and Hix 2006). The European Union has an elected parliament since 1979, but its position is relatively weak, its debates in Brussels and Strasbourg are largely inaudible to citizens of the member states, and voter turnout for its elections has seen a downward trend. While there is no lack of European policymaking, it is not properly rooted in a democratic process of political deliberation. Without a public sphere on a European scale, Europe is confined to a process of "policymaking without politics" (De Swaan 2003). Since there are hardly any European newspapers, magazines and television channels, European citizens and their organizations have few ways of expressing themselves and engaging in a regular exchange of views (on these issues see Fossum and Schlesinger 2007; Frank et al. 2010). This lack of a European public sphere is often attributed to language barriers, but it is also caused by the near absence of the kind of cultural and intellectual institutions that could provide an infrastructure for opinion formation and debate on a European level. This "cultural void" (De Swaan 2007) is all the more troublesome, because it is not recognized as a major problem in the public spheres of the individual nation states. European integration thus seems trapped in a vicious circle. The EU cannot function democratically without a public sphere, but the lack of such a public sphere is not considered a major issue in the nation states that form the European Union.

The deep crisis that the European Union is currently going through not only requires analysis of the political, economic, and social issues. There is also a need for a better understanding of the intellectual tools to study these issues—in other words of how knowledge is produced in and about the European Union, how this knowledge circulates across national and other boundaries, and how it is appropriated and mobilized by various groups and institutions.

Scholars, especially in the social sciences and humanities (SSH), played a prominent role in the production and legitimization of European integration, most strikingly in the case of law and the creation of European institutions (Cohen and Vauchez 2010; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013), and in the case of economics and the setting up of the single market (Hay and Rosamond 2002, Mudge and Vauchez 2012). By striving to build a "European Research Area" and developing their own science funding schemes, European institutions have, in return, also shaped the development of SSH disciplines in Europe. This special issue of *Serendipities* argues that an analysis of the interactions between European institutions and the social sciences and humanities is essential both to understand the current crisis of European integration and its legitimization, and to identify and improve patterns of international collaboration and exchange in the SSH.

Studying the Production and Circulation of SSH Knowledge in Europe

Assessing the production and circulation of knowledge within and about Europe implies studying a large and complex set of issues. It requires an account of the functioning of the "European Research Area," and its consequences for the SSH disciplines themselves, and more broadly for the workings of the intellectual field and the public sphere at the European level.

Few studies have addressed such issues. Inquiries about the European SSH have been concerned with rather ill-defined questions about European "identity" (Nedelmann and Sztompka 1993), with the juxtaposition of national cases while ignoring the transnational level (Coats 2000), or with research capacity and policy matters (Kuhn and Remøe 2005; Kovács and Kutsar 2010; Kastrinos 2010). Rarely have such studies dealt with the complex relations between the European and the

national level in SSH research, with the circulation and uses of SSH knowledge, or with the position of European SSH disciplines in the more global context.

Debates about the internationalization of the SSH, for example, have focused on "globalization," on the spread of the social sciences worldwide, the hegemony of Anglo-American or Western social science, or, alternatively, on "Southern" or "subaltern" perspectives on knowledge production (Alatas 2006; Alatas and Sinha-Kerkhoff 2010; Chakrabarty 2000; Connell 2007; Keim et al. 2014; Kuhn and Weidemann 2010; UNESCO 2010). What has been obscured in many of these studies, however, is that internationalization has not only taken the form *globalization*, but also of *transnational regionalization* (Heilbron 2014). Within the worldwide growth of transnational scholarly exchange, various transnational regional fields have emerged (for illustrations see UNESCO 2010; Gingras 2002, Gingras and Heilbron 2009). Located between national systems of higher learning and global arrangements, these transnational regional structures include research councils like the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLASCO, founded in 1967), the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC, 1973), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA, 1973), and the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS, founded in 2008). Unfortunately the documentation about these regional initiatives is sparse and uneven, and no historical or comparative analyses are readily available (see however Beigel 2013; for a regional perspective see also Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras 2014).

While transnational regional initiatives have developed in most parts of the world—North America is the main exception—Europe may be considered to be its most advanced case. This process was generally driven by academic entrepreneurs who mobilized their network to profit from growing funding opportunities. During the 1960s and 1970s funding for European SSH projects came mainly from American philanthropic foundations (Gemelli 1998; Boncourt 2015, 2016). Since the 1980s, their role has been gradually taken over by European research policy in the context of a deepening European integration. Against the background of a deep economic recession and in the face of mounting international competition, European research and development funding became concentrated in multi-annual, collaborative "Framework Programmes". The first was launched in 1984, the seventh Framework Programme ran during the years 2007–2013 after which they were replaced by the Horizon 2020 Programme. With the so-called Lisbon Agenda (2000) research officially became a European priority. Europe, as was famously declared by the government leaders assembled in Lisbon, was to be transformed into the "most competitive knowledge economy" in the world. The route mapped out for scientific research was parallel to that laid down for education. Just as the Bologna Process of 1999 aimed at creating a single European Higher Education Area (EHEA), research policy now set out to establish a European Research Area (ERA). One of the most tangible consequences of this process was the establishment of the European Research Council (2007). As the equivalent of the American National Science Foundation, it funds research in all disciplines, independent of policy objectives, with "scientific excellence" as the only criterion. As such, it represents a significant complement to the policy-oriented research of the Framework Programmes.

These European funding schemes contributed to a strong growth of European research projects, networks, exchange programs, journals and scholarly associations. Together with the establishment of European databases like the European Social Survey (ESS) or the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA), these initiatives have acquired a pivotal role in the functioning of the "European Research Area." However, at the same time, the position of the SSH in the EU bureaucratic field has remained not only relatively weak, but fundamentally contested. The SSH have proved to be vulnerable to shifting ideological winds and political attacks. Although the SSH are

arguably more important now than ever given the problems Europe is facing today (migration, inequality, threats to democracy etc.), the allocation of EU funding to SSH research has been put under strain. For example, in the original propositions for Horizon 2020, no specific "societal challenge"—that is, issues defined as priority research topics by European institutions—fell specifically within the realm of the SSH. Although a mobilization of European SSH researchers resulted in a revised design and an improved place for these disciplines, subsequent policy implementation measures did not consistently follow this revision. The place of SSH in EU funding schemes still appears to be under threat, at a time when it has become crucial for the financial backing of these disciplines.

This special issue of *Serendipities* provides a historical and sociological perspective on the processes that shaped, and are shaping, the European Research Area in the social sciences and humanities. In line with prior studies of the European intellectual field (Charle 1996; Sapiro 2009) and its interactions with European institutions and integration (Adler-Nissen and Kropp 2015), it puts the emphasis on the study of circulations between the national and transnational levels, and between the scientific and political fields. As it analyzes the complexities of the formation and functioning of a transnational field of the social sciences and humanities, it studies processes that are not specific to the European case. Transnational regional scientific fields exist around the globe, and a better understanding of the European case may contribute to addressing the challenges that the SSH face all over the world.

Outline of the Special Issue

The articles gathered in this special issue study the interactions between European integration and the development of European SSH from different angles. The first four papers are case-studies of the "Europeanization" of the SSH. They respectively focus on European SSH associations, journals, and databases, as well as the only academic European institution in the SSH: the European University Institute (EUI). After these case studies two more general articles analyze the two most important European funding schemes and their consequences. The first studies the functioning of the European Research Council (2007), the second examines the other main instrument of European support for the SSH: the so-called Framework Programmes.

Thibaud Boncourt studies the development of European SSH associations. He shows that the creation and development of these professional organizations has been driven by interactions between academic entrepreneurs and political actors, such as philanthropic foundations and, later, European institutions. By comparing the membership of these associations, he also argues that they foster different forms of "Europeanization", structured around different geographical areas. This process of "Europeanization" is shown to be, in any case, strongly structured by the weight of the United States.

Johan Heilbron, Madeline Bedecarré, and Rob Timans focus on "European" SSH journals. They show that the number of such journals has been growing since the 1960s, and at a particularly fast rate since the late 1980s—a time frame that corresponds to the process of European integration and policy making on the European level. They also argue that this growth has been concentrated in the most established disciplines (most European SSH journals are of a disciplinary or subdisciplinary nature), and that it has been dominated in particular by actors from the UK (these journals are published primarily by Anglo-American publishers and are run by editors from these countries).

Comparing two European social science surveys—the European Values Study and the European Social Survey, respectively launched in 1981 and 2001—Kristoffer Kropp shows that, in spite of what they have in common (both were closely connected to national and European social scientific institutions, and had ties to the EU), they enjoyed different fates. The European Social Survey was granted more symbolic and monetary resources than its counterpart, in part because it was more firmly embedded in academic networks with well-established epistemological and methodological goals.

Thibaud Boncourt and Oriane Calligaro focus on the only European transnational and academic institute devoted to research in the SSH. Founded in 1976, the European University Institute (EUI) was created by European community member states with the explicit objective to promote European integration. The article studies the extent to which European institutions succeeded in orientating EUI scholars' scientific agenda, in a direction favorable to European integration. The article argues that this attempt only enjoyed limited success, as scientific disciplines proved autonomous enough to bend external influences to their own logics.

Other papers approach the topic of this special issue by focusing primarily on the emergence of European research policies and showing how they shape the field of European SSH. Barbara Hoenig studies funding allocated by the European Research Council (ERC) which is focused on "excellence" and independent of issues of policy relevance. She argues that European SSH have been relatively underperforming in their attempts to secure ERC grants, with national funding retaining key importance in these domains. She also shows that proportionally more ERC funding has been allocated to SSH in some countries (United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands) than others.

Rafael Schögler and Thomas König analyze the policy-related European Framework Programmes. They address the mode of operation of these research projects and their ambitions with regard to the social sciences. Although the Framework Programmes provided the largest amount of European funding and significantly enhanced transnational collaboration, the "SSH" labelled programme has been a residual category within the overall structures of the Framework Programmes.

Collectively, these studies point to the key role played by political actors and funding schemes for the development of a SSH research infrastructure in Europe: associations, journals, databases, and the EUI all benefited from such support and have become established institutions in the field of European SSH. The articles also show that some of these funding opportunities were conditional upon researchers addressing specific topics (for example, European institutions sponsored the EUI in order to promote research on European integration) or developing specific approaches (for example, American philanthropic foundations aimed to promote the diffusion in Europe of behavioralism, a paradigm originally developed in the United States). These intellectual objectives, however, were only partially achieved. By funding the development of an SSH infrastructure, political actors created the conditions for the increasing autonomy of disciplinary fields which, in turn, became able to bend political injunctions in a direction compatible with their specific scientific debates. The extent to which the SSH provide tools to legitimize political processes is, thus, a product of a negotiation between the political and scientific fields.

The articles also draw converging conclusions on the weight of Anglo-Saxon countries on the history and structure of European SSH. Historically, the United States played a key role in the shaping of European SSH at both the institutional and intellectual level. Philanthropic foundations provided significant funding for the creation of European associations and research centers in several disciplines, while the US has retained considerable importance as a point of reference for the

intellectual positioning of all nascent European endeavors—the US being, in most cases, conceived either as a "model" to emulate or as a hegemonic threat to the diversity of European thought. The articles also show that the UK assumes a key position in the emerging field of European SSH, acting as a host for many SSH structures (most prominently journals) and obtaining large shares of EU funding. It seems likely, however, that Brexit will have significant consequences for this state of affairs although, at the time of publication, the scale and nature of these consequences is difficult to predict.

The special issue closes with a document that proposes a series of relevant indicators for studying the internationalization of the social sciences and humanities. It complements a similar document on indicators of institutionalization published in a previous issue of *Serendipities*.[1]

This thematic issue is the outcome of a workshop about the social and human sciences in the European Research Area, organized at Erasmus University Rotterdam on 25–26 February 2016 in the framework of the European INTERCO-SSH project. The aim of the workshop was to gain insight into the functioning of the European field of the social sciences and humanities, in particular in order to identify obstacles to European exchange and collaboration, and to stimulate new avenues for collaboration in the social and human sciences. INTERCO-SSH's disciplinary scope included classical social science disciplines (economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology) as well as some of the humanities (philosophy, literature).[2]

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[1] Christian Fleck, Johan Heilbron, Victor Karady, and Gisèle Sapiro (2016) Handbook of Indicators of Institutionalization of Academic Disciplines in SSH, *Serendipities, Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences* 1 (1) 2016, http://serendipities.uni-graz.at/index.php/serendipities/issue/view/1

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