Article

Governmentality, political field or public sphere? Theoretical alternatives in the political sociology of the EU

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Abstract
The call for a more sociological approach to the study of the European Union, reflected in a number of recent survey works by sociologists and political scientists, offers exciting new prospects for rethinking the empirical terrain of 'Europeanized' politics beyond the nation state – whether in terms of governance, policy-making, parliamentary and legal politics, mobilization, or political communication. Via a survey of three kinds of leading sociological work on the EU, broadly split between three camps working with the distinctive legacies of 'Habermasian', 'Bourdieusian' and 'Foucauldian' thinking, this article details the strengths and weaknesses of these paradigms. Focusing on a number of exemplary studies on the question of democratic legitimacy in the EU using each of these approaches, it offers a preliminary attempt to map their agendas, contributions, and blind spots, moving towards a synthesis that might identify commonalities and streamline a more coherent agenda for the political sociology of the European Union. The most promising line would appear to be one that moves away from purely theoretical/conceptual debates towards specific operationalizations able to combine elements of the various sociological approaches.

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EU studies is not a field in which sociologists have played a big part, even in Europe. But a small number have become vocal in recent years about the need for a more thorough-going concern in sociology for the study of the European Union (Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Favell and Guiraudon, 2009). They and others (Dìez Medrano, 2003, 2008) argue for a concern with the Europeanization of societies deeper and broader than the approaches of political scientists and lawyers who dominate these debates that the EU offers new ways of re-conceiving the relationship between state, society and the individual, or notions of cosmopolitanism and globalization (Rumford, 2002, 2008; Beck and Grande, 2004); or that sociology can be used to uncover societal sources of European integration – for instance, in terms of social classes, networks, or new forms of mobility – beyond the top-down policies and institutions of Brussels (Fligstein, 2008; Recchi and Favell, 2009; Mau, 2009; Mau and Verwiebe, 2010). At the same time, coming out of political science, a parallel set of political sociologists have endorsed a sociological turn in political science by showing how the ontological, epistemological and methodological potential of sociological thinking about (variously) ideas, norms, culture, identity, institutions, networks or agency in politics can question the assumptions and models of mainstream political science and IR scholars (Christiansen et al., 2001; Manners, 2007; Saurugger, 2009; Parsons, 2010; Saurugger and Mérand, 2010). These approaches together offer exciting new prospects for rethinking the empirical terrain of 'Europeanized' politics beyond the nation state – whether in terms of governance, policy-making, parliamentary and legal politics, mobilization, or political communication.

Many of the works cited above are survey articles that are programmatic in nature: mapping the field, suggesting avenues of empirical research, but not usually going on further to specify much how sociological interventions might contribute to or change particular EU policy or politics debates. The sociological potential in EU studies is far from realized. As discussed in detail by Favell and Guiraudon (2009), part of the confusion centres on the irresolvable issue of 'what is sociology?' in this context: whether political sociology is a somewhat peripheral branch of political science, or whether it should be a rather different field rooted in the concepts and methods of historical comparative sociology. It is also not clear what kind of sociology of the EU either of these might lead to if applied. We intend to take a different line here. 'Who represents sociology?' is perhaps a more immediately easier question to answer. Such a question is likely to lead quickly to a canon of eminent social theorists as some of the most representative 'sociological' thinkers of our time. Among these, three in particular are sure to be close to the top: French historian-philosopher, Michel Foucault; French anthropologist-sociologist Pierre Bourdieu; and German philosopher-sociologist Jürgen Habermas. These three thinkers have certainly laid down some of the most powerful and pervasive sociological paradigms of our times. And, not surprisingly, there is in fact a substantial literature in EU studies associated with each. To build a case for sociology in EU studies, then, our first aim is to discuss how Foucauldian, Bourdieusian and Habermasian approaches have been used in EU studies, and what they have done to advance the sociological cause in the field.

Yet, although an EU studies literature can easily be associated with each of these approaches (see Favell, 2006; Manners, 2007, for surveys), they appear to be largely marginal to the EU studies mainstream. Followers developing these paradigms have the

appearance of isolated, esoteric sects, pursuing theoretical agendas distant from the empirical concerns of policy-making or institutional analysis. Moreover, their common sociological 'critique' goes largely unheard. We argue the problem largely lies in the lack of dialogue between such sociologists dealing with the EU, something reflected in the distinct assumptions and conceptual terms that each of the different theoretical paradigms provide. We are thus facing less a problem of inter-disciplinarity in EU studies, than a lack of inner-disciplinary dialogue among sociologists. The legacies of 'Foucauldian', 'Bourdieusian', and 'Habermasian' thinking each have their own logic and political attitude, and each is a mostly separate scholarly network of debate and empirical enquiry. Each in its own way offers a brand new way of looking at the EU; a transformative potential for EU studies. But each alone has not been able to effect much change.

This is our starting point in this article. Using exemplary empirical studies from each of the three paradigms, we offer a preliminary attempt to chart the existing agenda, contributions and blind spots of characteristic Foucauldian, Bourdieusian and Habermasian approaches. We seek to identify where they might best complement each other, and how such a combination can more effectively challenge the mainstream. Some combination of these three must surely be part of what a sociological alternative in EU studies can provide, as well perhaps as offering a more substantial sociological grounding to the 'sociological turn' by which some political scientists and IR scholars have been recently tempted. We argue, though, that this agenda must be pursued at an empirical not theoretical level. The grand theoretical paradigms have to descend from lofty generalities or philosophical points scoring, and begin specifying how they can empirically make a difference to certain debates in the mainstream.

To have such an impact, the question obviously will be one of added value. We ask how sociology – viewed through the three central paradigms – might deal with one specific empirical issue that speaks directly to the EU studies mainstream: namely, the democratic legitimacy of the EU. In the mainstream literature this question is discussed mostly in the term of the EU's alleged democratic deficit. After thus setting out briefly the central issues about the democratic deficit raised by political scientists in EU studies, we take each of the three sociological legacies in turn, offering a broad characterization of the paradigm of each, before considering an exemplary text that has sought to apply the framework to this same key topic. In a concluding discussion, we suggest one way in which the most successful elements of each of the three approaches might be combined.

The mainstream debate about the democratic deficit of the EU

The notion of democratic deficit in the EU is generally taken to mean that mechanisms of governance and decision-making in the EU are in some ways insufficiently representative of or accountable to the nations and people of Europe (i.e., Lord, 2001). We 'know' what democracy looks like in historically rooted national political systems; the EU seems to fail to live up to these standards, when compared to our understandings of democracy based on, say, the British, US, German, or even Indian systems. This perception of the EU enjoys a good deal of popular credit, and is echoed in some widely discussed academic analyses of the problem (Siedentop, 2000). Still, the nature of the EU's

democratic deficit is strongly contested by political scientists studying the EU, not only in regard to how to characterize what the democratic deficit looks like and how to resolve it, but even in regard to whether there is a democratic deficit at all.

Some political scientists accept there is a problem with democracy in Europe, and focus discussion on what causes the democratic deficit of the EU and how it could be ameliorated (see for an overview, Weiler et al., 1995, Føllesdal and Hix, 2006). Here, the EU is mostly criticized for being dominated by executive actors (the Council, the Commission) which are beyond the control of national parliaments. Thus, European integration has increased executive power while at the same time decreasing parliamentary (i.e., elected) control. The European Parliament (as the only European institution directly elected by the citizens) is claimed to be too weak in relation to the Council and the Commission, even though the European Parliament's power has increased considerably over the years. Apart from the critically low voter participation, EP elections are also often criticized for not really being European elections, since they are in fact not conducted about the personalities and parties at the European level or the direction of the EU policy agenda. Further, the EU is often said to be simply too distant from voters. The EU is criticized for adopting policies that are not supported by the majority of the citizens in the member states, often because national governments are able to undertake policies at the EU level that they would not be able to pursue at the national level. EU directives and regulations are criticized for promoting wider and deeper markets, while failing to implement counterbalancing policies of regulatory protection or social welfare – widely seen as the reason for the failure of referenda on the EU Constitution during the 2000s. On all these issues, when the EU is said to have a democratic deficit, the arguments generally point to the problematic mode of political representation and contested policy outputs.

However, not all authors agree that the EU *does* in fact suffer from a democratic deficit. Indeed, an apologetic position might be said to be the more common one among EU studies scholars. They argue essentially that the problem does not lie with the EU – such as it exists legally and institutionally – but the still highly nationalized European public and media, who have basically got it all wrong. The EU works, they argue, as a remarkable, *sui generis* political order, delivering peace, prosperity and power to the European member states; it is just that its unique political structures and multi-headed dynamics do not map onto classical notions of democracy, founded on the liberal democratic nation-state (i.e., Schmidt, 2006). Looking back, Giandomenico Majone and Andrew Moravcsik represent two of the most influential voices in this line. For example, Moravcsik (2002, 2004) points out that the subset of functions that the EU performs are matters of low electoral salience that are commonly delegated in national systems. Therefore the constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control through national governments, and the increasing power of the European Parliament are in fact sufficient 'to ensure that EU policy-making is, in nearly all cases, clean, transparent, effective and politically responsive to the demands of European citizens' (Moravcsik, 2002: 605). In Majone's (1998, 2002) understanding, meanwhile, the EU is basically a 'regulatory state'. Instead of inducing or strengthening elements of parliamentary democracy, politics and economics should indeed be kept as separate as possible, since a politicization of regulatory policy-making would result in unequal redistributive outputs instead of

efficient Pareto-optimal ones. According to Majone, most of the citizens of the Member States oppose a European super-state, while still supporting far-reaching economic integration. Therefore, he argues: 'These being the preferences of the national electorates, we are forced to conclude that, paradoxically, Europe's "democratic deficit", as the expression is usually understood, is democratically justified' (Majone, 1998: 7).

Our goal here is not to adjudicate on these debates, but rather ask what a sociological lens would bring to the question. From a sociological perspective, the political science debate immediately appears too limited by the apparently pervasive normative concern with questions such as how to get the institutions right – or why they are 'right' already – as well as the practical political issue of how to get people to participate in elections. Political science approaches do not appear to grasp the bigger underlying question of what might have *qualitatively* changed about democracy in Europe with the EU. Their frameworks are not capable of exploring how the EU is (or may be) creating new kinds of political thinking and methods, and even more so, how it may be enabling new social practices and roles or new communicative links and contentions. The EU might be making new kinds of Europeans or Europeanized citizens who cannot be understood with the conventional tools of political science. They do not offer a systematic account of new opportunities that are opened up or new constraints that are evolving, nor alternately how the EU is reinforcing existing power hierarchies even more – i.e., changing democracy as such.

It has to be admitted that to date the political sociology of the EU has also yet failed to deliver a comprehensive understanding of the EU as a new political order along these lines. However, there are a range of interesting approaches that deal with at least *some* of the salient aspects that are most of the time ignored by political science research. In the following pages, then, we seek to introduce three approaches that offer another perspective of the EU, raising new questions and delivering new insights: (1) the conceptualization of the EU as a site of *governmentality*, inspired by the work of Michel Foucault; (2) the understanding of the EU as a *political field*, following the concepts and methodology of Pierre Bourdieu; and (3) the configuration of the EU as a *public sphere* inspired directly or indirectly by the work of Jürgen Habermas. The guiding aim is not to reconcile these different approaches on a philosophical or conceptual level, but rather to open up a dialogue which begins at the level of empirical analysis of the EU as an object of study.

The EU as a site of governmentality

Foucault developed the theme of governmentality in his lectures of 1978 and 1979 at the Collège de France. On the one hand, the term refers to a historically specific form of governing associated with twentieth-century liberalism and the bureaucratic control of populations. On the other, governmentality is understood more generally as the political rationality (or mentality) of government, as well as its technologies for the organization and exercise of power (Dean, 1999; Lemke, 2001; Merlingen, 2003). Rationalities of government are relatively systematic ways of thinking about government that delineate a discursive field, in which the exercise of power is rationalized by producing certain truths about a particular domain (e.g., the legal order of citizenship and rights). In this

way, the domain becomes ascertainable and thus capable of being subjected to the exercise of power. Political technologies are the instruments, procedures and techniques in which this power manifests itself: the means that are used to affect the conduct of individuals in line with the underlying rationalities of government.

In this view, government is conceptualized in a much wider sense, well beyond the conventional notion of officials and institutions authorized with the power to make decisions and to enforce rules for the state and its citizens. Instead, Foucault defines government as 'the conduct of the conduct', which includes all activities that aim at standardizing the conduct of individuals in a population through shaping their interests, beliefs, aspirations and desires by using a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge (Dean, 1999: 11). The decoupling of government and power from the state is one of the attributes that makes the concept of governmentality especially fruitful to the analysis of deterritorialized politics beyond the nation-state such as the EU. In other more conventional terms, this would be pointed to as new forms of governance (Larner and Walters, 2004: 4). From the governmentality perspective the central question is not what type of state the EU represents. The question is, rather, how the EU, its member states and populations are rendered knowable and discursively constructed as a governable entity, and by use of which political technologies is it governed effectively.

The governmentality perspective on the EU is also distinctive in that it does not require defining in advance stable concepts like democracy, state, society, citizen, etc. The variable definition and operationalization of such entities through discourse and practice become the core of the analysis itself. Accordingly, there is no need to (and no point in) analysing a unique political entity like the EU against the yardstick of (alleged) conventional categories of political order. Instead, the focus shifts to the particular subjects, objects and spaces that the EU brings into existence. At the same time, the governmentality perspective reminds us that the EU does not have a 'natural' direction of development that could be known in advance or follows a logical path. Instead, as Walters stresses in an interview (Tietäväinen and Pyykkönen, 2008: 65), the approach does not make any assumptions about the necessary direction for political and social change. This means there is no particular reason to assume, for example, that the nation-states will be functionally replaced by a supranational state. As he concludes: 'Instead we might take a more empirical attitude and ask what exactly do these organizations do?'

That the empirical value of a Foucauldian approach is stressed should be an important point in its favour. However, Foucauldians are nothing if not 'post-positivist' in their attitudes towards conventional 'empiricist' methods of social science inquiry, such as observations or surveys. Their own investigations thus almost exclusively focus on the reading of given textual sources. On the methodological level, then, governmentality studies tend to rely exclusively on the discourse analysis of policy papers, official publications, legal texts, speeches, and so forth. They consider how phenomena are discursively constructed as problems whose solutions require governmental intervention, the argumentative justification of the interventions, and the strategies developed for tackling the problems. Often, the analyses also include the materiality and technical aspects of discourses by drawing the attention to the way in which the world is made

visible, calculable and governable through numbers, charts, tables, graphs, diagrams and reports (Walters, 2004).

In the 1990s there was an impressive flourishing of research on governmentality influenced by two widely cited collections (Burchell et al., 1991; Barry et al., 1996), as well as a seminal article by Rose and Miller (1992). Meanwhile, governmentality has become a core concept within a wide range of studies of power, order and subjectivity. Most of these studies focused on the nation-state as their analytical entity. Apart from some pioneers like Didier Bigo (1994, 1998, 2000, 2002) or Andrew Barry (1991, 1994, 1996, 2001), scholars have only recently begun to apply the governmentality perspective to the EU (e.g. Rumford, 2002; Merlingen, 2003; Dale, 2004; Larner and Walters, 2004; Walters, 2004; Walters and Haahr, 2005; Shore, 2006).

A governmentality account of the EU's democratic deficit

As an empirical example of a governmentality approach to the EU, we refer to the seminal paper 'Governmentality and the problem of democracy' by Jens Henrik Haahr (2005), as well as the chapter 'Of democratic deficits' written by Haahr with William Walters in their joint book *Governing Europe: Discourse, Governmentality and European Integration* (Walters and Haahr, 2005).

For Walters and Haahr, the main question is not – as in mainstream EU studies – whether the EU can be considered a democracy against the backdrop of certain normative yardsticks. Instead, they understand their analysis as a critique of such yardsticks, by shifting the object of study from democracy-in-itself to the discursive field of the problematization of democracy. Thus, the debate as such comes under scrutiny, including the explicit and implicit understandings about the meanings and workings of democracy, and the ongoing reproduction of certain 'truths' but not others. The central question that Walters and Haahr address is: In which ways has democracy been involved and invoked as an element of European government?

Haahr (2005) argues that the outcomes of the Danish and French referenda in connection with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 opened up a new field of contestation. The 'speechless voice of the people was taken to account for the advance of new arguments or for the advance of old arguments with new forces; for the formulation of new critiques and for the application of new technologies of power' (Haahr, 2005: 9f.). He claims that in this way it became a characteristic of the presence of European integration that the ensuing problematization of government from the perspective of democracy predominantly take the forms of moves to 'insert democracy' into existing modes of government. This problematization seeks to actively conceptualize a European 'demos' of conscious, involved and – at some fundamental level – supportive European citizens. To study these attempts at democratic reform in terms of their specific technologies of power, Walter and Haahr (2005) then differentiate between what they call technologies of (de)differentiation, transparison, agency and proximity.

Walters and Haahr (2005: 72ff.) show, for example, how technologies of de-differentiation are used to open up a political space for European democracy, by producing new subjects through denaturalizing a political order which previously confined rights to the national sphere. This can be traced already in the Rome Treaty's

prohibitions of discrimination on the basis of nationality. At the same time, technologies of differentiation are used to produce difference as grounds for qualifying and limiting – but also marginalizing or excluding – certain individuals or groups from the European polity (e.g. 'third country nationals'). Technologies of transparison are used to increase the transparency of the policy process (e.g. the European Commission's White Paper on Governance) or they are established in the form of drafting charter, bills and declarations of European rights that 'can be posted, advertised, circulated in a way that invites the subject to see her/himself as a user of rights' (Walters and Haahr, 2005: 74). To explain why some of the mentioned technologies have failed so far, Walters and Haahr claim that these technologies also inhabit a symbolic field. The purposes of technologies, for example, to 'bring the EU closer to the people' might be only secondary; the primary purpose is in fact the *symbolic* production of European democracy.

Apart from the technologies of power that work in the field of 'un/democratic Europe', Walters and Haahr analyse the particular discourses of democracy that describe and define the field, such as the discourse of popular sovereignty, of justice, and of rationality. They conclude that the variety of discourses and technologies of democratic legitimacy show the polymorphousness of European democratic space, as 'it is continually unsettled by counter-discourses and social forces which it cannot successfully assimilate or neutralize. Some signs are more salient than others, some voices are loud, others are murmurs' (Walters and Haahr, 2005: 86).

While providing an inspiring new reading of the debate about the democratic deficit as well as of institutional attempts to overcome some of the perceived or constructed democratic deficiencies of the EU, Walters and Haahr themselves point to a certain weakness of their approach. They admit there might be a certain naivety here, of taking practices at their word: 'The point is, how many people really believe that initiatives like internet forums, or even improved procedures or consultation in policy-making are going to significantly enhance European democracy?' (2005: 79). Unfortunately, they do not specify this point any further, as well as not exploring more their observations on why some discourses are able to dominate while others are not. This points to a general shortcoming in the governmentality approach: they tend to describe political processes without identifying and exploring actors or agency. Indeed, governmentality theorists often limit their focus to top-down programmatic politics represented by official policies and strategies. Even though they disclose how the mentalities and technologies of power are supposed to work, we hardly learn anything about how they are implemented in terms of the conduct of individuals, groups, populations or the state. Correspondingly, it is often ignored how governmental practices are resisted.

Most governmentality accounts of the EU thus remain – despite their original view of the state – unnecessarily state-centric. They tend to look only at the governmentalization of Europe from above. Although from a governmentality perspective government is understood as including all activities that aim at directing the conduct of individuals, empirically their studies are usually only concerned with mentalities and technologies of government developed at the level of formal political EU institutions. This leaves an open question as to how such rationalities might work through other forms of politics. For a more comprehensive sociological understanding of the EU we also need to know how this governmentalization of the EU takes places from below or through new social

practices and positions. Thus, we need to ask questions such as how different actors actually make use of different mentalities and technologies of European government, and how do they shape or resist them through their actual practices? As we will show in the next section, the concept of political field may be very helpful to introduce such aspects in a consistent manner to analyses of the EU.

The EU as a political field

In his social theory, Pierre Bourdieu identified three main dimensions of social interaction and its wider implications in what is pictured as an eternal conflictual and highly litigious quest in society for dominance and power. These are the concepts of *field*, *capital*, and *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984, 1985). Capital and habitus are constitutive parts of any field in society. A field can be described as a hierarchical space of social relations where actors (individuals, groups, organizations, etc.) struggle to obtain certain resources (so-called capital, e.g. influence, prestige, power, money, etc.) in relation to certain spheres of social life (the economy, politics, education, the arts, etc.). The position of each actor in a given field is determined through the networks of relations this actor entertains with the other elements in the field and his (corresponding) capital or access to valued resources as defined by the field. Some actors are dominant because they have a lot of capital, while others are dominated due to a lack of it. The actor's stance and strategies follow their positions in the field, through a process Bourdieu calls *sociomimesis*, expressed in the automated habitus that successful behaviour within the structures of the field demands (Kauppi, 2003; Mérand, 2011).

In the political field, the actors strive for political capital to be able to influence the policy process and to monopolize the legitimate means of manipulating their own social world (Kauppi, 2003: 779). Prime ministers, lobbyists, trade unionists and any such political agents all legitimately monopolize power according to their specific position, which defines their agency's space of manoeuvre. However, in their struggle to possess the monopoly of the legitimate symbolic violence that empowers positions in the field, nominal political agents face competition from journalists, intellectuals, social scientists and others whose power derives from the relative autonomy of their own social field. Taken together, the political field approach combines a materialist concern with the underlying reasons why actors do things, with a socio-spatial notion of political conflict and competition (Favell, 2006: 127).

The political field is not dependent on any defined form of state or ideology, but is a general field of power deployment establishing public authority. Thus, the concept can be used for all kinds of political units, be it a political group or party, a state, an international organization, or a unique political entity like the EU. Building on Claude Lévi-Strauss and Pierre Bourdieu, Kauppi (2003, 2005: 3) defines the constant construction of public political authority through agency in a political field as 'structural constructivism'. He states that the use of the notion of the political field to study the EU makes structural constructivism a sociological alternative to the social constructivism heralded as a new 'sociological' approach by political scientists (e.g. Christiansen et al., 2001). Their social constructivism is only 'weakly sociological', he argues, from a more thoroughgoing sociological point of view, since their focus remains on discourse,

identity and norms, while the very real social location and roots of the actual individuals and groups making up the EU through their activities are mostly neglected. Instead, structural constructivism offers a sociological understanding of politics as the construction of reality by agents who struggle to accumulate social resources under the constraint of material and symbolic resources (Kauppi, 2003: 777).

Thus, the political field approach focuses on the *people* that make European politics happen: their actions, internal relations, conflicts and power struggles within a particular policy arena that is in the process of thereby constituting itself. To regard the EU as a political field implies asking whether a specific European political capital can be discerned that sets up a currency of action different from national political fields, and which can be accumulated and used in a way specific to the EU, i.e., in terms of a different habitus inculcated by the European field. European integration becomes much more than the centralization of government power in Brussels. It is all about the attempted constitution of new social fields (political, economic, cultural, etc.) at the European level. Moreover, as Kauppi (2011) points out, the EU itself can be understood as constituting a kind of 'superfield', composed of a variety of smaller fields of action like the national and regional political fields, different institutional fields (e.g. European Commission, European Parliament), or issue-specific fields (e.g. immigration policy, trade policy, social policy).

Georgakakis (2009) shows that the number of studies embracing a political field approach to the EU have multiplied over the last years focusing on different agents, particularly among a broad range of scholars working mainly in French. These focus for example on the Commission Director General (Georgakakis and de Lassalle, 2004, 2007), the director of the CEO Secretary General (Mangenot, 2004), members of the European Parliament (Beauvallet, 2007; Michon, 2004, 2006; Kauppi, 2005), permanent representatives (Chatzistavrou, 2004), lobbyists (Michel, 2006), trade unionists (Wagner, 2005; Verrier, 2006), journalists (Baisnée, 2007a), and political collaborators (Michon, 2006). Others put their emphasis more strongly on specific issue fields, such as immigration policy (Favell, 1998; Guiraudon, 2003), defence policy (Mérand, 2008), or European legal cooperation (Paris, 2006). The methods applied to carry out EU studies with a political field approach are usually a micro-level analyses based on ethnographic field work (in-depth interviews, participatory observation, etc.) that take into account the meanings that individuals give to their actions, combined with macro-level analysis of statistical data that enables the analysis of the micro-level from a macro-perspective.

A political field account of the EU's democratic deficit

Niilo Kauppi's book entitled *Democracy, Social Resources and Political Power in the European Union* is an ideal exemplary text for the political field approach. Kauppi sets out to go 'beyond the simplifying discussions of the notorious "democratic deficit" [he] could read every day in the press' (Kauppi, 2005: Acknowledgements). His aim is to study what he calls the 'democratic stalemate' in European politics through an examination of European integration as a general transformation of practices, norms and identities. He combines two perspectives in the analysis: (1) a focus on Europe as an object of political struggle between groups and individuals, understanding the EU as a

political order whose culture and values are reproduced by these European actors; and (2) a clear focus on the political agents involved in this construction (Kauppi, 2005: 1). His 'structural constructivism' leads him to define the process of European integration as the structuration of an evolving, multi-level European political field. This field makes up a common space for political action composed of a relatively heterogeneous supranational level and more established national political fields (Kauppi, 2005: 184).

For Kauppi, there are three modes of structuration in the EU (2005: 9): institutional structuration (the specific crystallization of EU institutions), processual structuration (domestic policy change as a result of European integration), and symbolic structuration (Europe as a symbolic device for political legitimacy and the new construction of political identities). He firmly holds to the conviction that detailed case studies and observations of the European political actors are necessary to understand Europe's democratic character. By recentring the analysis of the EU on the political actors (politicians, civil activists, intellectuals, bureaucrats) involved in its construction, he investigates, using in-depth case studies on France and Finland, how these actors deal with the transformations that European Integration has brought about. The analysis combines different levels and elements: the French presidential foreign policy ambitions in Europe; the integration of French politicians and civil servants into EU institutions; the characteristics of French members of the European Parliament; the status of the European Parliament in the career patterns of French politics; the European Parliament election campaigns of 1999 in France and Finland; and the way in which French intellectuals integrate 'Europe' into their discourses.

As indicated above, Kauppi's starting point is that Europe is facing a 'democratic stalemate', his way of characterizing the democratic deficit. He is less interested in specifying this stalemate, but in showing its material and socio-structural determinants. His notion of the EU's democratic deficit shares some of the features of a conventional political science account. He admits that the EU has taken on some of the functions of the nation-state, while not becoming a polity with an effective civil society, and dispensing laws with only the backing of output legitimacy, as Fritz Scharpf calls it (Kauppi, 2005: 43). However, his causal explanation differs strongly, in the way it shows that the democratic deficit here is due not only to the EU's specific institutional structure, but that political practices and social mechanisms in both European and national political fields are actively preventing a 'democratisation (that) would contribute to a more democratic development of the EU' (Kauppi, 2005: Acknowledgements).

French executive politicians, for example, since de Gaulle have seen Europe as a means to regain France's lost global and economic political role. This vision has structured French European policies, as it attempts to influence the shaping of European institutions and common European interests. While executive political groups such as civil servants and politicians utilize 'Europe' as an extension of the domestic ministerial cabinet system, 'legislative political groups such as MEPs use "Europe" as a means to enter national electoral politics through the backdoor provided by the European parliament (Kauppi, 2005: 185). Both prevent a thoroughgoing democraticization of the European field. Meanwhile, his analysis of the European Parliament elections of 1999 in Finland and France also reveals how these elections have played a significant role in the structuration of the two national political fields. The elections offered new political

opportunities for formerly dominated political actors like women or regional actors and allowed them to legitimize new issues on the political agenda. Further, the European Parliament elections were used by politicians, activists and intellectuals to challenge dominant French political values, while at the same time groups and parties elaborated for the first time their own vision of Europe and of France's place in it. Notwithstanding these changes in the national fields, most members of the Parliament continue to reproduce national political hierarchies and cultural values through their career choices and political actions, while many state executives openly belittle European electoral politics. Kauppi also demonstrates how the European Parliament elections provided French intellectuals with a new opportunity to reaffirm their role in public debate and to shape European discourses on 'Europe'.

Summing up, two main factors hamper a more democratic quality of the EU (Kauppi, 2005: 184). First, within the European political field, supranational, executive networks have gained more autonomous status over legislative ones. These actors (state executives and European bureaucrats) could thus reinforce the dominance of the executive-type political resources they possess in the European political field. Second, although the European political field has created common institutions, practices and norms, the more established national political fields constrain the development of a European democracy, since the value of European political resources is still predominantly determined by the political culture of domestic political fields. Thus Kauppi concludes: 'The combined effect of the dominance of executive resources and of domestic political culture has prevented the development of democratic accountability' (Kauppi, 2005: 184).

Kauppi's analysis is an advance on mainstream political science accounts on several counts. The theoretical framework is independent of any rooting in the nation-state and thus able to go successfully beyond the much-lamented problem of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Further, the political field perspective allows a better understanding of the dynamics of European policy-making by redirecting our attention from formal decision-making rules and institutional settings to the social fields that surround them. The exploration of such practices can show emerging patterns that are more informative than official documents, organizational rules or self-justifications (Mérand, 2011) or change our reading of conventional sources. Moreover, a political field account of social practices allows the linking of micro- and macro levels of analysis. It eliminates the normative, overtly pro-European inflections of the democracy and citizenship literature, offering an unsentimental analysis of the careers and organizational strategies of key European players. Bourdieusians also stress the interplay of structure and agency in a more empirically specifiable form than, say, the Anthony Giddens-inspired structurationist theory, that has been so influential in International Relations (IR) (Favell, 2006: 127, critiquing Wendt, 1999). Political field analysis does not get bogged down, as IR theory tends to, in theoretical or conceptual preliminaries. Rather it proposes a set of clear, operationalizable tools, aimed at revealing qualitative changes in the social bases of political action in the EU, and the way these underlying social struggles determine the ongoing political and legal construction of the EU as a set of institutions.

In contrast to the governmentality perspective, the political field approach has the great advantage of taking agency systematically into account. Thus, it might help explain

how certain rationalities of government are able to dominate others (e.g. who benefits), and how these are then actually shaping the practices of different actors. In the same way, a political field analysis can show how technologies of government actually influence the behaviour of political actors, but also how these technologies are shaped in turn by this behaviour. While the governmentality approach shows us how the EU is discursively constructed as a governable entity, the political field perspective helps us get inside and understand how political actors act within this construction; how they make use of it, oppose it or change it in the course of the day-to-day struggle about political influence and domination.

However, there are also a number of blind spots we should briefly touch upon. Generally, one can point to the usual weakness associated with Bourdieu and company: that it offers a path towards an inescapably cynical-looking analysis, stressing conflict and domination, and over-emphasizing a disaffected view of actors when they themselves might see their own actions in terms of much more benevolent or professional motives. As Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) have pointed out in their critique of Bourdieu, it does not take seriously the independent power of justifications of action framed in universal terms or the 'common good', which may vary across different political, legal or technocratic spheres (see also Lamont and Thévenot, 2000). Their alternate 'pragmatic' sociology of political culture has been developed in EU studies in the work of Jonathan White (2010a, 2010b), who looks at how everyday arguments and justifications about the EU are formulated by ordinary European citizens, showing how the whole debate on democratic deficit fails to resonate with the way issues are politicized at the ground level. On methodological grounds, meanwhile, political field analysis of the EU has tended to have an unsatisfyingly anecdotal character, as it describes struggles within EU politics. While sharing much in common with contemporary historians of the EU – who go into great depth about the biographical trajectories of EU actors, and their complex relations with national politics or transnational networks (Kaiser et al., 2008) – it often lacks the systematic archival and documentary underpinnings of the historians' narratives. Thus, even though it has often provided a comprehensive understanding of the social practices in a specific field or of specific actors, the empirical question remains open of whether the EU has really created new possibilities for action by other actors (that is, has it shaken up existing fields, created new resources, or transformed settled habitus?), or, rather, whether it has in fact enforced the existing system of power relations and domination. The weakness may be that political field analysis only indirectly points at the meso-level of European integration, which lies between the analysis of large-scale social structures and small-scale social interactions (Trenz, 2008: 27; also White, 2010a: 55). This targeting of the crucial meso-level in political sociology sits at the heart of the final sociological approach we will introduce in the next section.

The EU as a public sphere

The public sphere can be understood as an intermediary communicative sphere between state and society. It is neither a political institution nor a social institution. Rather, it is the sphere in which these institutions are observed, discussed and critically evaluated (Eder, 2006: 333). Thus, the public sphere in modern liberal democracies has primarily

an intermediary function between political rule-makers and those who are politically affected by the exercise of political rule (Gerhards and Neidhardt, 1991). There are different fora where the public sphere is constituted, such as in the public debates of parliaments, party conventions, and political gatherings. In modern democracies, though, the most influential public forum is clearly constituted by the general-audience mass media (Neidhardt, 1994; Jarren, 1998). A viable public sphere is a precondition for any democratic order because it serves as a communicative space where relatively unconstrained debates, analyses and criticisms of the political order can take place. Accordingly, public sphere theories are closely related to normative democratic theories. While the latter focuses on accountability and responsibility in the decision-making process, theories of the public sphere focus on the role of public communication in facilitating or hindering this process (Ferree et al., 2002). In line with this, the normative requirements that a public sphere should fulfil vary depend on the underlying conception of democracy.

In his early work (1962), it was Habermas who most influentially conceptualized the concept of the public sphere in both theoretical and historical terms. He also developed it in later treatises (1992), and in popular works on the European Union (2008). The core of all public sphere theory is the Enlightenment concept of publicity, which emerged in the eighteenth century in its current form embracing notions of legitimate authority and legitimate critique over gossip and common knowledge. Kant's (1993 [1776]) conception of publicity sums up this basic function of the public sphere when he writes that all actions that affect the rights of other men are unlawful if their maxim is not consistent with publicity. Habermas also begins his reasoning about the public sphere with Kant, establishing 'Kant's publicity as the principle that alone can guarantee the consensus between politics and morality' (Habermas, 1989: 180). In his communicative theory, Habermas continues to meticulously ponder the actual processes that take place when enacting publicity, describing the public sphere as an arena for the perception, identification and treatment of problems affecting the whole society. In the form of a deliberative public sphere it offers a mechanism of generating through public debate a rational discursive universe and creating, under certain conditions, 'reason'. However, he does not assume that public debate automatically creates a rational order that is in the interest of all; rather that it would be a necessary condition for arriving at such an order.

The scientific debate about a European public sphere research is based on the assumption that the development of a democratic order in the European Union depends on the emergence of an overarching communicative space that functions as a public sphere (Eriksen, 2005; Trenz, 2005; Fossum and Schlesinger, 2007). Hereby, several functions that a fully-fledged European public sphere should more or less fulfil are discussed in the literature (Koopmans and Erbe, 2004; de Vreese, 2007): transparency, validation, legitimation, responsiveness, accountability, and participation. The importance ascribed to each function varies between different approaches, but it may be summarized that a viable European public sphere should not only inform citizens about the EU, but also contribute to the accountability and legitimacy of the polity by showing political actors in action and providing a forum to critically discuss and evaluate their performance. This implies that a European public sphere can also be a space of contention and mobilization – that is, also enable both support and opposition to the processes of the European Union.

On the conceptual level, the notion of a European public sphere revolves around two main possibilities (Gerhards, 1993). One was the idea of a genuine unified supranational pan-European public sphere overarching and integrating the national public spheres (Grimm, 1995; Schlesinger, 1995; Kielmansegg, 1996). By now, though, the notion (and necessity) of such a pan-European public sphere, conceptualized as a communicative sphere requiring a common language, a transnational media system and a shared perspective and identity, is largely rejected. Instead the idea of a potential Europeanization of national public spheres dominates the debate and empirical research. This focuses on the degree to which actors, issues, debates and interpretations within the national public spheres of the EU increasingly include and develop European characteristics and scopes.

Most of the empirical research of the Europeanization of national public spheres looks at the mass media. In operational terms, the focus is on various characteristics of those actors and issues (i.e., geographical scope) that are prominent in different media debates. One strategy is to analyse the extent of Europeanized political communication in the different member states in times of crisis or specific (often European) events (e.g Siune, 1983; Reiser, 1994; Leroy and Siune, 1994; Meyer, 2000; Trenz, 2000; Díez Medrano, 2001; van de Steeg, 2002; de Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003; Risse and van de Steeg, 2003; Trenz and Münzing, 2003; de Vreese et al., 2006; Vetters, 2008). Another strand focuses more broadly on the general media's coverage of political issues in European member states and consists of large-scale comparative studies of broadsheets in different European countries, often in longitudinal perspective (e.g. Koopmans and Statham, 1999, 2001, 2010; Dereje et al., 2003; Trenz, 2004, 2006; Wessler et al., 2008).

These studies use either quantitative content analysis or claims analysis. In content analysis, the unit of analysis is the article and the aim is to capture journalists' representation of actors and events. In contrast, in claims analysis – as in the EUROPUB Project – the unit of analysis is the individual act of political communication (i.e., the claim). This was the strategy of one of the most ambitious studies of Europeanization to date, the EUROPUB project (Koopmans and Statham, 1999; 2010). Here, newspapers are used as the source for the publicly visible part of claims-making. For each instance of claim-making, a range of variables are coded, so that it becomes possible to map the field of political communication in terms of actors, issues and the relations between them. Very roughly summarized, the results of the large-scale comparative studies show that in general there is a remarkable level of Europeanized debate in the national print media. However, the level differs among countries and there are exceptions such as the British news media where Europe receives much less attention. The degree of the Europeanization of different issues corresponds strongly with the political power and competencies that the EU holds in the corresponding policy field. Vertical forms of Europeanization (i.e., communicative links between the national and the EU level) are much more frequent than horizontal forms of Europeanization (i.e., communicative links across member states). Even though discursive integration between national public spheres is not notably growing, some discourse convergences are observable in the sense that the same issues are discussed at the same time with similar levels of attention.

A public sphere account of the EU's democratic deficit

To discuss the more specific issue of democratic deficit from a public sphere perspective, we refer to a parallel project in the public sphere tradition, *The Transnationalization of Public Spheres in Europe* (Wessler et al., 2008). This took as a basic assumption, common to most research about a European public sphere shares, the notion that the emergence of a transnational sphere of public contestation is 'either an indicator or a normative prerequisite of democratic legitimacy both in the national and in the international realm' (Wessler et al., 2008: 2). Democratic legitimacy resides in the communicative process between society and state or, to be more precise, between actors and collectives in both realms. To explore this communicative process on the European level the analysis focuses on the transnationalization of national newspaper public spheres in different European countries at several points in time. The research design combines a quantitative content analysis of political debates in newspapers and two issue-specific qualitative and quantitative case studies. It distinguished between four dimensions of a transnationalization of public discourse, developing corresponding normative yardsticks to assess their empirical findings.

The *monitoring governance* dimension demands that the media informs the citizens about European institutions and their policy-making as part of their political news and commentary. As normative standards, Wessler et al. (2008: 14f.) define, for example, that the level of monitoring EU governance should be lower than for the nation-state in order to account for the still somewhat limited scope of its policy-making powers. They conclude, on this dimension that there is no longer a quantitative lack of attention towards EU politics but a 'selective focus on the output side and on domestic repercussions and a corresponding lack of focus on the early stages of policymaking' (2008: 181).

The *discourse convergence* dimension grasps whether national discourses grow more similar over time in the sense that they identify the same issues as important, accord them similar relevance, or employ a similar problem definition, or reveal converging discourse constellations and repertoires of justifications. On the normative level, Wessler et al. set the standard that all frames, discourse constellations and justifications that exist in national public spheres should to some degree occur in the other national public sphere as well. On this point, the results are the least problematic, since they found a relatively high level of initial similarity between national debates, as well as a weak homogenizing effect of foreign speakers on national discourse through advancing justifications and strengthening discourse coalitions that are in the minority in a particular country.

The *discourse integration* dimension presupposes that attention is paid to political developments in other countries and that ideas between different speakers in various countries circulate. Here, they define a normative standard of scope, saying that the countries observed and the speakers quoted in each country should come from all or at least most of the EU member states. However, the analysis shows that it is the powerful countries rather than European countries per se that play a role in national discourses and that no general trend of Europeanization is to be found. Thus, Wessler et al. (2008: 184) conclude that discursive integration is 'the Achilles' heel in the emergence of a Europeanized public sphere'.

Finally, the *collective identification* dimension refers to the development of a common European identity. Here, Wessler et al. (2008: 19) set a quite moderate standard for normative evaluation by 'focusing on notions of a problem-solving community rather than on community engendering deep forms of solidarity across national borders'. On the empirical level, they find that such a modest problem-solving identity is hesitantly emerging in public discourses across Europe. However, the authors stress that this finding should not be over-interpreted due to empirical doubts and analytical questions that they are not able to solve at the present stage.

Summarizing their assessment of the democratic legitimacy of the EU, Wessler et al. (2008: 186f.) conclude that the EU only in part derives legitimacy from Europeanizing public debates, with a considerable communication deficit persisting, as well as the resilience of national public spheres. As they summarize: 'In normative terms, therefore, we see progress *and* deficits, as well as some uncertainty as to the adequacy of particular standards and judgements.'

European public sphere research provides a sophisticated way of exploring the intermediary sphere between the political system of the EU and its citizens that goes beyond the mere account of election turn-outs or survey results. It allows us to explore how the EU is publicly discussed, contested and discursively constructed in the media from which citizens get their knowledge and understanding of the EU. Further, a public sphere approach sheds light on the degree of communicative integration of the European member states aside from their economic and political integration and possible causal relations. It can be used to find out which actors are actually able to benefit from the EU as a channel of new political communication and who are excluded, which new coalitions emerge and what discourses dominate. And there are benefits to the introduction of clear normative criteria for what we might expect of the new European political system as a new kind of democracy and to judge its current condition.

Nevertheless, in comparison to the notions of governmentality and political field, the public sphere approach is probably the one that most struggles with the problem of methodological nationalism. The central units of analysis remain basically nation-state societies in strictly comparative perspective. Either the degree of Europeanization of different national public spheres is compared to each other, or the structure of Europeanized public spheres is compared to an ideal-typical national one. Moreover, this kind of research often tends to remain descriptive, limiting itself to descriptively showing the extent and structure of Europeanized public spheres. Attempts to systematically explain these findings as well as the differences between countries are missing or remain often highly speculative. Furthermore, research is often limited to identifying the degree of Europeanization of a public sphere but hardly explores the effects or consequences thereof (de Vresse, 2007). There are also methodological limitations. The European public sphere has been mostly analysed on the level of quality newspapers; other media such as tabloids, television, radio or internet are only rarely the objects of research. Similarly, to date only a handful of the now 27 European member states have been included in comparative research. Even more seriously, across the various public sphere projects there has been no attempt at collaborating on common operationalizations. Therefore, most of the studies are not directly comparable, both because of diverging normative interpretations, but also because their different research designs lead in fact

to different findings on the descriptive level. The most hostile critics charge that public sphere research often tends to be the 'victim' of a normative definition of the European public sphere too much inspired by the European institutions' own conceptions, while neglecting the historical and institutional processes that promoted EU information and European public opinion as central aspects of the EU (Baisnée, 2007b). From a Bourdieusian point of view, the public sphere perspective only grasps a very small part of the EU as a novel political environment, because so much of what is interesting in the EU takes place well beyond the eye of national media (Favell, 2006: 128).

Discussion

As we have shown, Foucauldian, Bourdieusian and Habermasian approaches to the democratic deficit each bring new elements to the mainstream debate. By themselves, adopting any one of them offers a potentially transformative vision of typical questions about democratic legitimacy in the EU, that changes the object of study and/or offers new methodologies for exploring issues central to the field. The presence of this substantial and growing set of literatures ought to be enough to fuel a sociological rethinking of some of the mainstream's conventional political science rooted assumptions and conceptions. However, as we have also seen, each approach is marred by particular weaknesses, that may also be bound up with why they can so easily be ignored. Our strategy so far has been to reveal the strengths and weaknesses by juxtaposing the three approaches. We now aim to conclude with a more synthetic strategy.

   Clearly, we think much more can be done at the level of empirical operationalization than in terms of conceptual meta-theory or philosophical debate. At a purely theoretical level, there is most likely no reconciliation possible. Within each of the distinctive 'sociologies' that their legacies lay down, the three paradigms speak different conceptual languages, and take different philosophical stances on how to do social theoretical and/or scientific work. Habermasians are clearly 'normative' in their liberal faith in publicity and the search for truth through communication; the idea of the 'public sphere' has become one which most scholars in this line seek to use to build a 'better Europe' by diagnosing the failings of the present. Yet when operationalized, some of the most effective examples of public sphere research (Wessler et al.2008; Koopmans and Statham, 2010) in fact take a strongly 'positivist' style, that has been concerned to provide extensive empirical evidence to assess certain basic ideas. In these applications, some of the potential of redefinitional critique is sacrificed for the sake of empirical clarity and engagement with mainstream questions. Bourdieusians, in their contrary way, tend to both emphatically reject naive '*empiriste*' positivist work of this kind while also despising the 'easy' post-modern/constructivist moves of more Anglo-American readings of French social theory. Loïc Wacquant's definitive guide to Bourdieu's work (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002), for example, offers the clearest statement of how Bourdieusian sociology seeks to square the sterile circle opposing 'social physics' with 'social phenomenology', in a kind of 'post-post-positivist' empirical work. The impressive body of empirical studies amassed by both Bourdieu and his followers attests to the richness of this sociology. Unfortunately, though, the cult of Bourdieu and the exclusivity demanded by the adoption of his rigid terminology tend to cut short many

intersections with other theoretical paradigms. Foucault is, of course, no less of a cult, as well as offering potentially the most transformative vision of all. Foucauldian thinking has drifted much further away from its origins in France, often via strangely translated ideas in an Anglo-American context. Nevertheless, all Foucauldians are resolutely 'post-positivist' in their approach to research methods. This entails a heavy philosophical emphasis on textual strategies, and a refusal to ground claims in any direct empirical observation or standard social survey methods. While richly suggestive and strongly re-definitional in aim, it sometimes fails to deliver sufficiently substantial operationalizations of their approach in comparison to the other approaches.

Yet, for all the fascinating ontological and epistemological debates that these distinctions can launch, we would argue that scholars interested more in applications of theory to the EU or other subjects in political sociology must not get caught up in debating such differences. Rather, we think that by focusing on a common empirical issue, we can pinpoint what each of them lacks most in relation to the strengths (and weaknesses) of the others. Doubtless we could take any one of the three paradigms as a starting point. Here we will pursue this strategy by building on the last we presented: the public sphere approach.

The complementarity of the three theoretical paradigms lies in the fact each operates at a different level of analysis. The notion of governmentality provides an account of macro-structural transformation of the EU seeking to redefine the object of study in a new language of politics. It breaks with the illusions of conventional work about agency and institutions. The political field approach, rather, concentrates more on micro-structural transformation: politics at the level of actors, their identities and relationships, and their struggles in particular contexts. The public sphere approach sits somewhat in the middle, focusing on meso-level transformations in European society associated with the EU as it creates new public debates about Europe (for a similar distinction, see Trenz, 2008). Governmentality and political field approaches are more comprehensive perspectives that can be applied to all kinds of policy or politics topics. In contrast, the public sphere approach focuses on a very specific space in politics – between state and society. For this reason, it may in fact be the most open to the re-definitions of politics offered by the governmentality and/or the political sphere perspectives.

Public sphere research has produced some of the most convincing operationalizations of the sociological study of Europeanization, and is associated with some of the most clear-headed normative assessments of the potentialities and deficits of European democracy (for example, in the extensive work of ARENA and associates). It has advanced on the mainstream debates about democratic deficit by showing how substantial Europeanization – including Europeanization via contestation – has taken place, albeit in new ways. It helps us rethink Euroscepticism as a form of European democracy expressing itself, not as some kind of defective element of the European construction (Trenz and Eder, 2004). More broadly, the public sphere approach reminds us that we must not judge the democratic quality of a political system without taking into account the intermediary space between the political rule-makers and those who are affected by the exercise of political rules – be it on the national or transnational level. From this perspective, it seems that the Europeanization of state functions, the discursive construction of the EU, and the Europeanization of political agency have indeed not yet found an

appropriate correlate or foundation in European society. The essential problem here is that national public spheres possess a degree of persistence and grip on the conceptualization of 'normal' representative politics, holding back a more thoroughgoing Europeanization (Wessler et al., 2008).

The weakness in the public sphere approach lies in the fact it mostly only provides descriptive material about this change and quantity in the Europeanization of public debates, not any real account of variation in national accounts or explanation of why this happening. It also tends to reproduce the given terms of policy debates at national and international levels. In sticking with materials derived from ordinary national media, it ends up reproducing the national public sphere as a yardstick, even as it looks for something different.

On this point, the governmentality perspective can help. It reveals that the democratic deficit is in fact not an objective reality but a new discursive field that is part of the process of making the EU 'knowable' and hence governable as an expanding space of social, economic and political processes. It is, in short, a discursively constructed problem whose solution (seemingly) requires and demands (EU) governmental intervention; hence the argumentative justification of the interventions, and the strategies developed to tackle the problem regardless of voter opinion. To understand the EU as a site of governmentality reveals the political technologies that are used in turn to make the 'democratic deficit' discourse practicable on the EU level by aiming at 'inserting democracy' into existing modes of government through the creation of governable entities (i.e., a 'European citizenry') (Walters and Haahr, 2005). At the same time, the governmentality perspective might provide public sphere research with the tools to reflect more explicitly on the own normative yardsticks. It could inspire an empirical exploration of new forms of public sphere on the EU level that might not correspond to what we find on the national level but nevertheless provide important linkages between the political system of the EU and its society(ies) and citizens. Both approaches can work with the same kinds of discursive textual materials. This offers a clue to how ideas of governmentality can go beyond the re-analysis of top-down policy discourses, and start to show how meso-level debates have also created European subjectivities, as well as disciplining them to this new 'higher' form of liberal democratic politics. Not least, they can provide a hint of how mentalities and technologies of EU government actually access the thinking and perception of citizens who do not read official policy papers or directives but get their political knowledge from the media.

Yet, as we know, the governmentality approach is not so good at putting a face on the operation of power, or in pointing to where actors are able to resist or subvert it. Nor does the public sphere approach offer much to explain this. It is in the pinpointing of the variable dynamics of agency and the interaction of political actors that the micro-level analysis of the Bourdieusians excels. The political field approach reminds us there are observable and distinct social fields within which these discourses and technologies are embedded, strategically used, adapted or resisted: by the individuals, groups, organizations or institutions that make European politics actually happen, the people who are constantly constructing, reproducing and transforming these emergent political structures through their agency. This bottom-up approach shows that the question of the EU's democratic quality is about much more than just the set-up of a supranational system of political

institutions on the EU level. It is also about the potentials found by certain groups in redefining their field of political action at the European level, as well as their struggle with incumbent power holders in these various social fields at the national level. It is this which, according to Bourdieusians such as Kauppi (2005), is preventing a democratization of the EU – not least as the EU provides enormous new resources to national actors to position themselves against the EU or as the source of threatening change. The public sphere approach thus might benefit by seeking to link differences in the degree and quality of the Europeanization of national public spheres by understanding the media presence in EU politics as a political resource in Bourdieusian terms. This may have different values in different countries, on different levels (national, EU) and for different actors. Such studies would thus benefit from in-depth analysis of the journalistic fields within which Europeanization and its contestants are represented. As with the governmentality perspective, the political field approach reminds us that the notion of a European public sphere should itself be understood and analysed as a site of political struggle which is always instrumentalized and redefined by actors.

We could go on for quite some time listing enriching possible encounters between the three approaches. We hope there is enough here to suggest a possible shared focus, as well as any number of possible extensions to each approach once it engages with the insights of the others. Viewed together, all three approaches remind us that European integration is, for sociologists, about much more than just the study of formal institutions and policy-processes. All three go beyond the everyday criteria of democracy and legitimacy that is sometimes taken for granted by political science debates. They take us far into understanding the new and complex interactions between political order, society and the individual that we are witnessing with the construction of Europe. And this is surely the kind of transformative vision of the subject we would hope social theory might here provide.

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