

Governing a Transnational Field: Civil Society Organizations as Intermediaries in Global University Governance¹

Marta Reuter, Stockholm Center for Civil Society Studies (SSE)
& Department for Political Science, Stockholm University

Achim Oberg, Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien

Filip Wijkström, Stockholm Center for Civil Society Studies,
Stockholm School of Economics (SSE)

*Paper prepared for the 13th ISTR conference, 10-13 July 2018, Amsterdam.
Work in progress – please do not quote!*

¹ The research reported in this paper has been conducted under Grant FSK 15-1068:1 from a consortium of research funders: the Swedish Research Council, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, FORTE and FORMAS.

Introduction

In recent decades, increased attention has been directed at the emergence of transnational governance arrangements in different areas in society. In a growing number of fields, policy making is being gradually transformed in two different dimensions: first of all, policy making increasingly takes place not only at the national but also at the transnational level, challenging and altering the established nation-state based power structures in society (e.g. Djelic & Sahlin-Andersson 2006 & 2007). Secondly, in the ongoing transition “from government to governance” (Rosenau & Czempiel 1992; Rhodes 1996; Pierre and Peters 2000; Kjær 2004), policy making (whether at the national or the transnational level) is no longer the domain of state actors only, but includes also a whole range of private or nonstate actors, with the borderlines between the different actors’ power bases, competencies and mandates increasingly becoming transcended or blurred.

The state still appears to have an important (and often central) role in regulation (Jacobsson 2006; cf. Fligstein & Vanderbroeck 2014), and scholars have noted that “governance with government” rather than “governance without government” is a more fitting description of the dominant modes of governance in today’s society (e.g. Reuter 2011). However, nonstate actors in general, and civil society organizations (CSOs) in particular, appear to assume an increasingly vital role in the emerging governance structures and processes (Boli & Thomas 1999; Pierre 2000; cf. also Reuter, Wijkström & Meyer 2014).

While scholars have identified the nonprofit sector and civil society organizations as an organizational field of its own (DiMaggio and Anheier 1990), in this paper we address the intersection between a particular section of the nonprofit organizational landscape and the university field. Importantly, CSOs are increasingly found to perform *intermediary functions* (cf. Meyer 1996; Avant et al. 2010; Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall 2002; Sahlin et al 2015; Drori et al. 2003) through which they participate in the governance of many different fields. Intermediary actors are defined in the new institutionalist organization theory as those nonstate and nonprofit actors who mediate between different governance levels, formulating, reproducing and circulating ideas about the direction in which their particular fields should develop, but they also functioning as the organizational platforms from which institutional entrepreneurs launch initiatives with the aim to reconfigure entire fields (see Marcussen 2000, 2004; Brunsson & Jacobsson 2000; Hammack & Heydemann 2009; Djelic & Quack 2010; McInerney 2008, cf. also Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). In the emerging literature on organizational or institutional

fields, similar governance capacities and functions have been ascribed to the set of actors in the field defined as *Internal Governance Units* (Fligstein and MacAdam 2011).

One of the areas where the proliferation of such intermediaries has been noted is the field of higher education and scientific research (Sahlin & Wedlin 2008; Sahlin et al. 2015). However, the more exact functions of intermediary organizations, and particularly intermediary CSOs, in the governance of the university field, and the processes and mechanisms through which they exercise their influence, have so far not been the object of systematic. We know very little about who these intermediaries are; how they interact with each other and with national policy-makers; and what their roles are in mediating and editing currently fashionable ideas about what universities are and do (Sahlin & Wedlin 2008; Sahlin et al. 2015).

In the study discussed in this paper, we focus on the role of such intermediary CSOs (assessing, ranking and accreditation bodies; academic associations, scholarly societies and student unions; rectors' conferences; networks of universities and umbrella organizations; global think-tanks etc.) in the transnational mediation and circulation of ideas in the global university field. Empirically, we analyze the spread and institutionalization of the concept of Open Access (i.e. free public access to scientific publications) and the role of intermediary organizations in this process in two different national contexts: Sweden and Austria. The research is of a qualitative character, and it is based primarily on a number of semi-structured interviews with representatives of the key organizations in the field in the two countries and at the transnational level, as well as the analysis of a selection of internal documents and information materials produced by these and other central actors in the field.

An important basic assumption in our work is that one crucial manner in which university field governance evolves or is exercised is through the regulation and control of a number of primary flows of knowledge existing between universities as well as between countries. Three such primary flows of knowledge identified are (i) the flow of publications, (ii) the flow of students and (iii) the flow of faculty members. In this paper we deal with the regulation of the flow of publications.

In line with our focus on the role of intermediary CSOs in the regulation of flows of knowledge, the current study aims to explore their role in the “travel and translation” of the Open Access concept from the transnational domain into the domestic (Swedish and Austrian) university

policy systems where it has, during the recent ten years, become a part of the regulative framework around the flow of publications. In our current research, we study the national variation in how the Open Access concept has been transferred and translated into each domestic governance context, in Austria and Sweden, respectively. By exploring the key intermediary functions or mechanisms through which this diffusion and translation has taken place, the study aims to contribute, among others, to the growing literature on the role of CSOs in transnational governance with particular regard to their influence as intermediaries in policy-making.

Following Fligstein & McAdam 2012, we conceptualize the university field as a Strategic Action Field, where actors interact on the basis of shared understandings about the structures, relationship patterns and rules of the game particular to that field. As a first step in the analysis, this paper focuses particularly on the *field configuring events* (cf. Hardy & Maguire 2010; Powell et al. 2017) related to the Open Access spread and institutionalization process in Sweden and Austria. By mapping the sequence of such events, the paper aims to explore the extent to which, and the manners in which, the intermediary CSOs in the university field have been able to become key actors in the national regulation of the flow of publications, and thus contributed to the re-configuration of the university field in this respect.

The discussion is structured as follows: we start by delineating our theoretical framework, which is followed by a section on methods and empirical materials. Next, we move on to the empirical presentation and the analysis of the spread and institutionalization of the concept of Open Access as a process through which the field of higher education and research in Sweden and Austria is being reconfigured in certain dimensions, as well as the role of intermediary CSOs in this process. The empirical section is followed by a concluding discussion.

Please note that this is a very first draft, and a work in progress. The character of the discussion is exploratory, and the results presented here are preliminary, as the study is still ongoing. We are grateful to the ISTR panel and audience for any comments that may help us take the paper to the next level.

Theory

Our analytical framework revolves around three theoretical concepts: Strategic Action Fields, Intermediary Organizations, and Field Configuring Events (FCEs).

FIELDS. In this paper, we choose to conceptualize the core of higher education and research as “the university field”, with its own internal relational and governance dynamics, but also overlapping with other, adjacent, fields. This understanding is based on the relatively recent concept of Strategic Action Field (SAF) proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2011; 2012). Their conceptualization of fields draws on and synthesizes other field understandings, such as that of Bourdieu (1984, 1989); but also borrows from the ideas of “organizational fields” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983); “issue fields” (Hoffmann 1999; Meyer & Höllerer 2010); “sectors” (Scott & Meyer 1983); “networks” (Powell et al. 2005); “social movement industries” (McCarthy & Zald 1973, 1977); “policy domains” (Laumann and Knoke 1987) and “policy systems” (Sabatier 2007).

A field can tentatively be defined as an aggregation of organizations that taken together constitute an area of institutional life where the organizations share rules and meanings. The rules and meanings are produced and constructed collectively in-between and among the actors of the field and come to be taken for granted as ‘the rules of the game’ by the actors in the field. The shared rules and meanings are necessary to coordinate activities within fields, but also to uphold the borders and structures of the field. As a particular field matures, relations among field actors stabilize and routines are becoming institutionalized (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Fligstein, 2001; Fligstein & MacAdam, 2012; Scott, 2003; Strang and Soule, 1998).

Importantly, the SAF approach by Fligstein & MacAdam (2011, 2012) shares an analytical foundation with – and thus strikes a bridge to – new institutional organization theory. We also share the latter perspective’s view of fields as social constructions, as well as its focus on the importance of shared meanings, culture, norms and conventions in field dynamics. The added value of the SAF approach lies in its focus on organizational agency and its ambition to bring power and hierarchy back into theorizing on what goes on in society at meso (field) level. By using this approach, we wish to combine the insights from new institutionalist theory regarding the importance of institutional forces and cognitive scripts, with a more careful attention to strategic agency, interests, power and cooperation among the inhabitants of a particular field.

Following Fligstein & McAdam, we define a SAF as “constructed meso-level social order in which actors (individual or collective) are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared (...) understandings about the purposes of the field, relationships to other in the field (including who has power and why) and the rules governing legitimate action in the field” (2012:9). A field is in other words constituted of actors who recognize each other as parts of it, and who routinely take each other’s actions into account (ib. p. 167). Such fields not only partly overlap, but are often embedded or nested inside one another (ib. p. 9).

Two further features of the SAF approach are particularly relevant to our study. Firstly, SAFs are conceptualized as reflecting the outcome of political processes which makes the concept suitable for us given the political salience of higher education and research. Importantly, the state has a particularly central role in the theory, as the main rule-maker and “enabler” of organizing (Fligstein & Vanderbroeck 2014), which reflects what we know about the university field. Secondly, the SAF perspective’s notion of “internal governance units” (IGUs) provides us with an analytical tool in the conceptualization of the central dimensions of *intermediaries*, to which we now turn.

INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATION. At the centre of our framework are the organizations participating in the governance of a field by mediating, processing and circulating new themes, ideas and models. The proliferation and role of such organizations in society has long been noted in the social sciences, and our understanding of them is primarily inspired by three theoretical streams:

Firstly, new institutional organization theory points to organizations (named somewhat vaguely “Others” by Meyer 1996) that are not primary “producers” of the core outcomes in the field (in our particular case e.g. education or research), and which do not – at least not in their intermediary function – exercise direct or “hard” power, but which partake in governing through other means: by discussing, interpreting, advising, codifying, creating issues, setting agendas etc (ib.; Avant et al. 2010). A key feature of such organizations is their role in the circulation, dissemination and translation of ideas and models. The terms “carriers” (Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall 2002) and “editors” (Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin and Wedlin 2008) emphasize the ways in which such actors promulgate ideas and “edit” them in the process. In the context of university field governance, Beech (2011), Sahlin and Wedlin (2008),

and Drori et al. (2003) all stress the role of such organizations in the “translation” and “editing” of ideas.

Second, our understanding of intermediary organizations builds on the idea of Internal Governance Units (IGUs) in the above-discussed SAF approach (Fligstein & McAdam 2012). IGUs serve as communication platforms, standard-setters, umpires, or representatives of their field to outsiders. Through these roles, IGUs help create and guard the institutional order in the field, define its borders and outline and maintain the “rules of the game”. They report on, organize and reinforce these rules and the shared understandings of the field in a seemingly “objective” manner, attaining thus considerable influence over the field’s internal dynamics. In our conceptualization of intermediaries, we borrow heavily from this notion of IGUs and their key functions of rule-setting, boundary-work, and field maintenance.

Third, our understanding of intermediary organizations is inspired by research on organizations at the nexus of science, policy and practice, that explicitly bridge over field, institutional, organizational or other boundaries. The concept of “boundary organizations” (Gieryn 1999; Guston 1999 and 2001; Jasanoff 1996) stresses the blurring of institutional borders and the increasing hybridization of societal and institutional domains, which is also seen as an important feature of the global university field (e.g. Sahlin et al. forthcoming). The “boundary-work” (Gieryn 1983) of such organizations is of clear relevance to our project. Boundary-organizations represent and act upon the interests of different stakeholders and provide mechanisms and channels for interaction and the communication across institutional boundaries, fostering flows of information as a means for decision-making (Sternlieb et al. 2013, see also Kristensson Ugglå, Reuter & Wijkström 2013).

FIELD CONFIGURING EVENTS. Institutional theory has long debated how organizational fields or issue fields change over time, and what role single actors or single events play in changing fields. An early idea of change within fields rests on the assumption, that organizational fields follow an internal dynamic that increases their structuration over time (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). DiMaggio and Powell explain that organizations serving a joined societal purpose create mutual expectations that increase in detail and rigidity over time as interaction increases (‘normative isomorphism’). Additionally, powerful actors might coerce specific behavior from other organizations in the field (‘coercive isomorphism’). Even without interaction and without enforcement, organizations in similar conditions tend to observe and

mimic each other ('mimetic isomorphism'). Together, these three mechanisms lead to the development of strong expectations about organizational forms and enforce the diffusion of new practices across organizations of the same field.

While this early explanation of change rests on general social mechanisms applicable for many organizations, in the last 15 years research has started paying more attention also both to single actors and to single events as sources of change in organizational fields. In actor-focused analysis, the so called 'institutional entrepreneurs' become highly agentic: They have the ability to assess the current structure of a field, their own position, the future structure of the field, their future position ('goal') and the means to influence the field to reach this goal.

Single events or series of events, however, can also be seen as a way of organizing change (Hardy & Maguire 2010). Researchers following this tradition analyze events as social entities or temporal organizations (Schüssler, Rüling, & Wittneben 2014). Focus of such analysis can lie, for example, on how processes of joined sensemaking can develop in events such as conferences and trade fairs (Zilber, 2011). By studying events and temporal organization, communicative practices of convening and moderation come into focus (Mair & Hehenberger 2014). More recent approaches, on the other hand, pay particular attention to the communicative strategies of single actors (Powell, Oberg, Korff, Oelberger, & Kloos 2017). For instance, Powell et al. propose three communicative mechanisms – *proselytizing*, *convening* and *strengthening* – which can be combined with the initial field mechanisms identified by DiMaggio and Powell (1983): coercive, mimetic and normative pressures and processes. When following such an approach, communicative events at the field level become important, but instead of trying to identify singular events that change the field structure, multiple events have to be collected and pattern of events have to be analyzed in order to assess their ability to change a field. To study the emergence of Open Access, we will follow such an approach.

Methods and materials

As elaborated above, the aim of the empirical study discussed here is to map the ways in which the Open Access concept has been diffused into, and institutionalized in, the Swedish and Austrian national contexts, and the role of the intermediary (national as well as transnational) CSOs in that process and in the subsequent re-configuration of the higher education and research field in these two countries.

The study is qualitative, grounded in a (moderately) social constructivist epistemology, and based primarily on two kinds of sources. Firstly, we use internal documents and information materials of key organizational actors involved in the Open Access process in Sweden, Austria and at the EU level. Second, we are currently in the interactive process of conducting and analyzing in-depth interviews with the key national OA actors in Sweden and Austria, as well as central OA actors at the EU level. The interviewees include both the representatives of relevant (state and nonstate) organizations, and the individual “institutional entrepreneurs” at the national level who have been central to the promotion and diffusion of the concept even before it became endorsed by their own, and other, organizational actors. The interviews are all transcribed in verbatim and subsequently analyzed with the help of the MaxQDA software with focus on the concrete arenas, tools and mechanisms that have played a role in diffusing and translating the OA concept from one level or context to another, and on the different ways in which key CSOs in the research and education field in the two countries and at the EU level have acted (and/or still act today) as carriers & editors of the OA idea.

When it comes to coding of event, we define an event as a social activity where representatives of organizations are joined by mutual attention to a topic as a result of purposeful organizing for a certain point of time. For instance, workshops and conferences are such events, organized beforehand to draw attention to a topic, to discuss positions and solutions. Part of the organizing is that although these events have names and fixed starting dates, their influence starts often way before the defined date, and ends much later.

Following our definition, publicly signed contracts, agreements and declarations are “events” too, as they are coordinated, occurred at a certain point in time and coordinate attention of representatives of multiple organization. To the contrary, accidental meetings of individuals in an airport lounge are not events fitting our definition. Participants of an event can take over quite different roles like host, convenor, speaker, listener etc. during the event and roles like commentator, follower, viewer after the event. If parts of an event become published in newspapers and journals or on the World Wide Web, the number of representatives joined by mutual attention after the event can be much higher than during the event. For instance, when an association of organizations organizes a convention and announce a new guideline for their members, this event and the new guideline might be recognized by many organizations even if their representatives did not travel to the yearly convention.

To identify and classify events that influenced the development of Open Access, we performed three steps:

First step: Collection of events

Following a snowball sampling approach, we started to search relevant organizations and initiatives in Sweden and Austria and read their ‘stories’ about the development of Open Access. Many of these organizations explain on their websites how they got involved into the Open Access debates, which events they organized and with documents they issued for other organizations. Following these stories, we added more and more transnational and international organizations to our sample. For both cases, but especially for Austria, it became important to add German organizations and initiatives, as many activities in Austria are linked to activities in Germany.

Second step: the analytical framework

With the theoretical discussion outlined above as the point of departure, we developed an analytical framework based on the following three concepts:

- (a) **Convening:** Organizations or initiatives can invite representatives of other organizations and initiatives to discuss critical issues, alternatives and potential solutions. If convening organizations have a higher reputation, they are able to attract other important representatives even with opposing positions regarding critical issues. Thus, they facilitate the search for agreement and solutions. Especially under conditions of uncertainty about other organizations’ positions, convening can become quite helpful in organizing a shared understanding of an issue or in finding a mutual agreement.
- (b) **Proselytizing:** Other events are organized to convince representatives of organizations to adopt a certain standpoint or to apply a new practice. Instead of facilitating dialogue and debate, the proposed standpoint is singled out and rationalized as the best solution. In events and in publications, the favorable standpoint becomes framed normatively as good and emotionally as desirable. While convening enforced dialogue, proselytizing is more a one-speaker-to-many-listeners mode of communication.
- (c) **Strengthening:** While the previous two mechanisms rest primarily on communication, the mechanism of strengthening relies on the transfer of symbolic, financial or monetary resources from one organization to another to help the receiving organization to adopt a new technique. An example for an event that strengthens the diffusion of a practice is a call

for the submissions of proposal to develop solutions (e.g. research funding). Such a call is publicly visible and attracts attention of many representatives to an issue at a certain point in time.

Third step: Coding of the collected events

In a first round of coding, we assigned one or more of the developed codes to all collected events. Then we tried to identify the most relevant mechanism for each event. In some cases, it was hard to make the decision. For instance, the Max Planck Society organized a conference on Open Access in Berlin that ended with a declaration (the so-called ‘Berlin Declaration’). The conference with its declaration combine physically the two analytically distinct mechanisms of ‘convening’ and ‘strengthening via contract’. In such cases, we decided to split the event into several events – one convening event in Berlin and additional events when organizations signed the Berlin Declaration.

Fourth step: Visualization for interpretation

After collecting the events, we wanted to identify patterns in these events. To make the data set of events ‘readable’, we created our own version of a swimlane visualization:

- **Horizontal lines:** Organizations and initiatives are visualized as horizontal lines (‘swimlanes’). Each line starts and ends with the foundation or death of an organization.
- **Nodes:** Events are placed as nodes on the line of involved organizations.
- **Vertical lines:** The involvement of organizations becomes visible via vertical lines which connect the organizations’ nodes for an event.

To increase the readability of the swimlane visualization regarding the linkages between national, transnational and international events, we grouped organizations in organizations at the transnational level (for instance, UN, UNESCO, European Commission, European Science Foundation, Max Planck Institute etc.), and at the national level in Sweden and Austria.

We analyze the swimlane visualizations in two steps: First, we focus on the chronology of events and on involved organizations. In a second step, we color the nodes of events with regard to the underlying social mechanisms: green nodes for proselytizing, yellow nodes for convening, and blue nodes for strengthening.

Empirical discussion

Open Access: a new idea catches on in the transnational space

Open Access (OA) refers commonly to the promotion of free and unrestricted online access to the results of scholarly research. In the recent two decades, the concept of OA has gradually spread globally throughout academia – through the university field in particular – by what is sometimes referred to (both by its supporters and its opponents) as the “Open Access Movement” – a coalition of organizations and individuals within and outside the academia, dedicated to the principle of free diffusion of research results (cf. Tennant et al. 2016). The development of this movement has been closely linked to the rise of internet and the subsequent emergence of online publishing as an alternative to, or even a substitute for, print publishing, thus directly affecting the flow of scholarly knowledge both in the form of academic journals and other formats (ibid.). In the traditional (non-OA) system, research results are normally published in journals owned by commercial publishing houses, which set a price on access to individual articles or journal subscriptions, the latter often meant for university libraries. In the early days of internet, a widespread assumption in the academic community was that the transfer of scholarly publication to the digital domain would help reduce the cost of access and thus make research findings more easily accessible both to the general public and to scholars from financially less well-to-do academic institutions (ibid.).

When this hope did not materialize, it is argued that a movement for free access to scholarly research began to emerge within the academia. Because of the OA issue’s roots in the debate on the potential of the internet to make information and knowledge more widely and freely available, the Open Access movement is sometimes seen as being related to the earlier “open source” and “open courseware” movements (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory 2018) with which it shares similar normative foundations.

Initially – from the late 1980s and on – the idea of unrestricted access to research publications was championed by a few individual activists within the international academia, such as Stevan Harnad of the University of Southampton (UK), Peter Suber of Earlham College (USA), Jean-Claude Guédon of the Université de Montreal (Canada), and others. In 1994, Harnad published a seminal paper entitled *A Subversive Proposal*, suggesting that scholars in all disciplines should start self-archiving their research outputs in the way that computer scientists had been doing since the 1970s (Harnad 1994). Meanwhile, the issue of access to research publications started to gain attention among university librarians across the world, as university libraries

were the actors most acutely aware of the steeply increasing costs of scientific journal licenses. In 1997, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), an international alliance of academic libraries and other organizations, was founded by the (US-Canadian) Association of Research Libraries to address this issue and develop alternatives. SPARC could be seen as the first institutional promotor of the Open Access concept worldwide.

In 2001, the Open Society Institute in Budapest organized what became a hallmark conference on “Free Online Scholarship”, attended by several of the key figures of the Open Access movement. As the direct result of the conference, the *Budapest Open Access Initiative* (BOAI) declaration was released in early 2002, for the first time using the term “Open Access” in a formal setting. The declaration states its goal to be “open access to peer-reviewed journal literature”, and recommends two parallel strategies to achieve this goal: self-archiving (of scholarly publications by their authors), and launching of a new generation of “open access journals”. It also declares that:

“the Open Society Institute, the foundation network founded by philanthropist George Soros, is committed to providing initial help and funding to realize this goal. It will use its resources and influence to extend and promote institutional self-archiving, to launch new open-access journals, and to help an open-access journal system become economically self-sustaining. While the Open Society Institute's commitment and resources are substantial, this initiative is very much in need of other organizations to lend their effort and resources”. (BOAI 2002).

The Budapest declaration was followed already in 2003 by both the *Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing*, and the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access*, each signed by a large number of representatives from various types of academic institutions and from a large number of countries. In the following decade-and-a-half, the OA concept spread and translated across the global university field, gradually gaining the support of a number of key actors both in the academic community itself and in the policy field of higher education and research. In Europe, examples of such actors are Science Europe (an association of European research funding organizations and research performing organizations), SPARC Europe, LIBER – Association of European Research Libraries, ELIBDA - The European Bureau of Library,

Information and Documentation Associations, DART-Europe (a partnership of research libraries and library consortia), etc.

Today, Open Access is a politically widely endorsed concept within the field of university governance, both at the European level and in the two countries studied here. Support for OA is explicitly included in the EU's eighth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, Horizon 2020, and the European Commission is reported by many of our informants to have played a key role in promoting the OA notion. In Austria and Sweden, the principle of Open Access has been endorsed by the main funding agencies as well as several other key actors in the higher education and research policy field. Below, we briefly outline how the arrival and institutionalization of the Open Access concept has unfolded in the two countries respectively.

Arrival and institutionalization of OA: Sweden

In Sweden, the issue of unrestricted access to scientific publications was initially highlighted and championed by university librarians, and it has thus been from the beginning framed mainly as an issue of academic journal cost for the libraries. The (state-run) *National Library of Sweden (KB)* has played the central role in the spread and institutionalization of the Open Access idea (first as an Open Access “proselytiser” of sorts, through the efforts of a few engaged individuals in the organization, and then as the key coordinator in the more formal policy processes). However, other key actors have over the years included a number of non-state organizations, primarily the *Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF)* as well as the *BIBSAM Consortium* (of university libraries) and the *Knowledge Foundation (KK-Stiftelsen)*. As the brief overview below will show, an intricate mix of transnational actors and arenas – both state and nonstate – has been crucial to the spread of the Open Access idea to Sweden and its institutionalization here.

The Open Access “movement” in Sweden, just as at the transnational level, has its roots in the debate on electronic publishing that took off the mid-1990s among librarians in the higher education and research field. The National Library's 1995 inquiry report *The students' libraries* is often pointed to as the starting point of the Swedish development towards free access to scientific publications. The report discussed, among others, the advantages and disadvantages of the emerging trend towards electronic publishing, and warned that this trend

may in fact result in strengthening the hold of the publishing houses and other copyright holders over the students' (but also researchers') access to academic publications.

The debate that ensued continued at the conference *Researchers, netbased publishing and the libraries* arranged by the National Library's *Department for National Coordination and Development* in November 1996 for directors of higher education libraries as well as representatives of the scholarly community, rectors, relevant public agencies, funding agencies and other organizations within the field of higher education and research. The invited keynote speaker at the meeting was Stevan Harnad, a UK-based Hungarian-American scholar and a leading critic of the global scientific publishing system. The conference and Harnad's keynote speech on what he saw as the problems inherent to the existing publishing system appears to have been the first time that the idea of an "open access" to scientific publications was introduced to a wider Swedish academic audience.

The next key event – this time at the transnational level – in the Swedish development towards Open Access was the OECD seminar *Managing University Libraries* in Paris in 2002, which brought together leaders of higher education institutions and of funding agencies as well as senior librarians from the OECD countries. Present were, among others, representatives of the National Library and of the *Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions* (SUHF). Access to academic publications was one of the issues raised at the seminar, and the participation of SUHF representatives resulted in that organization setting up a committee of inquiry that included senior university official and chief librarians, many of whom had taken part in the OECD seminar. In 2003 the committee issued a rapport that discussed the Open Access idea in positive terms.

The committee and the rapport marked the beginning of a pioneering cooperation between SUHF and the academic libraries of SUHF's member institutions (universities and colleges) on the Open Access issue. A working group consisting of university leaders, researchers, library directors and a representative of the *Royal Library* was created, with the aim of advising SUHF on the changes within scientific communication. The work of the group resulted in SUHF deciding in 2004 to sign the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access in the Sciences and Humanities*. The group also participated in the Southampton Berlin 3 meeting in 2005, an annual follow-up meeting to the Berlin Declaration. A few months later the SUHF board issued a statement in which it "strongly recommended" implementation of Open Access to its member institutions.

Within the next couple of years both the National Library and the four major research funding agencies in Sweden signed the Berlin Declaration.

In 2006 the National Library launched *OpenAccess.se*, a development project for the promotion of Open Access in Sweden. The program was run in collaboration with several key state and nonstate actors in the field of higher education and research: the state-run research funding agency *Swedish Research Council (VR)*, as well as the non-state *SUHF*, the *Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (Kungl. Vetenskapsakademin)* and the *Knowledge Foundation (KK-Stiftelsen)*. *Openaccess.se* became a permanent project in 2009, and that year the nonstate *Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (RJ)* also joined the collaboration. From 2009 on the National Library started organizing yearly Open Access conferences under the label *Mötesplats Open Access*. 2009 was also an important year for another reason – that year, the *Swedish Research Council* adopted a policy of demanding open access of the researchers whose research it funds. Within the next two years, the three other main Swedish research funding agencies followed its example.

In 2012 the idea of Open Access appears to have reached the level of government policy-making in the field of higher education and research. The 2012 Government Bill on Research gave a mandate to the Swedish Research Council (VR) to develop national guidelines on Open Access, with the recently adopted EU guidelines as the departure point, and in cooperation with a number of other actors such as funding agencies, the National Library, SUHF etc. The Council submitted its proposal for national guidelines in 2015. In 2016, a new Government Bill on Research announced the goal of complete transition to Open Access within the next ten years (i.e. by 2026) in the Swedish academia.

Arrival and institutionalization of OA: Austria

Representatives of Austrian higher education organizations appear to have followed international debates on Open Access since the end of the 1990s. First official interventions from Austrian organizations governing the national higher education field took place in the early 2000s: in 2004 the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) developed an Open Access policy. The FWF is Austria's central funding organization for basic research, established by law for the purpose of funding “non-profit-oriented research designed to generate new insights and to expand and advance scholarly knowledge” (<http://fwf.ac.at>). The FWF signed the “Berlin

Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities” and mandated Open Access to scholarly publications since 2008.

In 2012 the FWF founded in partnership with Austrian Universities (UNIKO), the “Open Access Network Austria” (OANA). OANA is a think tank concerning Open Science with an open structure and without any legal form. Objectives are sharing ideas, coordination and integration of initiatives as well as formulation of guidelines for Open Science. OANA considers itself as an information platform of scientists, research institutions, funding bodies and research policies. OANA has recently expanded its focus from Open Access to Open Science related issues. Universities Austria (UNIKO) – a co-founder of OANA – is a non-profit organization under private law and is responsible for the internal coordination of the 21 public Austrian universities, it represents them in national and international organizations and is the public voice of the universities. UNIKO is funded through membership fees, paid by the universities. Its mission states that “along with its members, UNIKO develops positions which shape and influence the current and future agenda for higher education. Its purpose is to collectively strengthen the universities’ role and purpose in the economy and society. Universities Austria provides support to the universities in the fulfilment of their tasks and responsibilities, and thus fosters the advancement of Science and Art.” (<http://uniko.ac.at>)

Two years after the founding of OANA in 2014, the European Commission published guidelines on Open Access for scientific publications and research data in the research program Horizon 2020. In the same year, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) initiated the project “e-Infrastructures” to promote coordinated expansion and the further development of repository infrastructures for research data and publications throughout Austria. The BMBWF promotes Open Access, Open Data and Open Science in order to foster innovation and knowledge transfers between research institutions and actors from society and economy. Therefore, the ministry participates in OA-related working groups at the EU level (“National Points of Reference” or ERA) and coordinates activities with current Austrian networks regarding implementation and further development of OA.

The Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), a cooperation partner of OANA, has become the information platform for Open Access implementations in accordance with Horizon 2020 guidelines in Austria. The FFG is the national funding agency for industrial research and development in Austria. The FFG is founded by law and is represented by the Federal Ministry

for Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT) and the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW). As a provider of funding services, however, the FFG also works for other national and international institutions.

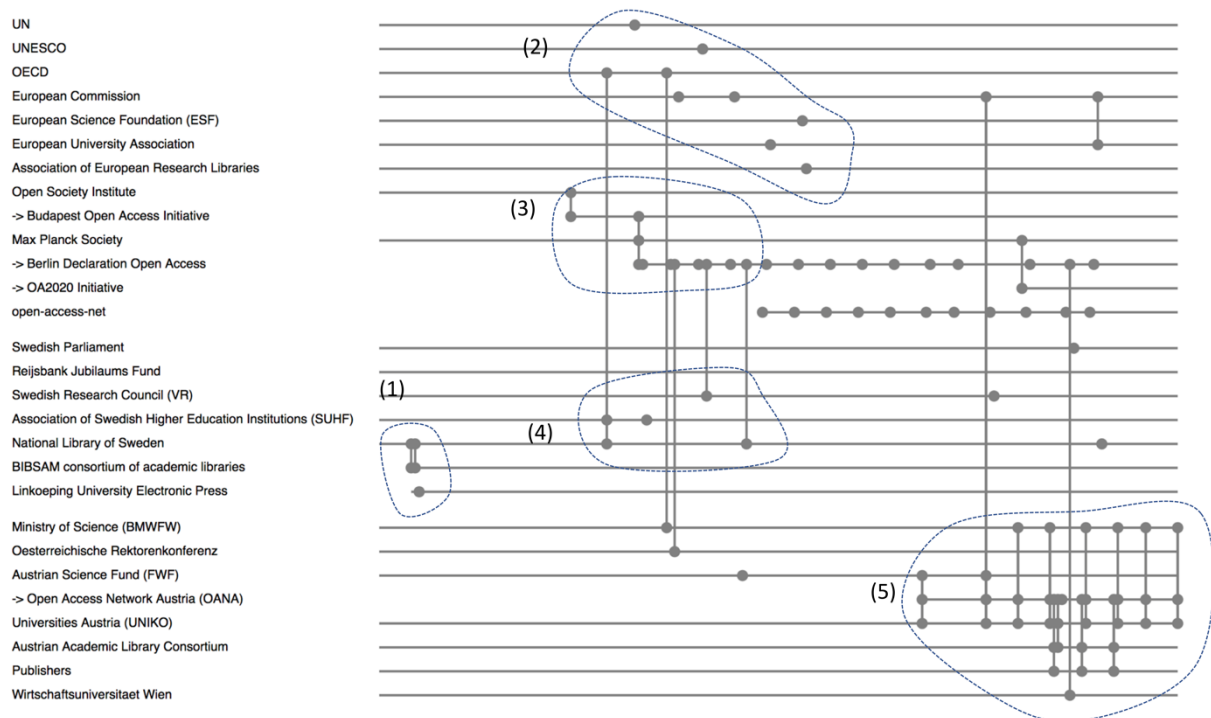
In 2016 OANA published the so called “Vienna Principles” for a fundamental reform of the scholarly communication system. The BMWFM supports these principles by funding the project “Austrian Transition to Open Access” (A2OA) from 2017 till 2020 in order to promote OA through concerted measures. This project helped libraries and universities to advance necessary infrastructures.

Since 2016 members of the Austrian Academic Library Consortium (KEMÖ) sign Open Access agreements with publishers. The KEMÖ consortium consists of university libraries, libraries of universities of applied sciences, state libraries, Austrian National Library and other public and private non-profit research and educational Institutions. The KEMÖ’s main purpose is (1) the coordinated acquisition and management of electronic resources (primarily databases and e-journals) and the usage rights of these resources within the consortia, (2) coordinated resource administration, (3) a unified voice to represent the consortia members both internationally and within library consortia, such as GASCO (German, Austrian and Swiss Consortia Organisation), ICOLC (International Coalition of Library Consortia) and other interest groups, (4) joint collaboration for national and international Open Access initiatives.

In 2018 Austrian research organizations and funding institutions signed an Open Access publishing framework agreement with the gold Open Access publisher “Frontiers”.

Analysis

The following figure contains all identified events at world level, at the European level and in Sweden and Austria. We selected the timeframe from 2000 to 2020.



The following observations are interesting with respect to the two national settings and the transnational institutional environment:

Sweden: As described in the case analysis, representatives of Swedish organizations attended early international discussion and started first digital initiatives on the level of libraries (see (1)) before the Open Access discussion became highly visible as international organizations started organizing OA-related events (see (2)).

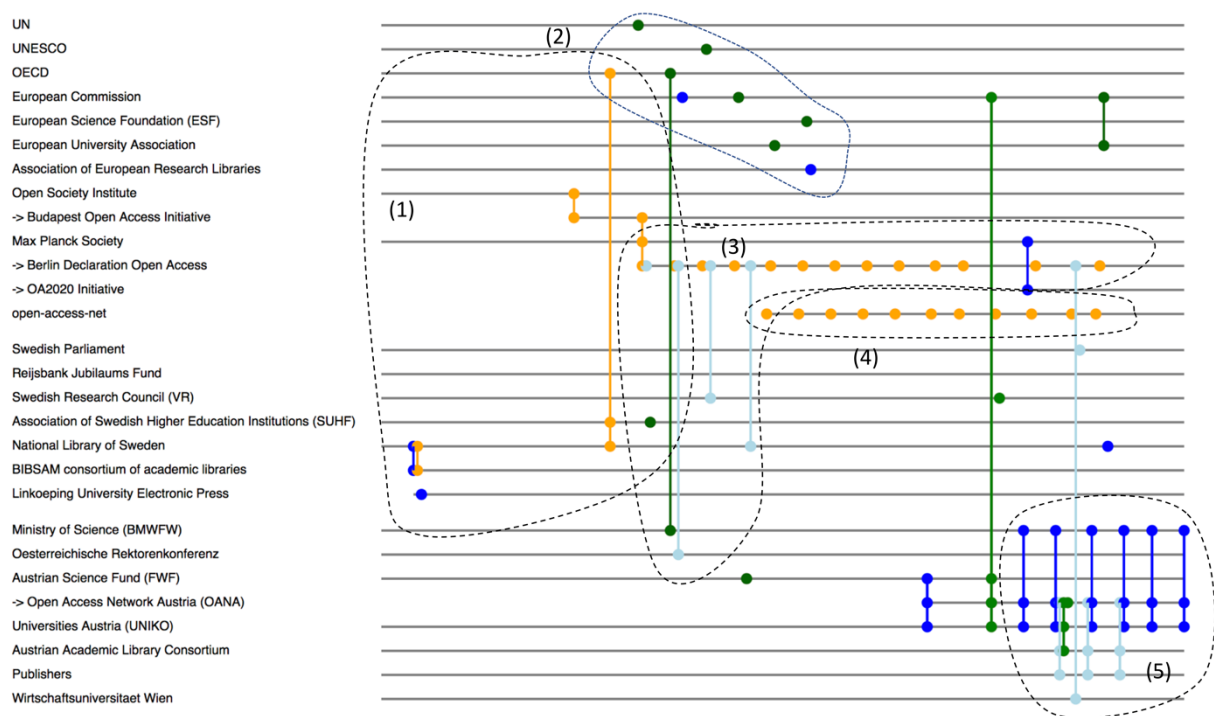
Austria: Austrian official activities to prepare for and to implement Open Access started relatively late, after the international debates and the European debates came to some conclusions published in recommendations and guidelines.

International and transnational organizations: In the middle of the last decade, international organizations fueled the global debate by organizing events (see (2)). In Europe, organizations such as Max Planck Society or the Open Society Institute were crucial in this respect for Swedish and Austrian OA promoting organizations (see (3)). The transnational initiative Open Access Net facilitated events for representatives for Austrian (as well as German and Swiss) organizations, especially the universities, libraries and tech organizations.

Types of events

Figure 2 shows the same events now colored according to type. When looking at the color coding in the previous figure, we observe different distributions of colors: public endorsement is colored in red, financial support or funding is marked green, light blue highlights conferences and meetings, dark blue is used for guidelines, and the color black reflects contracts.

Figure 2.



In the early phase of the international Open Access debate (1), representatives from international, transnational and national organizations meet and discuss whether they should promote Open Access. After many representatives come to conclusions that their organizations

should support the transition towards OA, they start to promote the concept without being too specific on the practicalities. In this phase (2), we observe a ‘trickling down’ of events by UN, OECD, UNESCO that promote Open Access at a world level followed by events organized by the European Commission, the European University Association and the European Science Foundation.

In the second phase, while international organizations promote Open Access, domestic CSOs such as the Max Planck Society also act in the transnational domain and organize conferences to bring different actors in the field of higher education from different national fields together. By initiating declarations that are signed by many actors in the field of higher education on follow-up meetings (see (3)), these actors work to strengthen the mutual agreement on Open Access. At the same time, in the German speaking countries, the Open Access Network organizes conventions to discuss practical solutions to build necessary infrastructures for Open Access (see (4)). By bringing together providers of solutions and potential applicants, the local adaptation to Open Access becomes easier.

In Austria we observe a coordinated form of strengthening within a national system. Years after international and transnational organizations promoted Open Access, central national actors like the National Science Fund (FWF) and the Universities Austria (UNIKO) created a new organization responsible for coordinating Open Access activities within the Austrian field of higher education. This new actor helped to translate an Open Access guideline by the European Commission into the Austrian context. Backed by financial support by the Austrian Ministry of Science (BWF), infrastructures and solutions for the application of Open Access were developed.

Concluding discussion

The Open Access idea was initially developed and championed by a small number of rather small intermediary actors active primarily at the transnational level. Through a set of intermediary activities such as organizing conferences, the publication of policy papers and the creation of professional networks, these actors were able to negotiate and network the idea into a more cohesive concept, palatable to a slightly wider group of more central and influential intermediaries. Together, these intermediaries have in more recent years been able to promote and catapult the concept into the relevant policy arenas both at the transnational and the national levels, where the concept also has started to mobilize resources. It has during the latest phase

of the development spread both globally and – in a subsequent step – also into domestic or national level at a relatively rapid pace. Open Access as an idea has eventually become institutionalized in the European Union and its core institutions in the field, at the same time as it has gained an increased foothold in both the local Swedish and Austrian contexts as shown in this paper, although the idea has progressed in different ways and probably with slightly different meanings ascribed to it within the two countries.

It is clear from the empirical account reported in this paper that different types of both transnational and national bodies have been exercising a set of intermediary functions in the transnational process of promoting, distributing and institutionalizing the idea of Open Access. As key actors in the “Open Access Movement”, these different institutions, networks and think tanks – many of them formally incorporated as nonprofit or voluntary associations or foundations – have not only been important distribution hubs in the global network spun around the Open Access concept, they have also been actively engaged in the actual shaping and institutionalization of the concept. In the latest phase of this process, the Open Access idea has finally broken through the formal barriers of the key stakeholder of the modern university, the nation state, and become institutionalized in both the form of formal policies and in actual decisions and distributions of resources to support the idea originally emanating out of the movement.

As we have shown in the paper, a number of key events have been important in this process – above all, a string of conferences at which people representing a significant number of influential actors at both national and transnational level were provided with the opportunity to meet and discuss the Open Access idea and its potential. These events, initially produced and visited by people from a small number of intermediaries – and the processes and outcomes produced by these events – were important not only in shaping and driving the Open Access movement. These events and their institutional seeds and artifacts have also been important moments at which key processes and institutions in the core architecture of the entire university field subsequently were being (re)shaped and reconfigured.

Through the output from these events (networks, discussions, publications of declarations, etc), one of the key flows of knowledge – the flow of publications – is currently being substantially re-regulated. We view this transnational re-regulation of the flow of publications as an important governance mechanism, influencing the entire global university field with substantial

consequences for each and every university, scholar and potentially even student in the field. We have therefore in this paper described these events as field configuring events (Hardy & Maguire 2010; McInerney 2008).

To summarize our key findings in this concluding discussion we would like to highlight the mobilizing effects in the field (re)configuring process exercised by three specific mechanisms or functions. We have in our earlier work identified a large number of organizations active in the transnational field of university governance, exercising different *intermediary functions*. These organizations “evaluate, coordinate, observe and seek to influence policy. However, some are also funding research and performing research themselves, others are clearly operating nationally while some are only partly active in the wider university field” (Sahlin et al 2015, p. ??). Common to them all is the fact that they from time to time perform intermediary functions with relevance for the entire field.

To structure our empirical findings reported in this paper and to push our synthesis further, we borrowed an idea about field-configuring mechanisms from the recent study by Powell et al (2017), as discussed in our theory section. In their paper, the authors identify what they describe as mechanisms that characterize the actions which enable organizations to influence the development and design of new institutional arrangements. These three mechanisms are: *proselytizing* of information and championing alternative visions, *convening* to create spaces for exchange among dissimilar participants, and *strengthening* as a means to fund and support the adoption of new practices and attract converts (ibid.).

When using the above three concepts as our analytical tools, we have been able to distinguish on aggregate level three important but distinct action items or representative artifacts established or created and used by the key players in the Open Access movement to gain access to, and wield influence in – to exercise field governance –the university field. We would like to summarize the actions behind these items or artifacts as: (i) emitting of statements; (ii) establishing of networks; and (iii) setting up of new funding or organizational structures. Our data indicates that these three different types of actions appear to be the means or vehicles through which the three mechanisms identified in the theoretical framework – proselytizing, convening and strengthening – play out, in a sort of a 3-by-3 matrix. Unfortunately, in this version of the paper we do not have the possibility to discuss this aspect in more detail. However, let us very briefly elaborate on each of these three types of action.

First of all, what has been mentioned by several respondents and/or found in several source documents is the importance of written statements. Both before and after the formative event documents with some kind of mobilizing power have been produced. Obvious examples are the both declarations produced in connection to the Budapest and the Berlin conference, respectively.

Secondly, particularly the Swedish data indicates a trace of personal relations and networks formed over time by early OA activists within the academia with engaged representatives of research libraries and library associations, as well as representatives of other key intermediary organizations in the field. The interviews point to a number of engaged individuals within the core organizations coalescing towards each other in different transnational and national events and fueling the interest of their own, and other, organizations in the Open Access issue.

Thirdly, and finally, the constitutional character of some of the actions following decisions at the event has been indicated as important factors in both institutionalizing the movements and marking the ground taken. These new formal organizations (employed people?) founded or set up have been important both for actors internal and external to the movement, not the least in carrying the ideas from the core of the movement into the wider university field, and primarily into the IGUs setting the rules and borders of the field.

A final note on the two countries in our study is in its place. We have been able to notice both substantial similarities and some important differences between the parallel processes of institutionalization in Austria and Sweden. Although Sweden and Austria share many similarities such as size and political regime, we have identified some differences which we choose to formulate as part of our (still very tentative and preliminary) results. These differences primarily relate to different patterns in the timing of events in Sweden and Austria. While both institutional actors and enthusiastic individuals in the Swedish Open Access landscape were involved early on in the international debates and also connected with some of the key actors in the university field, the actors and official representatives in the Austria university landscape added emphasis and force into the strengthening of the relevant national organizations in adopting the Open Access only once it became clear that Open Access policies would become reality in several other countries. We cannot at this moment – in our interviews or in the other empirical material – distinguish any particular reasons for this difference in

timing between the two countries. On the contrary, the cultural and geographical proximity to Germany – where the Open Access movement early on achieved a strong institutional foothold for example through the Max Planck Society – would indicate that Austria would be quicker on the ball. Further, about the same amount of academic institutions from both countries seem to have taken part in the third survey on open access launched by the European University Association (EUA) between November 25, 2016, and March 31, 2017, which put both countries at the European respondent-per-capita top of the list (Morais & Borrell-Damian 2018).²

To conclude our paper, the institutionalization process of bringing in the idea of Open Access from the original “movement” active at the margins of the university field into the very core of the broader field is as a case uniquely suited for the purpose of both tracking and illustrating the roles and the importance of various types of intermediary organizations in the actual governance of the entire university field. The case is also instructive in how to analyze the many different process steps through which the early idea was brought to bear on one of the key flows of knowledge in the university field, that of publication of knowledge.

² Please note that a possible caveat in our current empirical situation is that some of the observed national variations might be a result of different type and depth of data collection in Sweden and Austria. We plan to proceed with interviews and snowball collection of events during the next months to balance our empirical work and to make sure that observed patterns are not tinted by biases in data collection.

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