



**The dialectic of transnational
integration and national disintegration as mayor
challenge of the aggregation of knowledge by
European Expert Groups**

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1. Study Context: Indicator Expert Group of the European Commission

- **Target:**
 - Set up an indicator set to promote evidence-based policy-making.
 - On EU Level
 - On national level

- **Group structure:**
 - Expert Group chaired by the European Commission
 - Consisting of heterogeneous actors from...
 - ...and disciplinary backgrounds (EU and national policy, science, practice and other stakeholders)
 - ...different nationalities (representatives of member states of the EU)

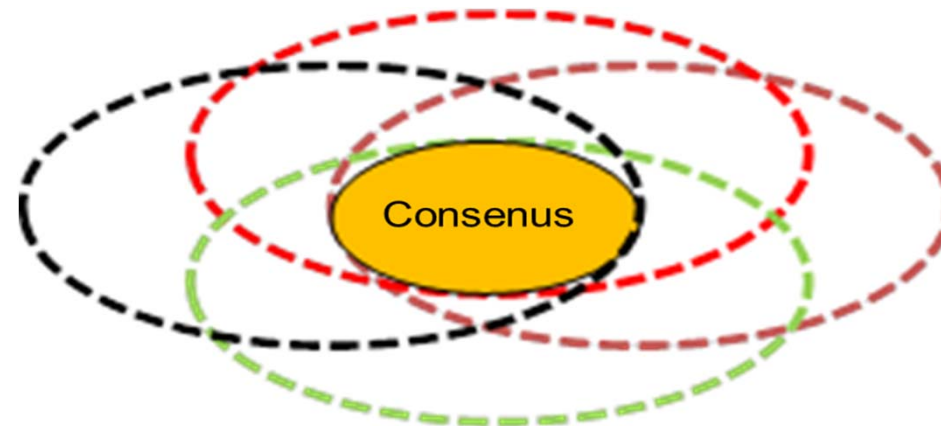
2. Theoretical Framework: Transnational Knowledge Co-Production



Perspective of this study:

- Arenas of cross-broader cooperation (Van der Molen & Lulofs, 2010).
- Co- Production of transnational expert knowledge (Gibbons et al. 1994)
- Sharing and combining different national world of relevancies into a consensus

=> Transnational Indicator/Knowledge system



2. Theoretical Framework: Knowledge Co-Production EU Level (e.g. Europe 2020)

Evidence-based policy-making

- Inclusion of national or domestic stakeholders in EU policy advisory system
- **Process:** Ideally non-hierarchical bottom-up knowledge co-production
- Overcoming Categories like discipline, nationality, locality or embeddedness
- **Goal:** Common “socially robust” (Gibbons et al. 1994) solution for a problem of application

Open Method of Coordination

- **Process:** Top-Down knowledge application on national level (Kaiser, 2004)
 - **Goal:** direct national policies towards common objectives, processes of mutual learning, cross fertilization → standardization
 - **Risk:** Limited or Non-Compliance of harmonized and aggregated outcome of international solution with specific local needs or situations.
 - Competition transnational and national world of relevancies
- ⇒ ***“dialectic of transnational integration and national disintegration”***
(Münch, 2010)

3. Case study approach: Knowledge Use and Application on National Level

Sociological Knowledge Gap:

- Transnational knowledge systems as popular instrument of decision-making processes in today's knowledge societies
 - **However:** Less information on how knowledge is or could be applied on national level
- ⇒ **Need:** Of empirical knowledge analyzing how national systems respond to such global standardization approaches (Klimkeit & Reihlen, 2015)

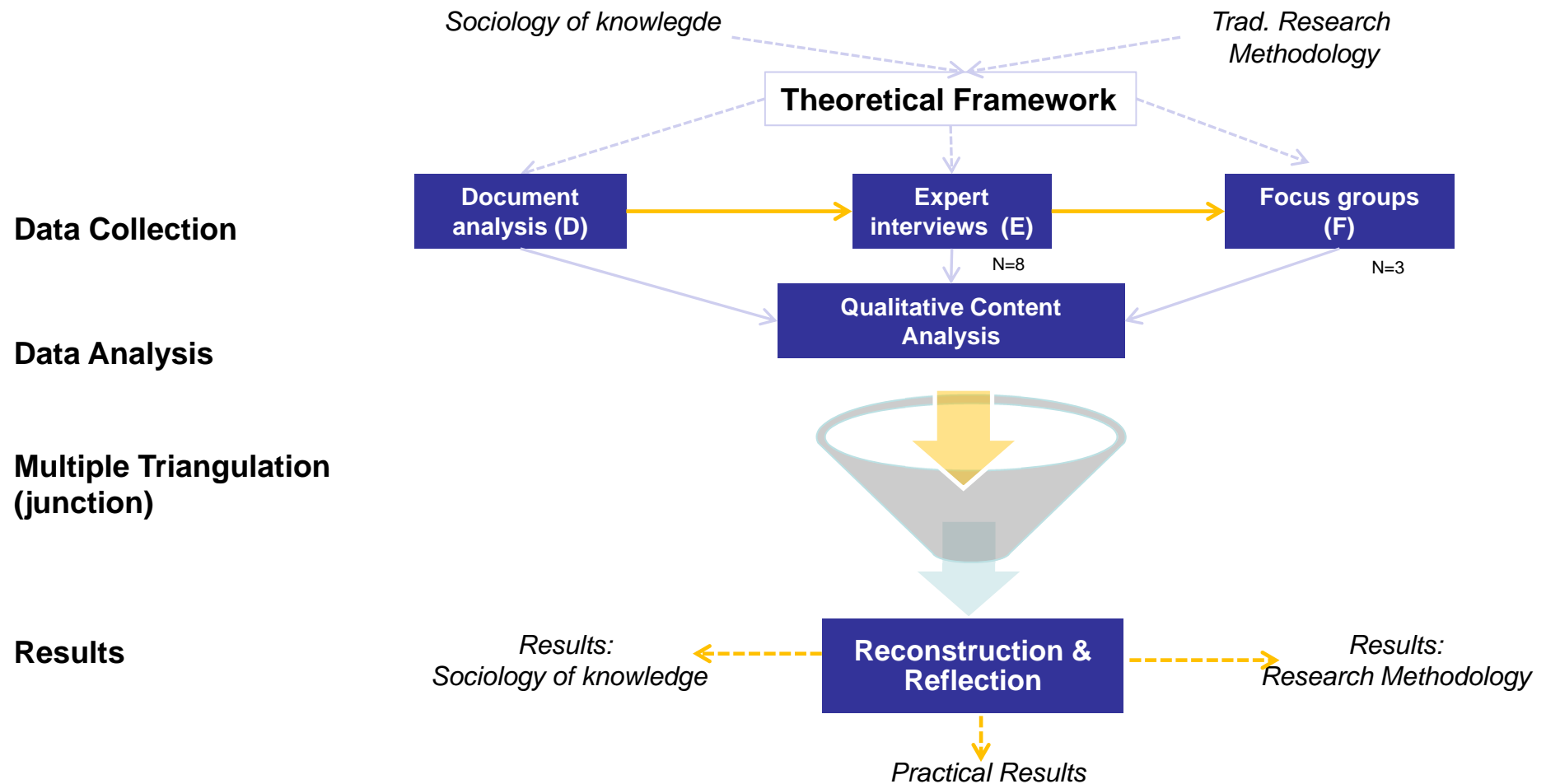
Focus of this Case Study:

- EU Indicator set as exemplary Case for transnational Knowledge System
- Theory guided empirical reconstruction of possibilities and limits of application of the co-produced knowledge of this expert group on national level (Renn & Klinke, 2013).

How is the transnational knowledge applied on national level?

What are limitations of an application on national level?

4. Case Study Design: Multiple Triangulation



=> Compensation of weaknesses, one-sidedness and biases of single method or perspective

(Flick, 2011; Ingenkamp & Lissmann, 2005 ; Kuckartz, 2012; Lamnek, 2005; Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2010; Steinke, 2008)

5. Results

How is the transnational knowledge applied on national level?

National Political Use

„The Dashboard is a kind of a statement, a summary of the EUROSTAT databases, so it reflects and represents the main interests of the EU. And therefore I think it is important for the EU to communicate the important areas of their policy. And for us to inform us about their key areas” Expert 2

⇒ **Communication and reflection of international priorities**

“And for the national context itself it is also very important for policy makers if they could tell that a problem is also reflected in the European policy. It is always a nice argument to be able to present your arguments and your opinions based on evidence taken from an independent source and especially from the European context.

...

This really helps to make strong statements of certain issues. To show that it is not only their position that you have to change something. If you can say - hey it is reflected by European statistics and it is also their a European priority.” Expert 4

⇒ **Substantiation of argumentation**

How is the transnational knowledge applied on national level?

National Policy Advise System/Scientific Use:

„I think we use it most when we are doing some broad exercises. When we are at the beginning or the end of a government period, then we make an overview, and reflect questions like ‘ok where are we with or youth policy?’ [...] we use the dashboard to get a grip on how we are within the European fields.” Expert 4.

„It is good to get a first impression as you can easily compare the harmonized data with on view. G Expert1.

...

„As XY already said, it is a reference or starting point for an analysis. After having looked at the dashboard you can check other sources to go more in detail..“ G Expert 2

*„It could perhaps be a first indication. But it isn` t even enough to describe what really makes the difference between the countries or even between two countries, if you would like to go in detail.”
Expert 1*

⇒ **First Overview or impression, for more not detailed enough**

What are limitations of an application on national level?

Practical Problems in the use

You always have to find the o find the common denominator and to exclude a lot of specificity . I understand that you have to come together and find a compromise at a certain point.“ G Expert 2

...

„It is a trade-off between standardization and information “ G Expert 1

„It often does not cover the national priorities [...]. The dashboard in some cases describes things that are not relevant for my country or even not problematic.” Expert 3

⇒ **Misscoverage with national world of relevancies.**

„We tried to use the dashboard and came to the point that such an international system to rigid for our purpose.“ G Expert 1.

“And we have the problem that the Dashboard is made for our whole country and here we have very different regional parts.” Expert 4

⇒ **Not flexible enough.**

“„I checked all indicators of the dashboard and found them interesting. However from a scientific perspective the extreme reduction of information was not appropriate my use. Indicators are not contextualized and most of the indicators are too simple“ G Expert1.

⇒ **Overall interesting but not used.**

What are limitations of an application on national level?

Presence of alternative knowledge systems

“What we do at my institution is, we talk to people from other countries. And this in a growing tendency. Going abroad to study other ministries. [...] I was traveling quite a lot to different countries and meetings with people from different institutions at the same level. That makes the comparison easier. I do not only have the figures; I really was there and was observing how they are thinking.” Expert 6

“On European Level the dashboard seems to be a part of the social reporting system. However, on national level, from my point of view, there is no real value. This is especially because the different countries have their own, better fitting and more detailed information systems. G Expert2

“We can use for example use national census data which has a much better data quality than the European surveys G Expert 2

⇒ **There are alternatives and they are used**

6. Conclusion: Transnational Knowledge Co-Production

- Transnational Indicator set as example for a transnational knowledge system
- **In Principle:** national stakeholder seemed to be likely to include such transnational knowledge into their national policy advise systems
- **However:** Mostly used and accepted for very basal purposes on national level
- Not suitable as socially robust decision making evidence
 - Challenged by national specificities (world of relevancies, Path dependencies, goals and needs)
 - Challenged by alternative sources

=>Example for the Dialectic of transnational integration and national disintegration

“Take home message”:

- Idea behind standardized transnational knowledge systems is great
- Should put al lot of effort and be open for the needs and goals of national applicants
- *“A knowledge system is only useful if it is used”*

Thank you for your attention