

Introduction: the sociology of knowledge approach to discourse in an interdependent world

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1 Introduction

The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse in an interdependent world

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The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (hereafter SKAD) has reoriented research on social forms, structurations, and processes of meaning construction and reality formation by linking social constructivist with post-structuralist thinking. It is especially well-suited for studying discourses and processes of sense-making in culturally diverse environments. SKAD offers a conceptual and methodological research program open to the pursuit of diverse research objects and issues. To do so, it allows issue-oriented modifications of its practices central to the specific questions of meaning-making, knowledge and knowledge society raised by a particular project. It thereby allows stretching and possibly overcoming the epistemological biases and restrictions still common in theories and approaches of Western- and Northern-centric social sciences. This book focuses precisely on such empirically based, globally diverse developments of the SKAD approach to date, providing clear articulation of the methodology and its implementation.

Studying discourses as world-making activity

In 2005, Adele Clarke stated in her book on Situational Analysis that today's world is "awash in seas of discourses" and pointed out the high degree in which social scientific inquiry around the world strongly needs elaborated methodologies of discourse research (Clarke, 2005: 145). At about the same time, social scientists from different disciplines and backgrounds were developing decisive steps towards discourse research, presenting their new approaches at conferences, in books, etc. (e.g. Keller *et al.*, [2001] 2011; Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001; Jaworski and Coupland, 2002). What these new methodologies had in common was that they pioneered by going beyond the core linguistic issues and established discursive critiques of ideology characteristic of earlier approaches to discourses. Instead they argued for a legitimate social science and humanities space for research into questions of the social (discursive) making of realities.

A decade later, this pattern of innovation continues. The essential challenge posed to all such approaches concerns how to best proceed in an increasingly interdependent world. These challenges include the omnipresence of the Anthropocene era of human-made ecological and climatic risks in constant interplay with *knowledge societies*, and the mediatisation and digitalisation of social life, deeply reshaping both production and consumption patterns. These are accompanied by transnational or global circulations of knowledges, ideologies, religious belief systems and attached symbolisms. Such heterogeneous systems of meaning-making require theoretically and methodologically sound means of research to better grasp the complex discourses of our times.

Renewed conflicts between ideologies, religions and (scientific) claims to knowledge and symbolic ordering are occurring, especially in making sense of environmental, climatic and related socio-political processes of change on global to local scales. Such conflicts vividly illustrate the power of public discourses in shaping not only public opinion but, by means of guiding actors in their decision-making, also shaping everyday life. Social relations of knowledge and knowing, as well as politics of knowledge and knowing, are highly consequential structures and processes both within and between societies across the globe. In very fundamental ways, they shape the world and worlds, the “multiple realities” (Schütz, [1945] 1973) in which we dwell. In line with social constructivist theory, the discursive, communicative and social construction of reality can thus be *empirically* observed globally. Moreover, it needs to be *analytically* understood in its local to global workings of shaping social realities in a century of globally interdependent turmoil.

This edited volume addresses the methodological challenges ahead by diving into SKAD, an original social science approach to analysing discourse based on the sociological traditions of the interpretive paradigm, the sociology of knowledge and Foucauldian research. SKAD was established in Germany in the early 2000s in a series of well-received books and articles (e.g. Keller, 2005, [2005] 2011a, 2012, 2013, 2019; Keller and Truschkat, 2012; Keller, Knoblauch and Reichertz, 2013). It is now widely used across disciplines (e.g. see Herzig and Moon, 2013; Sommer, 2012; Gorr and Schünemann, 2013; Holmgren, 2013). While SKAD was initially taken up in Germany in the late 1990s (see references in Keller on SKAD, Chapter 2, this volume), there has been increasing transnational interest among scholars worldwide in recent years (e.g. Wu, 2012; Feuer and Hornidge, 2015; Hornidge, Oberkircher and Kudryavtseva, 2013; Hornidge, 2017).¹

Demonstrating SKAD’s transnational reach, this edited volume brings together empirically outstanding SKAD applications from a range of academic disciplines, geographic, socio-cultural and thematic contexts. The common aspects addressed in all the chapters include (1) using SKAD in generating the specifics of the research perspective and questions;

(2) presenting analytical categories taken from SKAD; (3) describing the data selection process and sampling; (4) illustrating the concrete application of SKAD in data analysis; (5) describing the issue-specific analytical framework developed and its relation to SKAD; (6) demonstrating the integration and presentation of empirical findings; as well as (7) noting potential contributions to the particular research area addressed.

In short, it is the aim of this volume to discuss SKAD and its further development through its recent implementation in highly varied research settings. SKAD is a global yet not hegemonic tool which becomes local in the process of being interpreted and adapted to the local context, theme, and the specific discourse at hand.

Methodology, not method. Frame, not recipe

In studying processes of the institutionalisation and transformation of symbolic orderings, SKAD adopts Berger and Luckmann's perspective on the dialectical relationship between *objective* and *subjective reality*. This is constructed through the employment of different knowledges, while additionally drawing on Foucault's call to regard discourses as practices of power/knowledge, discursive formations, statements, dispositifs and discursive battles. SKAD is in some ways close to certain ideas in social studies of sciences and technology (e.g. Law 1986, 1993, 2008). But instead SKAD brings to the fore the broad traditions of sociologies of knowledge and meaning, as well as poststructuralist Foucauldian perspectives. It argues for inquiry into the production, circulation and performance of processes of meaning making all across society and societies – far beyond the core science fields initially studied in Science and Technology Studies (STS) research.

SKAD offers a comprehensive conceptual and methodological framework, but no pre-defined, static or prescriptive set of methods to be implemented as part of the empirical and practical operationalisation of the research (Keller, [2005] 2011a; 2011b; Christmann and Mahnken, 2013; Hornidge, 2013). Instead, and in line with Berger/Luckmann's definition of knowledge as everything that is regarded as knowledge in and by society (1966/1984: 16), SKAD emphasises *context-specific conceptualisations of discourse*. Discourses are explicitly understood as historically established, identifiable ensembles of symbolic and normative devices, all of which are context- and case-specific in nature. They are performed through social actors' (often competing or conflictual) discursive practices, with high impacts on the reality of the world we encounter, see, and feel.

SKAD's implementation depends on the particular discourse being studied, its main advocates or contestants, the communication platforms housing it, its underlying rationalities, logics, languages and power structures. SKAD thus emphasises the importance of defining afresh the

concrete methods for studying a particular discourse using SKAD as research lens on each occasion, while also reflecting on the positionality of the researcher in relation to the discourse itself (e.g. both emic and etic to the discourse itself).

Discourses socially construct, communicate, legitimate, and objectify structures of meaning which have social consequences for the institutional, organisational and social actors' levels. As detailed elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 2), Reiner Keller therefore stresses the study of discourses as knowledge/power complexes that exist through and in *practice(s)* and *dispositifs*. *Practices* are broadly defined as conventionalised patterns of action, based on collective stocks or repertoires of knowledge about *proper* ways of acting (Keller, 2011b: 55; [2005] 2011a: 255–257).

A *dispositif* is defined as an infrastructure established by social actors or collectivities in order to resolve a particular situation. A further distinction is also made between dispositifs of discourse production and dispositifs or infrastructures emerging out of a discourse (Keller, 2011b: 56; [2005] 2011a: 258–260). This distinction of discourses constituted in social practices as well as the resulting dispositifs also underlines the material and immaterial character of discourses, while bearing in mind the role of social actors in constructing and reconstructing *realities*. Therefore SKAD discourse research, according to its concrete purpose, makes use of textual analysis as well as ethnographic inquiry (see contributions to this volume).

Not for simple causal explanation

While SKAD can and must be adapted by every researcher wanting to use it, its adaptability is nevertheless limited. The choice of a discourse approach always implies the foregrounding of certain features while backgrounding others. The same is true for SKAD as it does not pretend to be an all-comprehensive strategy for discourse studies and should not be mistaken for a *one-size-fits-all* approach. First and foremost, integrating discourse as conceived by SKAD in any kind of causal-mechanic theoretical model makes no sense and would not work conceptually. In contrast, SKAD assumes that no single explanatory factor for social behaviour can be isolated from the complex processes of meaning-making through discourse. SKAD therefore refuses to include “*the* discourse” as another variable in a formula, which mainstream positivism might demand in taking discourse research seriously. Indeed, some social-constructivists or discourse-oriented scholars who attempt to seize “the middle-ground” try and fail to do this in hopes of fulfilling positivist demands.

As SKAD provides a theoretically grounded research methodology, it does not include any predefined schemes of explanation (see Keller on SKAD, Chapter 2 this volume). In particular, SKAD does not claim to be able to reveal any causal mechanisms for any empirically observable outcome. Nor does SKAD legitimate the application of a “hermeneutics

of suspicion” (Ricoeur, 1970; Keller and Clarke, Chapter 3, this volume). Applying SKAD is *not* about explaining certain outcomes by certain factors, but centres instead on reconstructing the dynamics of knowledge orders and revealing power/knowledge relations, processes and effects in socio-historically specific settings.

What is true for SKAD in relation to mainstream social science can also be said in contrast to other discourse analytic approaches. While SKAD is theoretically grounded, it does not arrive (over-)loaded with theoretical baggage, instead remaining open to fruitful combinations with other substantive theories depending on the research object under study. Like interpretive research in general, SKAD suggests developing and adapting research strategies across the processes and progress of inquiry. If a researcher is seeking a quick empirical substantiation of certain claims and assumptions, then SKAD is probably a bad choice of method as it is intended for intensive, profound and detailed interpretive analysis of social communication. Such analyses are sorely needed and SKAD can help provide them.

SKAD for a glocal academy

Studying the interdependent discursivities² of our time entails crossing increasingly contested and renegotiated disciplinary and geographic boundaries. These include boundaries between so-called *systematic disciplines* focusing on the *Global North* and OECD-world,³ and *Area Studies* or *Postcolonial Studies* focusing on the *Global South* including so-called “developing” and transforming countries. Today, the greater or lesser global interdependence of discourses, their circulations and translations into manifold contexts challenge our existing methodological and analytical lenses. They emphatically do *not* remain in the traditional disciplinary and geographic container spaces of the traditional Western science system.

SKAD enthusiastically takes on these challenges, offering a guiding methodological and analytical frame, while intentionally leaving ample room for local, context-, theme- and discourse-specific further development and additions. This volume was designed to present a broad range of such contextualisations and operationalisations of SKAD. Foucault’s critical ontology of the present as well as more current challenges to the *intellectual dominance* of the West, legitimised through colonial histories, voiced by colleagues such as Stuart Hall (1997), Gayatri Spivak (1999), and Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) have encouraged and informed SKAD to seek engagement with the politics of power/knowledge and the work they do within and between societies. Examples can be found in the chapters here by Zhang and McGhee, and Küppers.

SKAD heeds Walter Mignolo’s plea to study the social starting from *many worlds* and thereby diversity, rather than from one assumed *universal*, reference frame. Mignolo called this concept “pluriversality” (2007: 453,

2011: 2). It captures and further encourages the intention of SKAD to support study of the manifold discursivities of our times in their own right, according to their own logics, in their own languages and cultural and socio-political contexts. We will not be able to understand the interdependent social and discursive worlds of today if the tools we use are developed based only on limited empirical realities, everyday experiences, ways of knowing and ways of explaining, rather than the full array. SKAD offers a conceptual and methodological frame for studying the everyday workings of discourse in a wide variety of academic disciplines and studies, geographic, socio-political, cultural or thematic contexts.

It is precisely on this point that SKAD as a proposed epistemological frame interlinks and is inspired by recent discussions regarding rethinking Area Studies. In *Area Studies at the Crossroads* (Mielke and Hornidge 2017), authors from five different continents reflect on the *how* of decolonising the academy requisite for *understanding*, in Max Weber's terms, social reality on this planet. The authors argue for the need (1) to develop conceptual approaches and methodologies for *empirically* assessing social reality in its dynamic, constantly changing forms based on local empirical contexts, by and with local researchers at local research institutes; and (2) to contribute to the nurturing of critically thinking minds and high degrees of reflexivity in local epistemic cultures and knowledge systems. To accomplish these goals, the authors reject the often cited divide between so-called *systematic disciplines* and Area Studies and instead strongly argue for their mutual enrichment and reciprocal further development. Several of the chapters in Mielke and Hornidge's (2017) book illustrate the empirical and analytical strength, but also substantial challenges and limits, of linking conceptual thought of *systematic* social science disciplines with area studies' language, cultural and local expertise (see e.g. Mielke, and Hornidge, 2017). In addition, these chapters clearly illustrate the challenges and limits of conceptually and methodologically strong, locally embedded empirical social science and humanities research practiced by researchers socialised into diverse systems of science at research institutions located on several different continents. What does *conceptually and methodologically strong*, while empirically based in local contexts, languages etc. actually mean? Which quality criteria are applied? Which epistemes gain authority over others, to use Gieryn's (1999) terms? And where do *epistemic privilege* and *epistemic oppression* lead to *epistemic injustice* in Fricker's understanding (1998, 2007)?

While the answers provided in the chapters here cannot fully do justice to these questions, they actively contribute to a global yet local discussion and the mutual development of a pluriversal rather than hegemonic methodology and conceptual frame for discourse research. Distinctive reflexivities are requisite to jointly developing such a methodological and conceptual frame further and contributing to the decolonising of discourse research. Both a) the researcher's reflexivity, and b) SKAD's own

reflexivity as a method are called into play. With regard to the researcher, this entails conscious and continuous reflection on her/his own position in relation to the discourses under study and their discourse carriers, the research subjects. With regard to SKAD as a methodological and conceptual frame with affinities with interpretive methods, the distinctive reflexivity entails its constant further development based on the empirical realities encountered in the research process. This further development of both the method and the project through the actual doing of discourse research is part of the agenda of this book.

Organisation of the book

The book gathers a number of exemplary studies by researchers working in various fields and disciplines internationally. They have entered a reciprocal relationship, or epistemic friendship, with SKAD – for the study of a particular discursivity, and in turn they have developed SKAD further in that particular context. In thirteen chapters, the volume presents basics of doing SKAD research along with different ways of operationalising the approach in a broad variety of research projects. The regional contexts range from Europe, to Asia, North-America and Africa.

What all chapters have in common is that the authors shed light on their particular use of SKAD, including their conceptual considerations as well as the methodological implications drawn, and finally the modifications and additions to the method they have made. Thus, the main focus of all chapters lies on methodological questions and applications in relation to a common heuristics and hence to each other. The main questions are: How is the sociology of knowledge approach to discourse used to generate the research perspective and questions? Which analytic categories of SKAD are applied and how? How have data corpuses been built? Which more specific analytical frameworks are developed inspired by or in relation to SKAD? How have the results and findings been integrated and presented? Finally, how does this project contribute to and engage with a particular research area?

To critically reflect on and advance SKAD based on very different empirical contexts, the book begins with an outline of the core conceptualisation and aim of SKAD by *Reiner Keller*. This chapter introduces the basic theoretical groundwork, central concepts of and arguments for SKAD, followed by a short discussion of methodological aspects and methods for empirical research. The chapter explains SKAD's understanding of discourses and dispositifs, and lays out the basic framing for the contributions that follow.

In the next chapter, co-authored by *Reiner Keller* and *Adele E. Clarke*, SKAD is situated within both the history and current scope of qualitative inquiry and vis-à-vis discourse research in sociology and related disciplines. This chapter explores SKAD's embeddedness within the interpretive

paradigm, as well as its affinities with ethnographic work, analysis of meaning making and the sociology of knowledge. Much like situational analysis developed by Clarke, SKAD argues for the urgent need for inquiry into processes of discursive construction and world making.

Following these foundational chapters on SKAD as conceptual frame and methodology, the reader is invited to dive into the intricacies of empirical research, data collection and analysis inspired by SKAD. This empirical part of the book begins with a chapter by *Reiner Keller* on the social construction of value. Household waste and waste policies are high on the public agendas of wealthy countries around the globe – important issues in the Western world at least since the 1960s. Waste is an interesting topic for socio-cultural analysis as it encompasses structures of production and consumption as well as resource exploitation, environmental pollution and social norms of valuation and de-valuation. The chapter presents a comparative SKAD investigation into public waste discourses and policies in France and Germany from 1970 to 1995. What Keller finds is that the symbolic reality of waste mastery in both countries is considerably different. While German discourses were stimulated by protracted warnings of a coming catastrophe, the hegemonic discourse on waste in France repeatedly performed an ever-failing but still reassuring proclamation about civilisation's victory over the threats of waste production.

From France and Germany, it is only a small step to the analytic focus of *Wolf J. Schünemann* on political debates in the EU multi-level system. Drawing upon his comparative study of EU treaty referendum discourses in France, the Netherlands and Ireland, Schünemann introduces SKAD as a research program useful in the analysis of political debates in general and referendum debates in particular. To date, EU referendum research has largely sought universal explanatory models of electoral behaviour – why people voted as they did, how campaigns affected voting behaviour, and why referenda failed or succeeded. Instead, SKAD offers assistance in reconstructing the structures of political meaning-making deeply embedded in the respective socio-cultural settings. In addition, the chapter describes important modifications and adaptations of SKAD for use in political research.

The next chapter, contributed by *Andreas Stückler*, takes us from politics to policy. He analyses law-making processes in the amended Penal Procedure Code in Austria using a SKAD-inspired exploration of how different discourses construct victims' rights. In order to reconstruct the historical processes of discursive construction of the "victim" as a new category in criminal procedure law, the case study then explores different victim discourses circulating in the law-making process as well as victim-related patterns of interpretation constitutive of those discourses. Stückler used official documents from the legislative process (draft laws, minutes of parliamentary sessions, etc.). His analysis demonstrates how the Austrian reform of penal procedure was framed through the competition between

two essentially different victim discourses in law (“injured person” vs. “victim”).

Interested in SKAD’s potential in non-European empirical contexts, *Anna-Katharina Hornidge* and *Hart Nadav Feuer* then invite the reader to Southeast Asia. Their chapter is based on SKAD inspired research pursued since 2005 on different discourses of knowledge and their action guiding potential in the region vis-à-vis higher education. The authors argue that the triad of cooperation, international exchange and standard-setting among institutions of higher education has become a dominant framework for fostering strong transnational ties of *knowledge societies*. Hornidge and Feuer discuss how SKAD can help guide ethnographic research methods on both theoretical and practical levels and how SKAD itself becomes a heuristic tool in subsequent analyses. Specifically, they reflect upon and widen the SKAD tradition of ethnographic methods for long-term empirical field research, while also bringing in an approach to using traditional discourse fragments and quantitative data (e.g. on capital investments, graduation rates, publications and international agreements) for triangulation purposes.

From the landscape of Southeast Asia, SKAD next travels further North to China with *Shaoying Zhang* and *Derek McGhee*. They reflect on using SKAD in their explorations of the three-fold relationship between discourses and actors as a paradigm to understand Communist officials as *both* governing agents *and* governed subjects within the Communist Party of the People’s Republic of China. The authors demonstrate how both the dynamic political situation in China and the individual’s distinctive political situations together guided the recruitment of participants for this research. Interestingly, the interviewees used their research participation as an opportunity for risk-sharing and speaking the truth in hopes that the research would subsequently influence the Chinese government. The interviews thus became political theatre – an instrument wherein communist officials took risks to become specific intellectuals through practicing what Foucault called Parrhessia [speaking truth to power]. Referencing Stenson’s “governing from below” (1998) and Buzan and colleagues’ “securitization” (1998), the authors succeed in making the complex power relations in Chinese contemporary governance more visible. Further, within the analytical framework of SKAD, they found that every step of reflection is a paradigm-seeking process. Numerous “stories” developed in space and time were collected during the research, and informed the authors’ analyses and narratives.

The politics of classification stand at the centre of the next chapter by *Hella von Unger*, *Penelope Scott* and *Dennis Odukoya*. Employing SKAD, the authors compared changes in the categorisation and classification of im/migrants and ethnic groups in public health reporting in Germany and the UK. They sought to shed light on the genesis and power effects of classification systems and the underlying acts of categorisation as

discursive practices within specific socio-historical contexts, specifically health reporting on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis since the 1980s. Here their analysis focuses on methodological aspects of the study design and the challenges they encountered in the research process. The authors argue that the heuristic framework of SKAD allows the productive integration of elements from neighbouring methodologies such as grounded theory and its more poststructural version, situational analysis.

At a historical moment when the constantly accelerating flows of goods, people, viruses, symbols and systems of ordering have become constitutive of every day social realities, both classification and categorisation relate closely to important questions of identity and identity politics. Moreover, this topic is inherently built into SKAD as a methodological and conceptual frame via its focus on the discursive formations of both subject and speaker positions.

Continuing in this vein with reference to the German labour market, *Saša Bosančić* assesses the increasing cultural and economic marginalization of unskilled work. With reference to SKAD, Bosančić argues that in addition to being formed in the lifeworld and through biographical events, identities are shaped and reshaped by discourses as well as by one's position in the social structure. *All* have major impacts on the self. The methodological groundings for his underlying research design derive from the concept of subjectification located in the SKAD frame of reference. The author proposes that it is necessary to extend and adapt the actor categories of SKAD in order to fully examine the discursive situatedness of human subjectivities.

Carolyn Küppers offers further insights into the SKAD-inspired assessment of subject positions. She studied national and international media reports, especially newspaper articles, leading up to the Soccer World Cup 2010 in South Africa. Her focus is on which subject positions of sex workers were employed by these media and how they reflected the political intentions of the various authors and media outlets studied. Küppers argues that three subject positions were repeatedly deployed: the "magosha" ("whore"), the "victim" and the "mother". In further reflections, Küppers combines SKAD with scholarly work from queer, post-colonial and intersectional theories. She argues that the three subject positions must be understood within the context of heteronormative, post-colonial and intersectional power relations in South Africa. With regard to SKAD, Küpper's work illustrates the openness and integrative nature of the conceptual and methodological frame, allowing adaptation based upon the empirical and field context-specific realities of the research.

The following chapter brings us back to Europe. *Inga Truschkat* and *Claudia Muche* studied support systems for handling major transitions in the life course, and how they may be enhanced and enlarged. Today such so called "career guidance services" are increasingly offered in quite different social sites and for an increasing array of life events. The authors

focus on how they developed their research questions according to SKAD and how SKAD guided their research interests, as well as on their strategy of data collection. They discuss their use of the strategy of theoretical sampling in detail, and present an exemplary analysis of a short section of the data.

Tobias Ide next presents his research in progress, insights from research practice, and his reflections on using SKAD. In recent years, potential links between environmental stress, natural resource scarcity and (violent) inter-group conflict have attracted much academic and political attention. Drawing upon his case study of the Israel-Palestine water conflict, Ide examined the assessment of intersubjective dimensions of socio-environmental conflicts. In contrast to many empirical projects, this chapter is sensitive to the intersubjective construction of conflict identities, threat perceptions and environmental assessments, as well as the relevance of these constructions for human agency. The author applies SKAD in order to dissect and better understand these intersubjective dimensions of socio-environmental conflict and cooperation. Thus the chapter introduces SKAD as a helpful theoretical-methodological approach to make sense of the *simultaneity* of both conflict and cooperation about water between Israel and Palestine.

Florian Elliker applies SKAD to racial diversity in South African student residences. Starting from SKAD arguments for an ethnography of discursive production and discursive intervention into fields of practice, the author sought a new way to study local settings (such as student residences) in combination with analyses of discourses – phenomena and processes on the so-called macro-level of analysis. From this, Elliker develops a sociology of knowledge approach to discourse ethnography and discusses its strengths. This case study helps us to understand how an ethnographic study may contribute to a differentiated understanding of how discourses are entangled with local contexts and how such entanglements are implied in structuring social action.

The volume ends with a contribution focused on the “how” of visualising qualitative data by *Anne Luther* and *Wolf J. Schünemann*. Qualitative researchers in general and discourse analysts in particular are regularly challenged when it comes to the visualisation of empirical findings. In contrast with quantitative investigations that successfully integrate complex information and facts into accessible graphs and tables, a synoptical reduction of complexity using visual tools in qualitative research often fails, or is not even attempted, given the complexity of the objects and empirical approaches. The authors critically reflect on these challenges and are particularly aware of the temptations of so-called “creeping quantification” they see in many works that rely on ready-made tools available in QDA-software packages. As an alternative, they argue for independent and creative visualisation and present some illustrative examples from selected SKAD works. The chapter also introduces the Entity Mapper, an open source software tool for visualising qualitative data and the results of qualitative analysis.

The book's history and a word of gratitude

This edited volume emerged from a panel entitled *Spotlight: The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse*, chaired by Reiner Keller at the Tenth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, organised by Norman K. Denzin and team at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in 2014. Five of the thirteen chapters were initially presented and jointly discussed at that Congress. At that time, SKAD was just beginning to expand beyond the borders of the German speaking academic world where it had continuously gained ground for over a decade. We therefore decided to prepare this edited volume for an international audience with a focus on how to apply SKAD to very different research objects and in quite different national and regional contexts. Fortunately, Routledge was delighted with our proposal.

Many people have supported this project over the years of its creation. First, we would like to thank Norman Denzin and Adele E. Clarke for their unrelated but equally crucial, support, conceptual inspiration and platform for debate, prerequisite to the volume as given. Further, we thank all the authors for their interest in SKAD and their willingness to publish their work in this compendium, offering an internationally visible platform for SKAD. We thank them as well for their patience with us, the editors, in finally making it happen. We also extend deep thanks to the anonymous reviewers of the original proposal for their encouragement and helpful comments. Last but far from least, we especially thank Elena Chiu and Emily Briggs at Routledge who patiently accepted our delays and answered our questions during the entire process in a highly competent and considerate manner. Finally, we would like to thank the many helping hands, the crucial support in proofreading and editing all chapters, checking diagrams and tables, compiling CVs and abstracts. Here in particular we would like to thank Julia Franz at Hildesheim University, Philip Schenck and Lucas Barning at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) in Bremen and Cathrin Tettenborn at Augsburg University.

Notes

- 1 See the references in Keller on SKAD, Chapter 2, as well as references on SKAD studies in other languages: <http://kellersskad.blogspot.de> (last accessed 1 March 2018).
- 2 By discursivity we refer to the complexity and interwovenness of discourses and processes of discursive construction.
- 3 OECD-world refers to member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

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