

A Bibliometric Review of the Field Theory: Current Trends and Future Development

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Abstract. This study focuses on the development of Field Theory (FT) literature trends through bibliometric analysis for the previous 20 years. The data analyzed consists of 447 peer-reviewed journal articles from 228 sources retrieved in the Web of Science (WoS) database with Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) indexing, from 2003 to October 2022. An overview of 447 articles was presented by utilizing Biblioshiny and HistCite. To visualize the data, we used VOSviewer software. Bibliometric analysis enabled us to chart the development of the FT literature, and its variants, provide a thorough understanding of the FT field's dynamics (structure), and identify journals, authors, subtopics (themes), and their interconnections and network relationships. The results of this study obtained two significant findings, namely that studies on FT grew rapidly from 2003 to 2022, especially in 2016. In addition, there are seven research clusters where neo-institutionalism and Pierre Bourdieu are the dominant themes.

Keywords: Bibliometric, Field theory, Systematic literature review

1 Introduction

This study explores the development of field theory (hereinafter referred to as FT) over the past two decades in the social sciences, particularly sociology, politics, and economics, using a literature review approach, namely bibliometric analysis. Numerous academics have carried out empirical research on the concept and assumptions of FT, including Krause [1], Savage & Silva [2], Fligstein & McAdam [3], Beckert [4], [5], Wacquant [6], and Powell & DiMaggio [7]. FT studies using a literature review approach have also been conducted by several other experts, such as Kungl & Hess [8], Barman [9], and Rowlinson & Hassard [10]. However, the thorough evolution of the FT literature has not been adequately covered by these works. Therefore, this study is essential to fill this gap, which also serves as the basis for our bibliometric study.

FT has become a conceptual framework in the social sciences, especially sociology, which has become increasingly popular in recent decades. From conceptual explorations [11] to empirical applications, such as field studies in organizations [12], [13], [14], media studies [15], literary studies [16], political sociology [17], [18], [19], [20], historical sociology [21], [22], [23] and cultural sociology [2]. FT has also become a conceptual framework in the fields of business [24], economics [25], and management [26]. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric review of previous studies on FT from a sociological perspective. There are three reasons underlying our decision to conduct this study. First, there is a lack of FT literature that uses literature review studies, especially with a bibliometric approach, which focuses on empirical studies of key concepts and theoretical assumptions. To our knowledge, although several experts have attempted to conduct a literature review on this topic [9], [27], no FT studies use a bibliometric approach. Second, the quantity of articles published in the FT literature has been rising annually. This rise highlights the necessity of using software, enabling us to review the entire collection of FT literature. Analysis using large data sets in this way provides excellent benefits to researchers when considering the field as a whole. Third, one of the methods that academics have been using a lot lately for this aim is bibliometric analysis [28], and it continues to grow each year [29]. Lastly, there is limited quantitative studies, underexplored contexts or populations, and a lack of longitudinal research on how field dynamics change over time. Additionally, there is often insufficient cross-disciplinary research and a failure to examine key variables like power dynamics or external influences. By identifying these gaps, the manuscript justifies the use of a

bibliometric approach to analyze existing studies, reveal trends, and highlight overlooked areas, thereby advancing both theoretical and empirical knowledge.

We argue the relevance of FT across various disciplines by highlighting its interdisciplinary applications, particularly in sociology, economics, political science, and management. FT's core concepts, such as fields as arenas of struggle and the role of actors within them, offer valuable insights into social, political, and economic dynamics. While its roots are in sociology, FT's ability to explain complex power relations and organizational structures makes it highly relevant in diverse fields. The manuscript underscores FT's foundational role within sociology, emphasizing its enduring influence in understanding social phenomena and its broad applicability across disciplines.

This study contributes to the study of FT by providing a better understanding of the current context of FT through a bibliometric analysis approach. Bibliometric analysis is a form of literature evaluation that summarizes the content and structure of a specific study domain. [30], [31]. In contrast to other forms of literature reviews, bibliometric analysis aims to analyze a collection of previous literature related to a specific topic to produce objective findings [32]. Additionally, this study can provide valuable insights or serve as a reference for experts interested in FT literature using bibliometric analysis methods. The results must be defined following the research questions to demonstrate that this study contributes new and relevant information to the development of pertinent literature. Based on the objectives of this study, we propose five research questions that will be the principal emphasis of this research.

RQ1. How has FT literature developed from 2003 to 2022?

RQ2. Who are the most influential authors, articles, journals, affiliations, and countries in the field of FT?

RQ3. How do authors, countries, and journals collaborate on FT topics?

RQ4. What are the research trends in the field of FT? What are the important topics and issues in FT literature in the social sciences, particularly in sociology, politics, economics, and other social issues?

RQ5. What are the future research opportunities regarding FT literature?

The next part of this article explains the data collection and analysis methods. Then, we report the main findings in the form of a general description of the analyzed articles along with visualizations of all analysis maps, and discuss the crucial findings of this study by presenting future research on FT literature. Drawing conclusions and pointing out limitations and implications for future research is the final part of this article.

2 Theoretical Foundations

The development of contemporary sociological FT cannot be separated from two major influences, namely Max Weber and Kurt Lewin. Weber significantly impacted FT's conception of the field as an arena of action that is socially constructed. Meanwhile, the concept of "field," originating in physics, was introduced by Kurt Lewin through his work in the 1930s and discovered its way into the social and behavioral studies. [11]. Through the explicit use of the "field" metaphor, Lewin provided a crucial foundation for developing contemporary sociological FT. FT emphasizes attention to institutional constraints and individual agents that generate the capacity for social change [3], [11], [33], [34], [35], [36]. In the field of organizations and social movements, FT focuses on institutional stability or change [14], [35], [37], [38].

FT includes analytical units as well as a set of conceptual claims regarding social action. The field is a meso-level domain in which actors share a common orientation (Barman, 2016; Fligstein & McAdam, 2011). The field operates as a relational theoretical paradigm, wherein actors participate in collective action based on their structural placement and their positionality relative to others within a defined arena [3], [9], [11], [34], [35], [36]. Despite shared claims, FT takes different forms. The most prominent variants of FT in contemporary sociology are the Bourdieusian approach, New-Institutionalism, and Strategic Action Fields (SAFs) [1], [9], [27]. These three approaches must be understood in a dialogical manner, each addressing the weaknesses in the previous versions [1], [3], [9], [27], [35], [39].

FT employs diverse sources to produce its actor models or FT action models, including Bourdieu, who formulated and utilized the concept of field within an extensive framework of political economics, structural anthropology, and Weberian sociology. Bourdieu emphasizes his focus on the configuration of relationships defined by the "distribution of types of power (capital)" [36], [40]. His concept of habitus was influenced by philosophy, such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, as well as sociologists who were philosophically inclined and influenced by phenomenology, such as Mauss and Elias [41]. Meanwhile, new-Institutionalism designed and developed a second stream of FT that differed significantly from Bourdieu's conception. New-Institutionalism heavily relies on the work of Berger and Luckmann for their actor model, which posits that the world is a social construction [7]. New-Institutionalism explicitly incorporates field-based principles to theorize the relationship between organizations and their environment [7], [34], [42], [43]. DiMaggio and Powell created the notion of the organizational field, primarily aimed at elucidating the commonalities among organizations that

inhabit the same institutional framework [34]. This approach focuses more on actors' pursuit of legitimacy and conformity with norms at the field level than on other forms of FT.

FT's third and most recent elaboration is Strategic Action Fields, proposed by Fligstein and McAdam [3], [35]. This approach synthesizes several core ideas from previous approaches on field emergence and transformation mechanisms. Fligstein & McAdam present the most lively and political standpoint on field changes [3]. According to this method, a field is an unseen, structured entity made up of actors who identify as field members and occupy a variety of roles within it. It is also full of collective identities and its own set of rules. "Strategic action fields" (henceforth referred to as SAFs) are described by Fligstein & McAdam [3] as "meso-level social systems in which actors (individual or collective) correspond and communicate with one another through a common comprehension (which does not imply consensus) of the field's targets, relationships with other people in the field (including who has power and why), and the rules regulating proper action in the field." This concept borrows heavily from Bourdieu's work, including the idea that fields do not exist independently of actors' perceptions and definitions [36]. Compared to the other two approaches, SAFs focus on deliberate strategic actions and thus make agency more explicit.

3 Methods

This section describes two stages of identifying and analyzing data sources and research methods used in FT literature studies. First, the literature search strategy stage. At this stage, articles are identified, screened, and selected in detail. Second is bibliometric analysis, where selected data is analyzed and interpreted.

3.1 Literature Search

We conducted a systematic review to identify academic studies in the FT literature through bibliometric analysis [28], [32], [44]. There were two phases to the literature search: (i) finding articles using databases and search terms/keywords, and (ii) filtering articles using inclusion and exclusion criteria. Numerous databases contain the information needed for bibliometric analysis. Multiple databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, WoS, and Scopus, offer datasets for bibliometric analysis [28]. This study uses the WoS database to search for literature. This database was selected for three reasons. First, the WoS database applies stricter standards than Scopus, resulting in more credible sources [45], [46]. Second, the WoS database (started in 1900) has a broader publication coverage than Scopus (began in 1927) [47]. Third, WoS is a database widely used in literature reviews for social sciences [48], [49]. The process of systematic review was summarized in Figure 1.

Table 1. Keywords Used to Identify Relevant Articles

Keywords
"field theory" OR "theory of field" OR "boudieusian" OR "new institutionalism" OR "neo institutionalism" OR "neo-institutionalism" OR "strategic action field"

3.2 Article Screening and Selection

After conducting the identification stage, we screened 84,165 documents. The aim was to find studies that were not within the scope of the review. These irrelevant studies affected the results of the bibliometric analysis and the validity of the analysis. For this reason, inclusion and exclusion criteria were necessary (Table 2), using the PRISMA diagram (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) as a guideline (<https://prisma-statement.org/>).

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Article selection	
Inclusion criteria	1) Article in the categories: sociology, political science, business, economics, management, or social issues 2) Article published in a peer-reviewed journal 3) Research article 4) Article in the English language 5) Keywords (in Table 1) included in the article's title, abstract, or keywords 6) Publication years: 2003 – October 2022 7) Web of Science Index: Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)

Exclusion criteria	1) Proceedings paper, book chapters, book, book review, early access, retracted publication, data paper 2) Article published after 2022 (2023) 3) Web of Science Index: Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), Art and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), Emerging Source Citation Index (ESCI) 4) Article not covering the FT
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Source. Processed by the author

This screening stage was conducted in three steps. First, screening was performed based on WoS categories. Our study focused on “sociology, political science, business, economics, management, or social issues.” It means that studies outside these fields are excluded or not processed further. Of the 84,165 studies, 83,071 were determined to not fulfill the basic search/screening criteria and were subsequently excluded. Meanwhile, the remaining 1,094 articles proceeded to further screening. Subsequently, additional screening was performed according to the established inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 2). We exclusively picked research articles published in peer-reviewed journals and written in English, with a WoS index of “social science citation index” (SSCI). SSCI is one of the most well-known citation indexes obtained from the Web of Science website(www.mjl.clarivate.com) [50]. We excluded proceedings papers, book chapters, books, book reviews, early access, retracted publications, and data papers, as they are not considered validated knowledge and are not based on empirical findings. Furthermore, we omit publications that lack the specified keywords (enumerated in Table 1) in the title, abstract, or keywords section. At this stage, out of the 1,094 documents identified, 577 that did not meet the criteria were excluded, leaving 517 papers.

Finally, we manually evaluated the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the remaining 517 documents to ensure that the articles were within FT's scope. Out of the 517 documents, 70 were dropped for not aligning with the scope of FT. At this stage, 447 articles were eligible for further analysis.

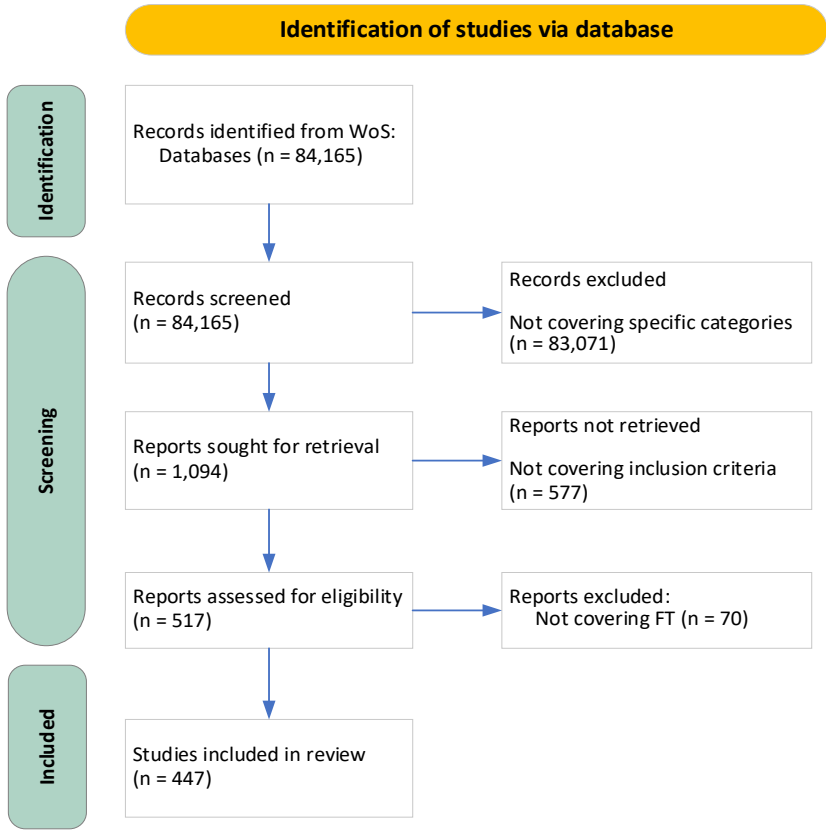


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram

3.3 Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is extensively employed in social science research to discern research trends and to offer an overview and progression of fundamental issues. It was a technique employed to delineate the intellectual

framework of each study domain, topic, or publication based on particular indicators [28]. Researchers utilized aggregate bibliographic data from other scientists, derived from citations, partnerships, and papers, as the foundation for their conclusions [44], [51]. Bibliometrics employs a quantitative and valuable methodology in literature reviews, directing researchers to the most impactful studies while delineating research domains devoid of subjective bias. Bibliometrics is employed to achieve a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the actual structure of a discipline, discover research clusters that give rise to research fields, and illustrate advancements within a field of study [44]. Bibliometric research can examine and illustrate the framework of a study domain by categorizing things (articles, authors, publications, terms, or categories) into distinct groupings. [32].

4 Results

4.1 Publication Trends

This section attempts to answer **RQ1** regarding the development of FT literature from 2003 to 2022. Figure 2 illustrates the progression of FT literature within the WoS database, reflecting the total document count (articles) and the average annual citations. During this period, there were 447 articles from 228 journal sources. The number of articles increased, peaking in 2016 with 48 articles (see Figure 3). This increase is due to many researchers in the social sciences (such as economics, business, management, and politics) using the latest FT variant (strategic action field) as their conceptual framework. This is similar to studies conducted by Özen & Özen [52], Laamanen & Skälén [53], Taylor et al. [54], B. J. Taylor [55], and Domaradzka & Wijkstrom [56]. Additionally, the annual growth rate of FT literature is 11.92 percent. The highest yearly average citation count was in 2010 at 7.59.

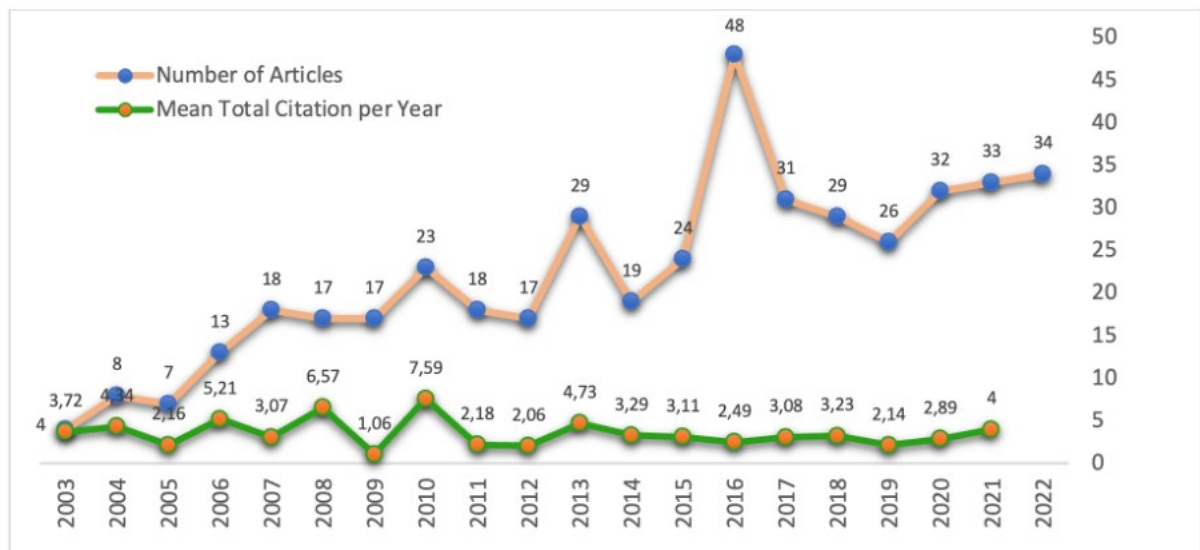


Figure 2. The Historical Trajectory of the Publication of Field Theory

4.2 Authors, Articles, and Sources

This section discusses the most productive authors, influential articles (based on the number of articles, citations, and local citations at the end of the period), relationships between publications, and productive journals, while answering RQ2. First, we identify the most productive authors in FT literature based on the total number of articles (see Table 3). From the sample data, 751 authors contributed to 447 articles in 228 journals. Table 3 indicates that Singh S is the most prolific author, having published five publications. Strand M and Garcia-Cabrera AM have authored 4 and 3 articles, correspondingly. Second, identifying influential articles in the FT literature based on the total citations received per year, both locally (TLCS/t) and globally (TGCS/t), and local citations at the end of the period (LCSe) (see Tables 4 and 5). TLCS indicates how often other articles in the collection have cited articles in the local collection (articles taken). TGCS indicates how often articles outside the collection have been cited in the local collection (selected articles). Simultaneously, LCSe displays the ratio of local citations at the conclusion of the specified period. This ratio describes whether an article received more citations at the end of the study period or more recently.

Table 3. Most relevant authors (sorted by total articles)

Authors	Total Articles	TLCS	TGCS
Singh S	5	1	18
Strand M	4	4	83
Garcia-Cabrera AM	3	0	25
Heilbron J	3	2	60
Mccloskey DN	3	1	51
Oh I	3	0	27
Suddaby R	3	6	530
Abrutyn S	2	3	74
Arts B	2	1	109
Barman E	2	3	72

In Table 4, Dacin MT, Kostova T, and Roth K are the authors whose articles received the highest number of citations with scores of 56.40, respectively. They are followed by Schmidt VA and Suddaby R with scores of 55.62 and 45.92, respectively. Simultaneously, the pieces that garnered the most local citations by the conclusion of the term, namely articles by Benson R and Schmidt VA, are shown in Table 5. The article by Benson [57] entitled “News media as a ‘Journalistic field’: What Bourdieu adds to new institutionalism, and vice versa,” published in Political Communication, ranks highest. Second place was occupied by Schmidt [58] with his article titled “Taking ideas and discourse seriously: explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth ‘new institutionalism’”, published in European Political Science Review.

Table 4. Ranking of top 10 articles (sorted by TGCS/t)

Rank	Author	TLCS	TLCS/t	TGCS	TGCS/t
1	Dacin MT	4	0.27	846	56.40
2	Kostova T	4	0.27	846	56.40
3	Roth K	4	0.27	846	56.40
4	Schmidt VA	9	0.69	723	55.62
5	Suddaby R	6	0.46	530	45.92
6	Chappell L	2	0.18	361	30.93
7	Binder A	7	0.44	332	20.75
8	Bonikowski B	0	0.00	132	18.86
9	Gidron N	0	0.00	132	18.86
10	Kenny M	1	0.00	224	17.23

Note: TLCS Total local citation score received. TLCS/t Average local citations score received per year. TGCS Total global citations score received. TGC/t Average global citations score received per year. *ordered by TGCS/t.

Table 5. Ranking of trending articles (sorted by LCSe)

Rank	Author(s)/Year/Title	Journal	LCSe	GCS/t	LCS/t
1	Benson R (2006). “News media as a “Journalistic field”: What Bourdieu adds to new institutionalism, and vice versa.”	Political Communication	4	10.82	0.53
2	Schmidt VA (2010). “Taking ideas and discourse seriously: explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth ‘new institutionalism’.”	European Political Science Review	4	55.62	0.69
3	Couldry N (2003). “Media meta-capital: Extending the range of Bourdieu's field theory	Theory and Society	3	8.25	0.55
4	Hesmondhalgh D (2006). Bourdieu, the media and cultural production.”	Media Culture & Society	3	15.53	0.59
5	Franssen T (2013). “Coping with uncertainty, abundance and strife: Decision-making processes of Dutch acquisition editors in the global market for translations.”	Poetics	3	6.40	0.70

6	Liu SD, Emirbayer M (2016). "Field and Ecology."	Sociological Theory	3	5.71	0.43
7	Evans R (2008). "How Environmentalists "Greened" Trade Policy: Strategic Action and the Architecture of Field Overlap."	American Sociological Review	2	5.13	0.33
8	Childress CC (2015). "Regionalism and the Publishing Class: Conflicted Isomorphism and Negotiated Identity in a Nested Field of American Publishing."	Cultural Sociology	2	1.38	0.25
9	Strand M (2015). "The genesis and structure of moral universalism: social justice in Victorian Britain, 1834-1901."	American journal of sociology	2	4.57	0.29
10	Barman E (2016). "Varieties of Field Theory and the Sociology of the Non-profit Sector."	Sociology Compass	2	4.14	0.29

Note: LCS/t Average local citations score received per year. GCS/t Average global citations score received per year. LCS/e Ratio of local citation at the end.

Third, we identified influential journals in the FT literature. We reviewed them based on total articles, impact factor, and total citations (TLCS and TGCS) (see Table 6). Table 6 indicates that Theory and Society is the most prolific journal, releasing 18 papers. It is followed by Poetics, Cultural Sociology, Asia Pacific Business Review, and Media Culture & Society. All journals included in Table 6 possess quite high influence ratings. In other words, journals that publish articles related to FT are relatively high-quality journals. Specifically, International Journal of Human Resource Management (IF: 6.026), Human Relations (IF: 5.658), and Organization Studies (IF: 5.524) have high impact factor values among the journals in Table 6. The journal impact factor (IF) reflects the average number of citations earned by articles inside a journal, serving as a measure of its quality [59].

Table 6 additionally presents the aggregate citations garnered by the publications that published FT articles in the most prolific journals. Total journal citations are calculated based on the total citations per year (both TLCS/t and TGCS/t) combined. In addition to publishing the most FT articles, Theory and Society has the highest average total citations per year (TLCS/t and TGCS/t) among the journals in Table 6.

Table 6. Most Prolific Journals (Sorted by Total Articles)

Sources	Rec	Journal Impact Factor	TLCS	TLCS/t	TGCS	TGCS/t
Theory and Society	18	3.226	27	1.82	936	73.90
Poetics	15	1.857	12	1.39	178	23.59
Cultural Sociology	11	1.429	9	0.93	212	21.77
Asia Pacific Business Review	7	2.011	0	0.00	50	7.14
Media Culture & Society	7	3.248	13	0.84	352	25.61
Polish Sociological Review	7	0.362	1	0.11	26	3.63
Sociological Theory	7	3.694	10	1.21	190	22.85
Human Relations	6	5.658	2	0.12	147	10.64
International Journal of Human Resource Management	6	6.026	3	0.19	225	16.08
Organization Studies	6	5.524	1	0.10	223	24.37
Public Administration	6	4.013	2	0.18	248	27.06
Journal of European Public Policy	5	4.366	2	0.13	164	12.56
Voluntas	5	2.794	0	0.00	27	7.40

Note: TLCS: Total Local Citation Source, TGCS: Total Global Citation Source. The TLCS/TGCS of the journals were obtained using HistCite. Citations are based on the Web of Science database as of October 2022. The journals' impact factor for 2021 was taken from their website and Clarivate Analytics.

4.3 Citation Analysis

Furthermore, we provide a representation of citation analysis by examining the interconnections among articles (Figure 3). We utilized VOSviewer software to analyze the data. By identifying the preeminent articles in a study domain, we acquired insight into the intellectual trends of that domain. Citation analysis enables the identification of the most cited (or important) works, authors, or journals within a research domain [44]. The

premise is that citations indicate intellectual relationships between publications established when a single publication references another [60]. In other words, the impact of a publication is determined by the number of citations it receives.

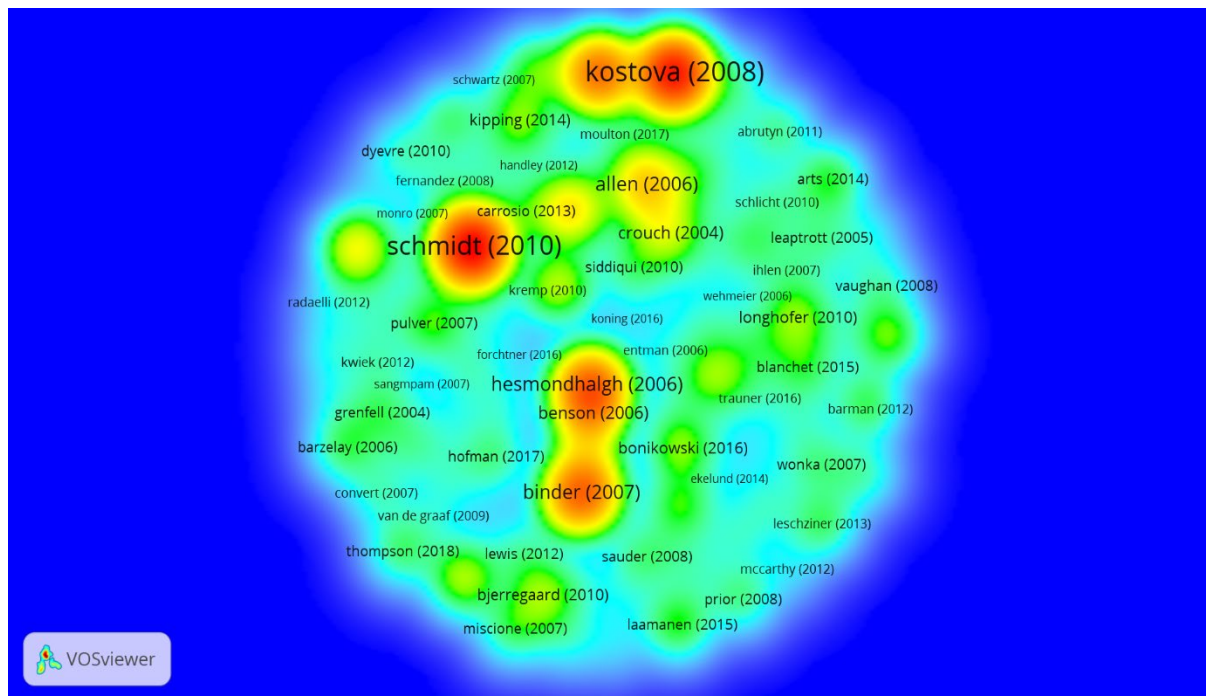


Figure 3. Most Influential Studies in the FT Literature. *Notes:* Created using VOSviewer Based on a Sample of N = 447 Articles. Citations are based on the Web of Science Database as of October 2022

In total, there were 24,831 studies cited by 447 articles in the sample. A minimum criterion of 20 citations was established. This indicates that the studies incorporated in our research were required to be referenced a minimum of twenty times by 447 papers. A total of 134 entries satisfied the criteria. Figure 4 illustrates the most referenced studies in Web of Science Citations. The results show that Schmidt's [58] study titled "Taking ideas and discourse seriously: explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth 'new institutionalism'" is the most cited study with 723 citations. These results support the finding that Schmidt's study is among the top 10 articles, with the highest number of local citations (TLCS) (9) and the fourth highest number of global citations (TGCS) (723 citations) (see Table 4). Additionally, Schmidt's study ranks second in trending articles (see Table 5). Next, in second place is Kostova's study [61] titled "Institutional theory in the study of multinational corporations: A critique and new directions" (see Table 4). Kostova's study received a total of 846 global citations (TGCS). Although Kostova received the highest TGCS score, the total local citations (TLCS) obtained by Kostova were lower than those obtained by Schmidt.

4.4 Authors, Organizations, and Countries

This section presents the affiliations (organizations) and top countries contributing to FT literature with five or more articles (see Tables 7 and 8). This section also answers RQ2 and RQ3. Of the total 447 articles, there are 456 universities from 49 different countries. Authors at 333 of these universities contributed to one study in the FT literature. Table 7 shows the most influential affiliations in FT literature based on total articles and total citations (TLCS and TGCS). Erasmus University is the most contributing university in FT, with the highest number of articles at 9. Harvard University and Copenhagen Business School follow it. Table 7 is dominated by European universities, except for Harvard University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Toronto. Nonetheless, the United States is the most prolific nation, producing 120 articles (see Table 8). The UK, Germany, Canada, and France follow this. The USA is the dominant country in FT literature, contributing approximately 27% of the total articles. Developed countries account for a higher proportion and demonstrate substantial research impact in the FT field. For instance, the USA has the highest total citations (TLCS and TGCS), and Harvard University (USA) is the second most cited affiliation after the University of Edinburgh, and among the universities listed in Table 7.

Table 7. Most Influential Affiliations (Sorted by Total Articles)

Affiliation	Total Articles	TLCS	TGCS
Erasmus Univ	9	4	218
Harvard Univ	8	10	356
Copenhagen Business Sch	7	1	99
Univ Calif Berkeley	7	0	135
Univ Edinburgh	7	3	392
Univ Manchester	7	1	291
CNRS	6	4	119
Univ Nottingham	6	0	164
Univ Toronto	6	5	266
Univ Birmingham	5	1	92
Univ Ghent	5	1	180
Univ Oslo	5	1	156

Note. I list just those universities that have contributed five or more articles to the field. Citations are based on the Web of Science database as of October 2022. Also, citation counts were obtained by using Hitscite
Source: WoS/HistCite

Table 8. Country Scientific Production (Sorted by Total Articles)

Country	Total Articles	TLCS	TGCS
USA	120	73	4537
UK	81	36	2504
Germany	41	13	590
Canada	28	17	2100
France	24	5	340
Netherlands	24	11	503
Italy	19	3	453
Sweden	19	4	414
Australia	18	2	605
Denmark	15	3	382
Norway	13	1	228
Switzerland	13	4	229
Peoples R China	11	0	334
Poland	11	1	91
Belgium	10	2	233
Spain	8	0	77
South Korea	7	0	47
Ireland	6	1	22
Czech Republic	5	0	22

Note. I only include countries contributing to the field with five or more articles. Citations are based on the Web of Science database as of October 2022. Also, citation counts were obtained by using Hitscite. Source: WoS/HistCite

4.5 Salient Word, Keyword, and Co-Keyword

This section emphasizes "words" as its unit of analysis, in contrast to citation analysis, which centers on referenced publications or citations. Co-word analysis seeks to investigate current or prospective links among topics within a research domain by concentrating on the textual content of the publications. Co-occurrence analysis finds the most commonly utilized terms (or subtopics), assesses the intensity of associations between keywords, and uncovers patterns and trends within a specific study domain. In co-word analysis, terms are frequently derived from the author's keywords. Nonetheless, critical terms derived from the "title," "abstract," and "full text" may also be utilized for analysis. Co-word analysis elucidates the relationships between concepts (words or subjects) that co-occur in titles, phrases, or abstracts. [44].

Similar to citation analysis, co-word analysis posits that words that regularly co-occur possess thematic associations. Co-word analysis serves as a supplementary tool to enhance comprehension of topic clusters identified through co-citation analysis or bibliographic coupling, as themes generated from publishing similarities are sometimes quite general [62]. Consequently, co-word analysis can elucidate the subject matter of each topic

area within FT literature. Furthermore, co-word analysis can be employed to forecast and offer an overview of forthcoming research in the domain. In this case, we conducted the analysis based on the authors' keywords, as keywords fully reflect the research content. Through this method, we identified the most studied concepts or subtopics in FT literature, while also answering RQ4 about research trends in FT literature. We utilized Biblioshiny and VOSviewer software in data processing to present co-occurrence networks, thematic evolution, and thematic maps.

Co-occurrence analysis measures the words most frequently discussed in FT topics [63]. We analyzed co-occurrence keywords using VOSviewer to identify trending topics in the FT field. Figure 4 visualizes the co-occurrence network of FT articles from 2003 to 2022. It comprises seven clusters and 29 items proposed based on color, containing author keyword occurrences. Cluster 1 (red) consists of 9 items: culture, economic sociology, governance, institutional change, institutional logic, institutionalism, isomorphism, legitimacy, and neo-institutionalism. Cluster 2 (green) represents five items: cultural production, field theory, literature, Pierre Bourdieu, and symbolic capital. Cluster 3 (dark green) includes four items: environment, globalization, social movements, and sociology. Cluster 4 (light yellow) comprises cultural capital, gender, and strategic action fields. Cluster 5 (purple) contains three items: entrepreneurship, ideas, and institutional theory. Cluster 6 (sky blue) combines three items: the European Union, organizations, and transnationalism. Cluster 7 (orange) consists of 2 items, involving France and journalism. Each item contains occurrences indicating how frequently the keyword is mentioned in the 447 articles. Neo-institutionalism (occurrences = 128) from Cluster 1, field theory (occurrences = 98) from Cluster 2, and Pierre Bourdieu (occurrences = 50) also from Cluster 2 are the most frequently occurring keywords. These are followed by institutional theory (occurrences = 30) from cluster 5, institutional change (occurrences = 12) from cluster 1, and journalism (occurrences = 11) from cluster 7. The results indicate that these six keywords are the most explored topics in the FT articles.

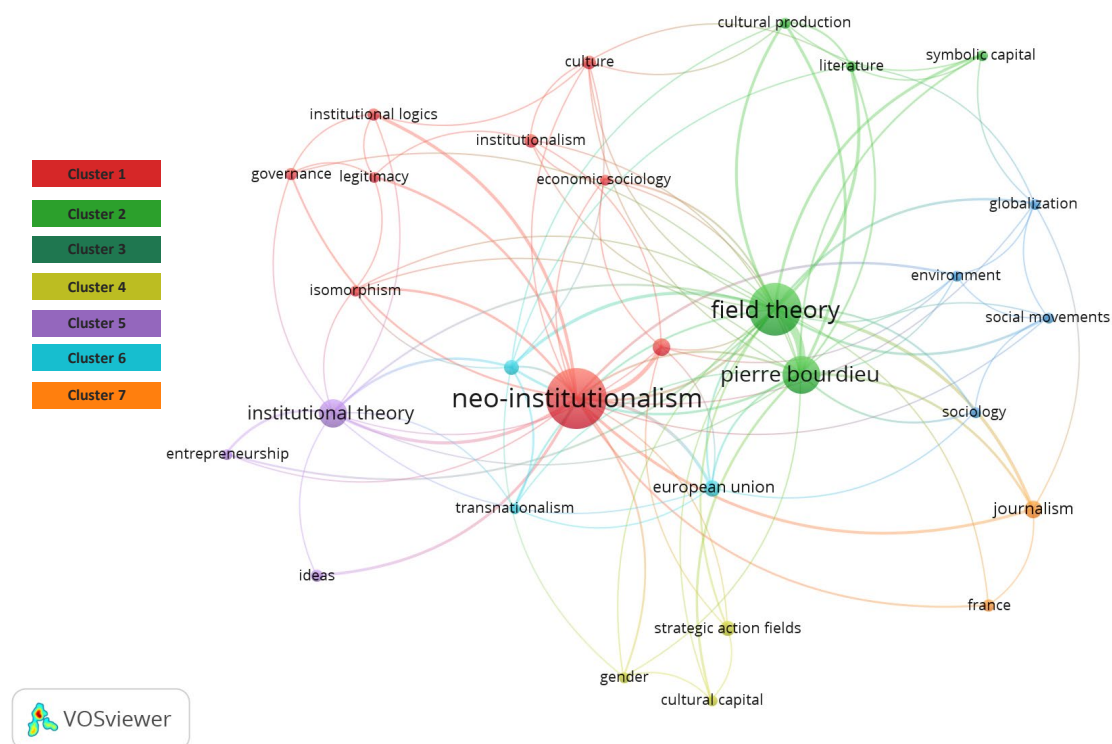


Figure 4. Author's Keyword Co-Occurrences (Min. Five Occurrences)

The themes present in the papers examined in this study are continually evolving, particularly when comparing recent articles to those published in the past. While the primary focus of this study is FT, the data reveal other sub-themes that are commonly utilized according to the writers' keywords. We analyzed the evolution of FT literature themes from 2003 to 2022 using Biblioshiny (Figure 5). The left section displays the six most prevalent themes from 2003 to 2010, varying in size according to their frequency of occurrence. The theme "new institutionalism" ranks first, followed by "neo-institutionalism," "field theory," "institutional theory," "institutional change," "institutionalism," and "historical institutionalism." The second part (middle) displays themes frequently used from 2011 to 2017. Several motifs that surfaced during this period are developments of previously employed themes and are content-related. For example, the theme "new institutionalism" emerged as

a revolution of the themes “new institutionalism” and “institutional change” in previous studies. The most frequently used themes in this period were “field theory” and “new institutionalism.” In addition, other themes that frequently appeared during this period include “neo-institutionalism,” “collective action,” “France,” “institutional theory,” “Poland,” “sociology,” “transnationalism,” “environment,” “economic sociology,” “cultural capital,” and “Brazil.” The third section (right) displays the themes most recently utilized in 2018. There are twelve themes listed that are an evolution of themes that appeared in the previous period. This extends several previous themes, as indicated by the number of connected threads. In the last period, the themes “sociology” and “economic sociology”

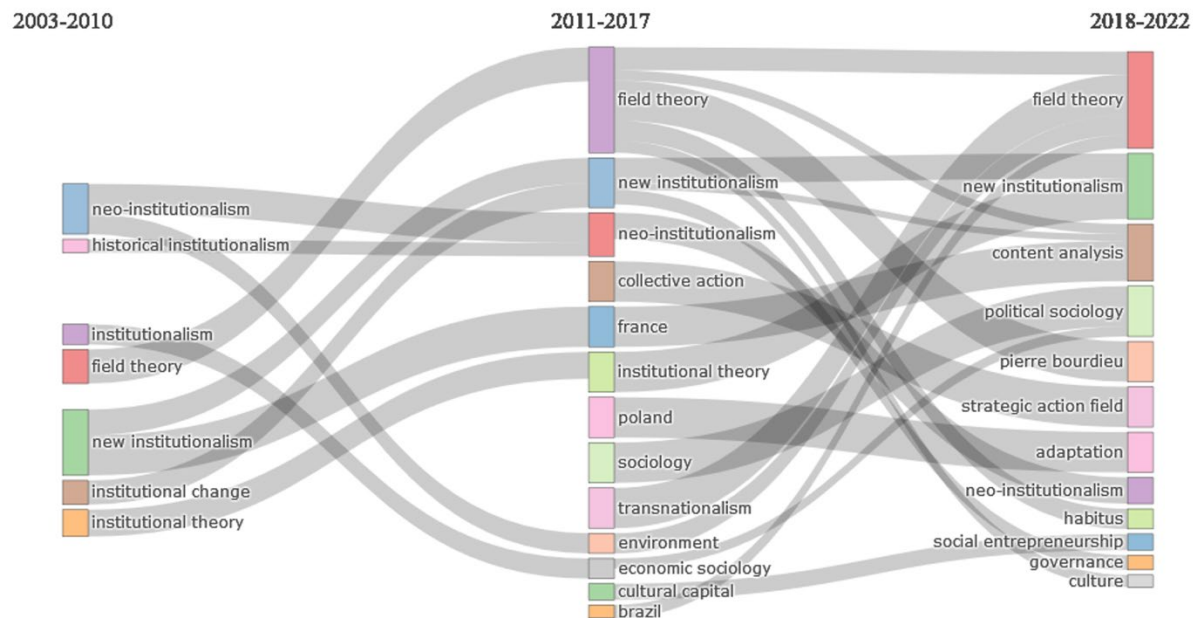


Figure 5. Thematic Evolution

4.5 Research Opportunity

The bibliometric trend analysis of field theory literature reveals a dynamic and evolving intellectual landscape, suggesting several promising directions for future research. It is helpful to fulfil RQ5. Figure 6 shows emerging themes in recent years, such as technology, entrepreneurship, migration, and social movements, which reflect a shift toward understanding how institutional fields are shaped by digital transformation, global mobility, and collective action. Scholars are increasingly interested in how technological innovation and entrepreneurial agency catalyze field-level change, calling for deeper inquiry into the mechanisms of institutional entrepreneurship and the reconfiguration of legitimacy in technology-intensive environments. In parallel, migration and transnational activism introduce new actors and power dynamics into established fields, which necessitates a re-evaluation of field boundaries, governance structures, and the role of non-traditional agents in institutional transformation.

The growing focus on terms such as reputation, framework, and performance indicates a methodological turn in theoretical literature. These developments suggest increasing scholarly interest in how fields are evaluated, measured, and compared across institutional contexts. Future research could explore the construction and diffusion of evaluative frameworks, particularly about performance metrics and legitimacy standards. This aligns with broader concerns around accountability, transparency, and the standardization of knowledge within and across fields.

At the same time, classic concepts such as institutions, power, legitimacy, and governance remain central to the discourse, offering a stable theoretical foundation. However, these pillars also invite re-examination in light of pressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and global health crises. Future studies might integrate field theory with complementary perspectives, such as actor-network or systems theory, to account for increasingly complex and interdependent institutional environments.

Additionally, several underexplored yet promising topics emerged in earlier phases of the timeline, including knowledge, social construction, welfare, reform, and growth. These areas offer fertile ground for revisiting foundational theoretical questions, particularly regarding how knowledge regimes, policy discourses, and epistemic communities influence field emergence and evolution. Revisiting these concepts may enrich

understanding institutional persistence and transformation, especially within public policy, education, and health care systems.

Geopolitical and contextual variation also warrants greater attention. The presence of terms such as European Union, United States, and globalization points to the relevance of comparative, cross-national perspectives. Future research should seek to expand the geographical scope of field theory applications by investigating how institutional logics and field structures vary across cultural, political, and economic contexts. This move beyond the traditionally Western-centric lens could yield more inclusive and nuanced understandings of field dynamics.

Finally, methodological innovation is an important area of growth. The increased emphasis on models, frameworks, and performance highlights the potential for incorporating computational approaches—such as bibliometric network analysis, simulation modeling, and natural language processing—alongside traditional qualitative methods. Embracing methodological pluralism may enhance researchers' capacity to capture institutional fields' multi-layered, temporal, and spatial complexity as they adapt and evolve.

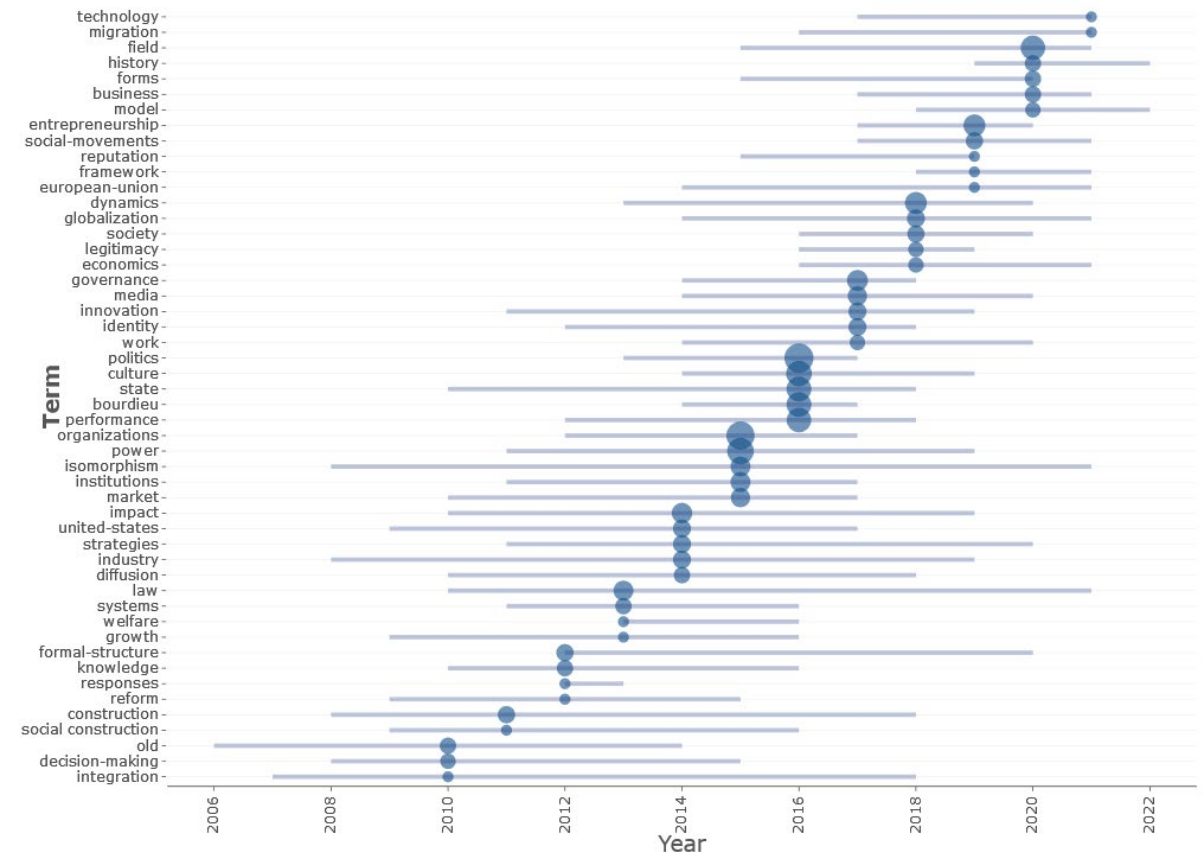


Figure 6. Trend Topics (Keywords Plus)

5 Conclusion

We provide a comprehensive overview of the FT literature through bibliometric analysis. This investigation employs three distinct software programs: Biblioshiny, HistCite, and VOSviewer. The objective is to deliver an exhaustive summary of the FT literature. The results show that research in the field of FT has continued to increase over the past few years. We employed diverse bibliometric techniques, including co-word and co-citation evaluation, to delineate keywords and references within the field of FT. My thorough analysis of prior studies from many perspectives enabled me to extract significant insights from the FT literature, pinpoint study deficiencies, and formulate recommendations for future inquiries in a well-founded manner. This work constitutes a descriptive review. A comprehensive analysis of the content of the pieces in the FT field was not performed. This study delineates tendencies associated with FT and provides a comprehensive review of FT. The subsequent conclusions and recommendations pertain to the review and focus of the FT field.

In this study, we contribute to the development of Field Theory (FT) by providing both theoretical and empirical insights that deepen its understanding and application. Theoretically, we introduce a novel bibliometric approach that traces the evolution of FT across various disciplines, highlighting key shifts in its conceptualization and application. This approach not only offers a systematic overview of how FT has been used but also identifies

emerging trends and areas where the theory can be further developed. Empirically, our study maps the existing FT literature, revealing significant gaps and underexplored areas, particularly in the context of cross-disciplinary research and the empirical validation of FT's core concepts. By analyzing citation networks and scholarly influence, we uncover the impact of key authors and studies on the development of FT, providing new insights into how the theory has shaped and been influenced by different academic fields. Overall, this study offers a comprehensive view of the state of FT, positioning it for continued growth and application in both established and emerging areas of research.

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