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Digital Lifestyles Between Solidarity, Discipline and Neoliberalism: On the Historical Transformations of the Danish IT Political Field from 1994 to 2016

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Abstract: Governments have increasingly turned to digital technologies as a means of rebuilding their public sectors, allowing them to heighten efficiency, cut expenditure, and deliver new services to citizens. However, rather than merely a technical upgrading of governmental institutions, digital reforms and IT policymaking are deeply political practices concerned with producing and imposing certain normative and ideological visions of the social world. Denmark is often labelled as a leading nation in terms of implementing digital governance, but the political and normative dimensions of digital reforms within the Danish welfare state are yet to be systematically investigated. This paper provides a historical study of Danish IT policies from 1994 to 2016. Relying on archival research of national policies and drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's work on the state, we explore how the IT political field has emerged through symbolic struggles over time and how these struggles have produced particular forms of "digital lifestyles". We find that two overall logics have dominated within the Danish IT political field. In 1994-2001, solidarity, equality and local Danish values were highlighting as core components of a digital life. However, from 2002, economic efficiency, competitiveness and self-governance become the main ideals. In this way, the IT political field has increasingly come to converge with neoliberal discourses concerned with imposing market-like dynamics on the public sector and population. The paper concludes with a reflection on how the concept of digital lifestyles may help us understand these changes.

Keywords: Digitalisation, Digital Governance, Digital Lifestyles, IT policies, Pierre Bourdieu, Field Theory, Danish State, Digital Technologies, Neoliberalism

1. Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become important means of statecraft within advanced democracies around the world. Through the implementation of internet-driven platforms, big data analytics, and digital infrastructures, national governments have pushed digital era governance to the front of the political agenda (Margetts and Dunleavy 2013; Dunleavy et al. 2006). By promoting digitalisation as a necessary means to heighten public sector efficiency, deliver new services to the citizen-consumer, and foster international competitiveness, digital reforms and IT policymaking have resulted in significant transformations of public sectors and public managements (Weerakkody and Reddick 2013).

The global transformation of national governments into digital agencies is, however, not just a technological process concerned narrowly with upgrading public institutions through the implementation of ICTs. Although the large majority of research within the field of e-government has tended to frame these changes in either purely technological, positivist or otherwise uncritical terms (Heeks and Bailur 2007), a growing body of critical scholarship has emphasised the distinctly political and ideo-

logical dimensions of digital reforms. Indeed, following the publication of the European Union's so-called "Bangemann Report" in 1994 (Gibbs 2001; Goodwin and Spittle 2002), critical research has highlighted the importance of studying the implicit assumptions and ideological underpinnings of digital reforms (Gurumurthy, Chami and Thomas 2016; Bates 2014; Verdegem and Fuchs 2013; Franceschetti 2016; Verdegem 2011). This research has given weight to Braman's (2006) argument that information policies are becoming a central means of exerting state power within the contemporary era. In this context, studies of European countries in particular have shown how digital reforms have increasingly becoming reliant on neoliberal discourses. Bates (2014) has thus shown how Open Government Data in the United Kingdom has played an important part in rebuilding the neoliberal state after the 2007 financial crises. Franceschetti (2016) has made similar observations in the case of data policies in Italy, arguing that these have served as powerful neoliberal devices. Ahlqvist and Moisio (2014) have highlighted how digitalisation has served as a potent engine of neoliberalization within the Finnish state, while Verdegem and Fuchs (2013) have documented how the "Digital Agenda" pursued by the European Union has incorporated and reproduced neoliberal ideals about competitiveness, entrepreneurship and the supposed benefits of market-like dynamics. This research showcases that behind the oftentimes sleek, technocratic and overhyped rhetoric of governmental policies, IT policymaking is a deeply political activity. It is sunk into the dominant ideological structures of our times and part of the reproduction of neoliberal hegemony on a global scale. If we wish to understand the impact and consequences of digital governance, we must be attentive to these symbolic components of digital reforms.

Yet, while research has begun investigating the political and ideological dimensions of digitalisation and digital reforms, through a critical engagement with the underlying discourses contained in governmental documents, little research has examined how citizenship is being transformed through such political initiatives. However, as Björklund (2016) has recently shown in a study of Estonian e-government, conceptions of how citizens should and ought to live have been at the centre of such policymaking. Digitalisation has not just been concerned with how society and the state should become digital, but also with how the population should and ought to act, which forms of life are deemed natural, and what it means to be a proper citizen.

In this paper, we seek to contribute to these emergent strands of critical research through a study of national IT policies formulated by the Danish state from 1994 to 2016. Since the 1990s, the Danish state has taken decisive steps towards constructing a completely digital public sector. Today, Denmark is often labelled as an international forerunner when it comes to digital reforms, and the country is in the top of the European Union's Digital Economy and Society Index (Igari 2014). Through an investigation of Danish IT policymaking, treated as a specific case that nonetheless shares important similarities with other Western democracies, we specifically seek to understand how digital reforms have constructed and relied on certain political and normative images of the Danish population. How have citizens been expected to act in a digital society? Which logics have been attributed to the 'good' digital life? How have these logics changed over time, and what has the consequences of these changes been?

To address these questions, we will propose the concept of *digital lifestyles*. Appropriating the notion of lifestyles from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (2010), we suggest digital lifestyles as a way of understanding how particular conceptions of the "good" digital life have formed within the state and been imposed onto the citizenry

over time. Relying on an archival study of governmental documents from 1994 to 2016, we will trace the different symbolic logics attached to digital lifestyles over time. This will allow us to advance the argument that throughout the history of the Danish IT political field, from its genesis in the early 1990s to its consolidation as a genuine field of policy during the 2000s, what has been at stake is a symbolic struggle to define how citizens should and ought to live, which forms of life are deemed natural, and which values are attributed to specific forms of behaviour. Moreover, we will showcase how digital lifestyles have increasingly come to converge with neoliberal ideology. In this way, our analysis highlights that while digital lifestyles were attached to mainly civic ideals in the 1990s, concerned with maintaining solidarity, deepening participatory democracy, and sustaining 'Danish' values in an era increasingly prone to globalisation, these have come to overlap with economic ideals concerning efficiency, competitiveness, and the subject as a self-governing individual. This has simultaneously meant that a whole array of tools has been developed to estimate the economic potential of IT, and that new disciplinary measurements have been put in place to accelerate the implementation of IT across the population. As digital lifestyles have shifted towards an increasingly neoliberal model, the internalisation of these dispositions has also turned from soft-consensual means to more direct forms of discipline. The state has attempted, in oftentimes subtle and unnoticed ways, to impose its means of vision and division onto the population. By historicising these contemporary modalities of digital lifestyles, we can begin to see that they did not emerge fully formed or complete. Instead, they are the result of historical battles over symbolic capital within the IT political field itself (Bourdieu 2010).

This paper contributes to the international body of research concerned with the political and normative implications of digital reforms and IT policymaking (Verdegem and Fuchs 2013; Bates 2014). By introducing the concept of digital lifestyles, positioned within the broader context of Bourdieu's theory of the state, this paper provides new conceptual tools that may form the basis of transnational studies going forward. The paper showcases how conceptions of citizenship and the natural life have constituted cornerstones in the digitalisation of the Danish state. In providing this specific national study, the paper advances our knowledge of how ICTs and digital reforms are altering and impacting contemporary governments. It showcases how neoliberalism has gradually entrenched on traditional welfare state logics, and why critical research is urgently necessary.

2. Digital Lifestyles and the State

Since the 1970s, Denmark has very actively sought to become one of the leading nations worldwide in terms of adopting digital technologies (Igari 2014). To this end, technological developments within the Danish public sector have progressed rapidly: from the first computers introduced in the public sector in the 1970s and 1980s (King and Kraemer 1985; Henriksen and Damsgaard 2007; Sundbo and Lund 1986) to having digital tools as an integrated part of both civic life and public sector administration in the 1990s and 2000s (Andersen and Danziger 1995; Jæger and Löfgren 2010; Henriksen 2015). The digitalisation of the Danish state has been accompanied by dreams, hopes and promises as to the new services, enhanced forms of democracy, and economic effects supposedly brought about by digitalisation (Johansson 2004). Through long-term strategies, annual reviews, and national policies, the Danish state has consistently sought to express *why* the welfare state should be made digital and *how* citizens are supposed to act in a digital society. Yet, beneath the

seemingly technocratic discourse of policymakers, IT has constituted a field of continuous symbolic struggle to define and fixate what this area should imply.

Existing research has partially portrayed the development of Danish IT policies over time (Johansson 2004; Jæger and Löfgren 2010), including ethnographic studies of how digital reforms are altering the work conditions for local welfare state professionals (Pors 2015a, 2015b) or how national reforms are negotiated in local administrations (Hjelholt 2015; Hjelholt and Jensen 2015). The political and social changes prompted by the digitalisation of the Danish state have also been addressed by perspectives relying on maturity models (Andersen and Henriksen 2006) and new institutional approaches (Henriksen and Damgaard 2007; Federspeil 2015). This change has first and foremost entailed a focus on how users may adopt certain IT solutions, how policy formulation can be more aligned with the potential users, and how IT may or may not provide a positive business case. All too often, this has implied a depoliticised and naturalised outlook on policymaking as somehow detached from ideological and political structures. In this paper, we shift the analytical focus significantly. Instead of taking the symbolic forms produced by the state as our point of departure, we instead seek to investigate their historical conditions of emergence. How has the IT political field constructed digital lifestyles? And how has this changed over time? To explore these questions, we draw extensively on the work of Bourdieu, as it provides a central resource for understanding symbolic struggles and power relations.

Bourdieu (1990, 2010) uses a flexible and dynamic set of concepts to theorise members of society and their agency. He portrays human beings as existing in a social space of power, a field that comprises all social relations. Within this social space, there are several differentiated fields, each consisting of "a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 16). A field is a "structured field of forces, and also a field of struggle to conserve or transform this field of forces" (Bourdieu 2004, 33). Each field has its own internal logic revolving around the accumulation of different kinds of capital: economic, cultural, scientific, religious and so on. By theorising fields as historical and relational in nature, Bourdieu's work allows for an analytical sensibility towards the historical conditions of emergence constituting particular parts of social reality.

Fields are simultaneously arenas of struggle in which agents will battle for the accumulation of capital, and the specific power it yields. In this way, fields contain and produce symbolic hierarchies between agents distributed differently within the field. By showing how fields work through the production of symbolic distinctions, Bourdieu stresses that symbolic classifications and beliefs play an important part in the reproduction and legitimisation of particular fields. As Swartz (1997, 123) summarises, "*fields are arenas of struggle for legitimation:* in Bourdieu's language, for the right to monopolize the exercise of 'symbolic violence' [original emphasis]."

Bourdieu (2005, 2014) uses this theoretical basis to offer important insights on the state as a sociological object of investigation. Extending Max Weber's classic definition of the state as holding the monopoly on legitimate physical violence, Bourdieu argues that the state must also be conceived as holding the monopoly on legitimate *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu 2014; see also Swartz 2013, 129). Thus, according to Bourdieu "[t]he state, as I see it, must be conceived as a producer of principles of classification, that is, of structuring structures that are applicable to all the things of the world, and in particular to social things" (2014, 165). In this way, the state has "the ability to impose in a universal fashion, on the scale of a certain territorial foun-

dation, principles of vision and division, symbolic forms, principles of classification" (Ibid., 166). The state constitutes, in other word, a symbolic machine, capable of imposing its specific logics onto the wider social space through legislation, the crafting of institutional structures, and other forms of standardisation.

While privileging an analysis of the symbolic forms produced by the state, Bourdieu simultaneously stresses that the state must not be approached as an immovable subject. Instead, he foregrounds the concept of the *bureaucratic field,* which he takes to be a field of forces in which agents struggle for the "peculiar form of authority consisting of the power to *rule* via legislation, regulations, administrative measures [original emphasis]" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 111). Wacquant (2009, 2010) has emphasised the usefulness of Bourdieu's conception of the bureaucratic field by arguing that this concept allows us to move beyond stale portrayals of the state as "a monolithic and coordinated ensemble", instead seeing it as "a splintered space of forces vying over the definition of public goods" (Wacquant 2009, 289). The concept of the bureaucratic field is thus useful insofar as it allows us to dynamise the internal structures of the state.

2.1. Locating the IT Political Field

Following Bourdieu's conception of the state, we conceive of the Danish IT political field as a sub-field to the bureaucratic field that has formed over time. In this way, we view it as the product of symbolic struggles to define its structures, accumulate capital, and acquire the means to rule through digital reforms. Like other parts of the Danish state (Pedersen 2011), the IT political field has been caught in a symbolic struggle between disparate logics construing its function and contents in widely different political and ideological terms. In this regard, Wacquant's exposition of Bourdieu's work on the state is helpful. Wacquant argues that the contemporary bureaucratic field is lodged in-between several opposing logics:

> In the contemporary period, the bureaucratic field is traversed by two internecine struggles. The first pits the 'higher state nobility' of policymakers intent on promoting market-oriented reforms and the 'lower state nobility' of executants attached to the traditional missions of government. The second opposes what Bourdieu (…) calls the 'Left hand' and the 'Right hand' of the state. (Wacquant 2010, 200-201)

Recalling Bourdieu's metaphor, the Left hand of the state is constituted by the "family counselors, youth leaders, rank-and-file magistrates" (Bourdieu 1998a, 2) in charge of social functions, while the Right hand is the Ministry of Finance and the technocrats who are "obsessed by the question of financial equilibrium" (Ibid., 5). For Bourdieu, there has emerged a disconnect between these two hands, in which the "right hand no longer knows, or worse, no longer wants what the left hand is doing" (Bourdieu 1998a, 183). These two opposing sets of struggles can also be seen in the context of our study. As our analysis will depict, within the context of the Danish IT political field, this struggle has taken the form of a battle between solidarity, Danish values and democracy on the one hand, and economic ideals bent on efficiency, competitiveness and growth on the other. It is within this dynamic site of struggle that digital lifestyles have been produced, contested and transformed over time (see Figure 1).

We deploy the concept of digital lifestyles as a way of conceptualising the invisible forms of symbolic power yielded by the state, capable of naturalising, imposing and enforcing specific normative images of the natural and good digital life onto the pub-

lic. It acts as a way of bridging the internal structures of the IT political field with its power to impose conceptions of the social world onto the citizenry through symbolic violence. As this study will depict, it is our contention that national IT policies have come to play a crucial part in symbolic struggles to define how citizens should and ought to act. At the same time, the IT political field has been a symbolic battleground for different, competing logics seeking to dominate the field. The concept of digital lifestyles thus allows us to trace how symbolic struggles within the IT political field have simultaneously implied imposing certain forms of life onto the citizenry.
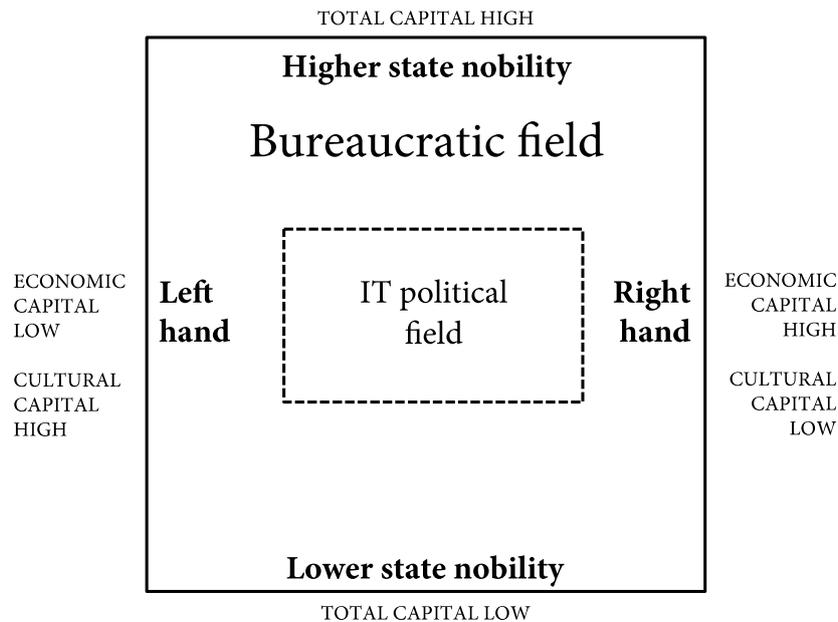
TOTAL CAPITAL HIGH

Higher state nobility

Bureaucratic field

ECONOMIC CAPITAL LOW   **Left hand**   IT political field   **Right hand**   ECONOMIC CAPITAL HIGH

CULTURAL CAPITAL HIGH   CULTURAL CAPITAL LOW

Lower state nobility

TOTAL CAPITAL LOW

Figure 1: Generic model of bureaucratic and IT political field

This paper studies digital lifestyles from a national policy level with a focus on their shifting internal composition and meaning. The degree to which the IT political field has drawn on and overlapped with the two logics sketched above has shifted during the last twenty years, with neither completely dominating at any one point in time. The Left and the Right hand have, to different degrees, worked in combination. To understand the specific Danish shaping of the IT political field, it is consequently important to address the *relative* dominance of one of the logic over the other, while also paying attention to how these logics have formed together. As most policy documents have been made in broad compromises across the political system, a clear opposition between these two logics cannot be found. Instead, the position of the field has been fought in a subtle and latent manner, where shared opinions have often been presented in order to balance disparate claims within the government itself.

To map the internal struggles of the IT political field, this paper builds on an archival study of Danish policies, strategies and documents related to digitalisation and IT. The data has been collected over a period of several years and entails material from a 25-year period, spanning roughly 1994 to 2016. This paper builds on a set on data containing 47 historical documents. Following the methodological approach found within discursive and interpretative policy studies (Fischer and Gottweis, 2012), our focus has been on the construction of language over time, with a specific emphasis on the arguments, rhetorical devices and symbolic means of objectification used in

the analysed documents. In this way, our analysis has taken shape through an interpretive-textual approach to the assembled archival data.

3. The Transformations of the IT Political Field 1994 to 2016

This section analyses the development of the IT political field from 1994 to 2016, with an emphasis on the ways in which digital lifestyles have been constructed and contested through symbolic struggles over time. Based on our coding of the archival data, we have grouped our analysis into two distinct phases. **Table 1** presents an overview of our findings. Broadly construed, the first phase, spanning the period from 1994 to 2001, entails a strong focus on civic values concerning inclusion, participation, democracy and the sharing of knowledge. Sustaining 'Danish Values' in an increasingly globalised world is taken to be the main challenge facing policymakers. The second phase, stretching from 2002 to 2016, signals a turn towards IT being cast in terms of economic efficiency, competitiveness and growth. Together with novel forms of discipline, a highly economised form of digital lifestyle starts to become a political imperative. These two phases do not constitute a clear-cut break. As ideal-typical constructs, they first and foremost serve to portray the *relative* dominance of specific logics within the different historical periods. As our analysis will show, these two distinct logics have in many ways overlapped and served as mutually reinforcing narratives.

	Phase 1: 1994-2001 Ministry of Research	**Phase 2: 2002-2016** Ministry of Finance
	Dominant symbolic forms	
Main political ideals	Solidarity, equality, access to information, democracy, participation, "Danish" values	Efficiency, optimisation, growth, flexibility, competitiveness
Public sector	Efficiency, openness, optimisation of service delivery, integration of different administrative parts	Efficiency, optimisation of labour processes, modelled as a private enterprise, self-scrutiny, flexibility
Market	Market must be kept at a distance, should not steer strategising	Market should be accommodated, steers strategising
Digital lifestyles	As many citizens as possible should use digital technologies; vulnerable citizens should be taken into account; digital lifestyles must be continuous with traditional welfare state values; protection against surveillance and privacy infringement; digital lifestyles should be taught throughout the educational system	All citizens must use digital technologies; IT is a part of an efficient, self-governing and productive life; all subjects can use the same standardised systems; citizens are treated and framed as customers; legislation and discipline as a means of constructing digital lifestyles

Table 1: Overview of findings

3.1. Phase 1: 1994-2001

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, state institutions in Denmark began utilising electronic technologies and archives as a way of handling large amounts of data. In this way, like "most other industrialised countries, in the 1960s and 1970s Denmark witnessed the development of big central government databases based on mainframe computers" (Jæger and Löfgren 2010, 257). In the 1980s and 1990s, as a direct consequence of both technological innovations and the increasing ubiquity of the Internet, IT went from mainly being a way of optimising the internal parts of the Danish state to including the direct relation between the state and its citizens. Digital technologies reached the "front office" (Jæger and Löfgren 2010).

The 1990s signalled a change in terms of policymaking. Up until this point, IT policies had been split in various sub-groups, such as *media*, *information* and *telecommunication* policies (Johansson 2004). However, "[f]ollowing the recommendations of the EU Bangemann high-level group in 1994" (Jæger and Löfgren 2010, 257), the Danish government choose to pursue a much more proactive form of politics. Policies on the "information society" were consequently developed into a genuine and increasingly autonomous field of governance. While there had been produced general strategies prior to this point, this internal re-organisation of the political field made sure that IT was placed centrally on the political agenda. It signified the emergence of the IT political field as an independent part of the bureaucratic field. The Ministry of Research was put in charge of steering the IT political field. As we will show in this section, this implied the construction of digital lifestyles in terms of civic values based on keeping the market at a distance, sustaining Danish culture in a globalised world, and maintaining the core values of the welfare state.

Info-society Year 2000 (1994): The emergence of the IT political field had its initial culmination in 1994 with the release of the report *Info-society Year 2000* (*Forskningsministeriet* 1994). This document, known as the Dybkjær-Christensen Report, contained a comprehensive vision for the transformation of the Danish society into an information society. It became popular amongst Danish citizens, as it shifted IT discussions from technical solutions to broader societal problems and possibilities. The report takes its point of departure in the "global short-circuiting of time, places, people and processes" (Forskningsministeriet 1994, 7) caused by the diffusion of the Internet. If employed in the right way, the report reasons, these "information technology can be a source of economic development, enhanced life quality and better public and private service" (Ibid.). Yet "*the question is not* whether we want to be a part of the information society or not. (…) The question is instead: *How* do we want to be a part of it?" (Ibid., 23, original emphasis). It is this overall question – how do we want to be a part? – that forms the main frame for the report.

Info-society Year 2000 answers this question by affirming the centrality of socalled *Danish values*. It is imperative, the report states, that Denmark's entrance into the information society is "built on values such as openness, democracy and responsibility for everyone in society, so that there will not be a division of Danes into an A- and B-team" (Ibid., 7). This latter metaphor, of divided teams, is mobilised throughout the report. It is used to support the claim that while Denmark should take advantage of the new economic possibilities of IT, this should not cannibalise the core values of the Danish welfare state. According to IT policymakers at the time, these core values entail approaching IT as supporting "the free access to information", "democracy and the individual's ability to participate", "personal development", "the creation of an open public sector", "the weakest [citizens] in society", and "Danish businesses' international competitiveness" (Ibid., 24). On the one hand, Danish values are seen as

confronted by the globalisation of cultural production. In the eyes of policymakers, new forms of transnational communication and transmission of content across hitherto existing boundaries threaten Danish values. Yet even though these values are endangered, they are also on the other hand seen as an agenda that should be actively *constructed*: "Denmark must, according to Danish goals and values, seek to influence the EU's policies on the IT area" (Ibid., 29). In this way, Danish values are an ultimately constructivist project, something that must be created. They are also expressive of broader nationalistic concerns found within the bureaucratic field. Confronted with technological and social changes on a global scale, policymakers seek to safeguard what they perceive to be threatened national values.

While IT may provide citizens with important new tools of participation, the report nonetheless makes clear that it should be a *choice* – not a mandatory obligation (Ibid., 34). So-called "weak" citizens should be taken care of and helped. This should happen through public libraries and the educational system, which must serve as core elements of the Danish democracy. In this way, one of the key challenges in selecting approaches, according to the report, is how to take advantage of the new possibilities of IT without producing new forms of division and inequality, thus maintaining solidarity and equality as core "Danish" values.

The Digital Denmark (1999): Unlike most governmental policies, *Info-society Year 2000* became a genuine public success and had to be re-printed several times (Jæger and Löfgren 2010). It pushed IT policymaking onto the public and political scene, giving it a "much more central placement in the political arena" (Johansson 2004, 155, our translation). Most of its initiatives were, however, never implemented. This is concluded by the second Dybkjær report, named the Digital Denmark (Forskningsministeriet 1999). This report picks up on several themes explored in *Info-society Year 2000*, showcasing that the symbolic structures present at the beginning of the 1990s are very much continued throughout the following years.

The major point of contention addressed by the second Dybkjær report is between *economic-global logics* on the one hand and the *national values of the welfare state* on the other. The question, once again, is how "Denmark can become a leading IT nation in the network society, while continuing the best values from the welfare society" (Ibid., 7). According to the report, this question has been actualised by the increasingly dominant globalisation of social relations, emerging as a direct consequence of digital and internet-driven technologies. Within this global world, sustaining core "Danish values" (Ibid., 9) is of primary importance. These Danish values are construed, very much in line with the first report, as providing citizens with the opportunity for "lifelong learning" (Ibid., 8), protecting them against surveillance and privacy invasion, and giving "all citizens free access to information and exchange of information, and opportunities to expand citizens' self-determination" (Ibid., 9). Foregrounding civic logics as integral to the continuity of the Danish welfare state, IT must actively form a part in strengthening "an active, representative democracy, where there are equal opportunities for all, and where solidarity binds society together and ensures help for those in need" (Ibid.). Solidarity, equality and universal welfare support are thus central to IT policymaking at this point in time – more so than they were in the beginning of the 1990s. Danish society is seen as being "fundamentally fair with welfare benefits made available to all citizens" (Ibid., 33), and the "Digital Denmark must be based on a sustainable development" (Ibid., 32).

In this way, IT is mainly viewed as a "democratic tool" (Ibid., 79) that can facilitate "new forms of access and modes of communication between citizens and politicians" (Ibid.), whilst "creat[ing] openness in the political system and a new closeness be-

tween citizens and politicians" (Ibid.). Continuing the discourses established in *Info-society Year 2000*, Danish citizens are still not forced to adopt digital technologies, and the state should instead make sure that "citizens who do not have Internet access (…) have improved opportunities for acquiring information from the public sector" (Ibid., 72).

This does not mean that market-like dynamics are absent from this report or the IT political field in general at this point in time. The report emphasises that "Denmark must offer a competitive environment for companies in the network society" (Forskningsministeriet 1999, 10). Yet, while IT *is* seen as a catalyst for economic efficiency and competitiveness, the market is explicitly kept in balance: "Because of the tough international competition, we have to have a fast transition [to the network society] to ensure our welfare. *But the market alone should not be allowed to control the development*" (Forskningsministeriet 1999, 101, our emphasis). The market is accommodated, but not solely on its own terms.

Digital lifestyles: The main problem addressed by the IT political field in the period 1994 to 2001 is how digital lifestyles can be made continuous with existing 'Danish' values. While IT is portrayed as leading to a more efficient public sector and increasing the competitiveness of Danish companies, these rationales are to a large extent subordinate to civic ideals about access to information, the enhancement of active democracy, participation, solidarity, and equality. Danes are encouraged to be digital, if they should so desire, but this is not yet made into a firm political imperative. Indeed, within this formative phase, policymakers tend to foreground that IT should not be made mandatory, that weak citizens should be helped and taken into account, that new divisions must not be created through IT, and that everyone should have equal opportunities to engage with the state, whether they are digital or not.
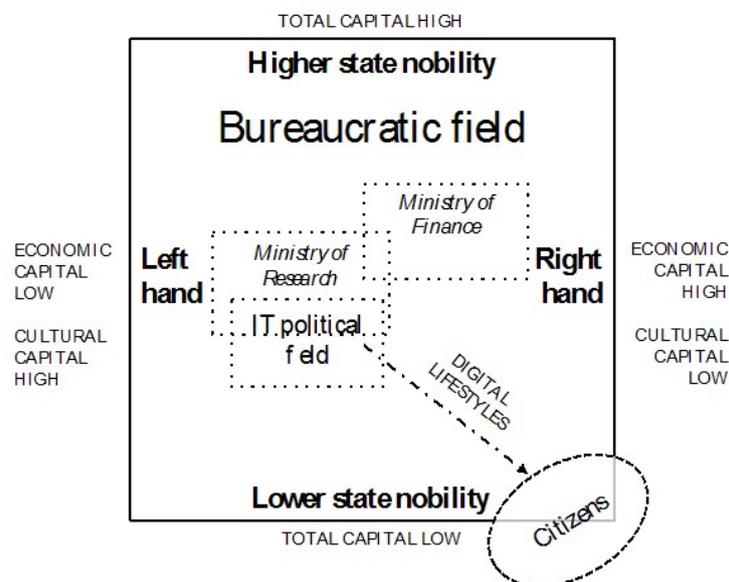

Figure 2: IT political field from 1994 to 2001

In this sense, digital lifestyles is still a fairly open set of ideals circulating within the upper parts of the bureaucratic field (see Figure 2). Making the population digital is seen as a task that must be accommodated gradually throughout the educational system, with courses for both teachers, students, and senior citizens unable to utilise digital technologies. Thus, while the IT political field has yet to condense a solid im-

age of what digital lifestyles might entail, it nonetheless views it as a *constructivist project*. Neither the public sector, the citizenry nor the market suddenly become digital: the transformation of these domains has to be actively encouraged and pursued. The main challenge in realising this novel means of statecraft is how these transformations can be held together with Danish values in an era increasingly prone to globalisation.

3.2. Phase 2: 2002-2016

In 2001, there is a shift in the national government in Denmark. A liberal-conservative government replaces the former social-democratic. This means that prominent neo-liberal voices are appointed as ministers and given a central placement within the bureaucratic field. As Jæger and Löfgren (2010, 258) succinctly recounts, this also implied a shift within the internal organisation of the bureaucratic field itself: "Until that year [2001] all issues regarding new ICTs, information society and e-government were formulated by the MRIT [Ministry of Research and Information Technology]. In 2001, the political management of e-government issues was *de facto* transferred to the Ministry of Finance". In 2001, this implies the creation of the so-called *Digital Taskforce,* which, under the management of the Ministry of Finance, seeks to coordinate IT policymaking on a national scale. The taskforce is closed down in 2011, as the "Agency for Digitisation" [*Digitaliseringstyrelsen*] is created, an agency that is controlled directly by the Ministry of Finance. With this gradual turn to the Ministry of Finance, the technocratic Right hand of the state *par excellence*, digital lifestyles are also significantly re-constructed by the IT political field. The period from 2002 to 2016 thus signals a transformation of the symbolic structures within the IT political field, as solidarity, equality and participation increasingly becomes subordinate to notions of flexibility, efficiency and competitiveness within a symbolic structure premised first and foremost on market-like dynamics. As our analysis will foreground, this change does not imply the total dominance of the Right hand of the state. In shifting towards an increasingly neoliberal vision of digital lifestyles, the Left hand also plays an important role. Digital lifestyles are formed in-between both hands of the state working in collaboration.

Towards e-Government (2002): One of the first major results of this internal re-organisation is the national strategy "Towards e-Government: vision and strategy for the public sector" (*Den Digitale Taskforce* 2002). This strategy departs from the broader ideals expressed in the 1990s. In a much narrower fashion, this document specifically tackles the implementation of digital administration within the Danish public sector. This in turn is simultaneously placed within a very direct line of economic reasoning: "The vision for e-government is that digital technologies are systematically used to innovate and transform organizations and work processes to improve service quality and efficiency" (Den Digitale Taskforce 2002, 5). IT is construed as an important way of making the internal parts of the state more efficient by optimising existing work processes. To some extent, this strategy signals a much closer alignment with the discourses found within ICT policies formulated by the European Union. As Verdegem and Fuchs (2013) have argued, the European Union has very much focused on promoting an economic and neoliberal vision of the information society. IT has been framed as a means of heightening competiveness and nurturing economic growth. Drawing on the work of Bob Jessop (2002), Verdegem and Fuchs argue that this can be seen as the rise of the *competition state.* Outside the area of IT policymaking, Pedersen (2011) has shown how the Danish welfare state has increasingly become transformed into a competition state. The turn inaugurated in 2001-2002

thus resonates with broader structural transformations within the ideological foundations of the Danish state and the European Union.

Towards e-Government argues that "Denmark (…) must be among the nations that utilize the global digital development to create growth and welfare" (Den Digitale Taskforce 2002, 4), while businesses "must utilize digital technologies (…) to strengthen the[ir] competitiveness in an increasingly global world". Citizens, meanwhile, are portrayed as "already active in the digital network society" (Ibid.). They should "have access to digital media and use them in all parts of societal life – from shopping on the Internet to new offers within education and culture" (Ibid.). In these quotes, we can see how signifiers used in the previous period – globalisation, Denmark as a nation, and welfare – are being repositioned within a different symbolic structure. While globalisation was seen, in the previous period, as endangering the core values of the welfare state by undermining solidarity, equality and participatory democracy, it is now cast as a mainly economic process: "In a globalized world, the nations that can utilize the possibilities of the network society will have the best position" (Ibid., 6). The market is seen as a key dynamic to be accommodated and nurtured.

How should the public sector be reorganised following this symbolic change? By placing "citizens and businesses at the centre" (Ibid., 7). This is a notion that resonates broadly throughout the plethora of documents produced by the IT political field from 2002 to 2016. Citizens and businesses *must be placed* at the centre of government. This mean, among other things, that the individual needs of citizens should be handled by the public sector as efficiently as possible. With the advent of digital technologies, policymakers claim, it becomes possible to blur the "boundaries between institutions [which have] in many ways functioned as walls" (Ibid., 4) and create a "flexible handling of specific tasks across institutional boundaries" (Ibid., 8). In this way, 'flexibility' is highlighted as a key component of a more efficient public sector. Digital technologies, however, do not simply facilitate the creation of a flexible way of organising the public sector by delegating tasks to the units most capable of solving particular problems. IT should be implemented in conjunction with a continuous process of self-critical scrutiny within the public sector itself: "public institutions [should] continuously and systematically optimize their efficiency through the reconfiguration of work processes and organization, supported by digital tools" (Ibid., 12). In this way, constructing the flexible organisation is an ongoing achievement that should be continuously re-enacted by the individual institution. The public sector starts to become moulded into a private enterprise with a strong focus on efficiency and competitiveness between different institutions.

To some degree, visions about digital lifestyles almost disappear within this initial part of the second period. While citizens are mentioned as being digital, broader concerns about solidarity, equality and enhanced democracy are absent. Moreover, citizens are primarily portrayed alongside businesses, as consumers, outside the state itself, *demanding* particular services. In remoulding the public sector in terms of a private enterprise, citizens are also recast as customers seeking to acquire certain goods from the state. They are framed as users or consumers. The public sector must "analyse its own service in collaboration with the users and following their users' needs" (Ibid., 13), "representatives from the users should evaluate needs" (Ibid.) and the implementation of IT should create "enhanced services for citizens and businesses who are in contact with the public sector" (Ibid., 12).

The Digital Path to Future Welfare (2011): In the following years, these basic arguments are sustained in more or less unaltered form. In major national strategies,

such as "*Strategy for Digital Administration 2004-06*" (Regeringen et al. 2004) and "*Strategy for the Digitalization of the Public Sector 2007-2010*" (Regeringen et al. 2007), efficiency, optimisation, the accommodation of the market, and competitiveness continue to be dominant logics. Yet in a subtle manner the citizen gradually comes into being as not just an outside *consumer*, but also an *object of governance*. In the national strategy from 2011 to 2015, called "The Digital Path to Future Welfare" (Regeringen et al. 2011), citizens no longer appear as simply demanding new services from the public sector. The state also starts to expect certain actions from them.

In this strategy, citizens are construed as being already "familiar with digital technologies", and they must now "contribute to the public services in new ways" (Ibid., 4). Not only will this accommodate their individual needs, it will also make sure that they can serve themselves "whenever it fits the citizen" (Ibid., 5). Though 'weak citizens' (Ibid., 14) should still be taken care of, everyone is construed as being digital by default. Digital technologies are no longer seen as a choice, but as an almost ethical obligation. The new term for this is *mandatory self-service* (Ibid., 16): everyone must be self-serving and self-governing. These images of self-service are in many ways intimately connected to an image of the citizen as *an active subject* who does not want to "waste time" (Ibid., 3). As the strategy states, the time "wasted" could be used on "developing the business and creating growth" (Ibid., 18). Citizens are thus expected to be digital for the "greater good" of society as a whole. By being digital they serve to make the government more efficient and cut costs in the public sector. In this way, we can see how a (in many ways) *communitarian* image of citizens is used to legitimise an economic end goal. Ideas tied to citizens as part of a national collective is appropriated as a means of economic justification. The same can be said about the notion of 'Danishness' and 'Danish values'. While these concepts are largely abandoned during the 2000s and 2010s, the strategies nonetheless identify the use of digital technologies as a distinctly 'Danish' trait: "Danes use their computers, mobile phones and the Internet every day. (…) The same goes for the public sector where Denmark is one of the countries in the world that is the furthest ahead in using IT and new technology to renew and improve the welfare society" (Ibid., 3). Here we can see how previous notions of 'Danishness', central to the ideological tropes employed in the 1990s, are still present. The difference is that from 2002 and onwards, these are increasingly articulated in relation to economic concerns.

These new portrayals of the citizen simultaneously give way to new forms of policy implementation. November 2014, the so-called 'Law on Digital Post' was put in place. This law stipulated that all citizens *must* conduct their communication with the public sector through a digital infrastructure named Digital Post. Citizens who did not initially adopt the system were thus forced to do so if they were to maintain social welfare benefits. As Henriksen (2015) notes, the law was passed in the Danish parliament without great controversy or hesitation. While some political parties did object to the turn towards mandatory self-service – as they thought it undermined the forms of solidarity and equality inscribed into the "historical core" of the welfare state – these criticisms were quickly silenced after little legislative debate. Digital Post can be seen as the culmination of the turn inaugurated in the early 2000s: the IT political field, being a sub-branch of the Ministry of Finance, had finally accumulated enough symbolic capital to rule and impose its symbolic structures through legislation and discipline. This turned digital lifestyles into a genuine means of symbolic violence. These novel forms of symbolic violence were both enacted through the deprivation of rights to

those unable to utilise the system (if they failed to receive and act on official communication). Yet softer disciplinary strategies were also put into effect. Through support courses and new forms of guidance, welfare state professionals have sought to help citizens *become* digital in the way imagined by the state. This showcases how the Right and the Left hand of the state act together in forming digital lifestyles. While the Right hand works through hard legislative measures, aimed at uniformly imposing certain juridical demands on citizens, the Left hand seeks to gently nurture, help and guide citizens. It seeks to actualise the "inner" digital competencies within the individual. Particularly welfare state professionals, who are often driven by a genuine wish to support citizens in highly vulnerable situations, have become enrolled within a much broader political project. In this sense, the sincere solidarity and commonality of the 'ground floor' of the welfare state is integral to realizing the technocratic demands imposed by the Ministry of Finance.
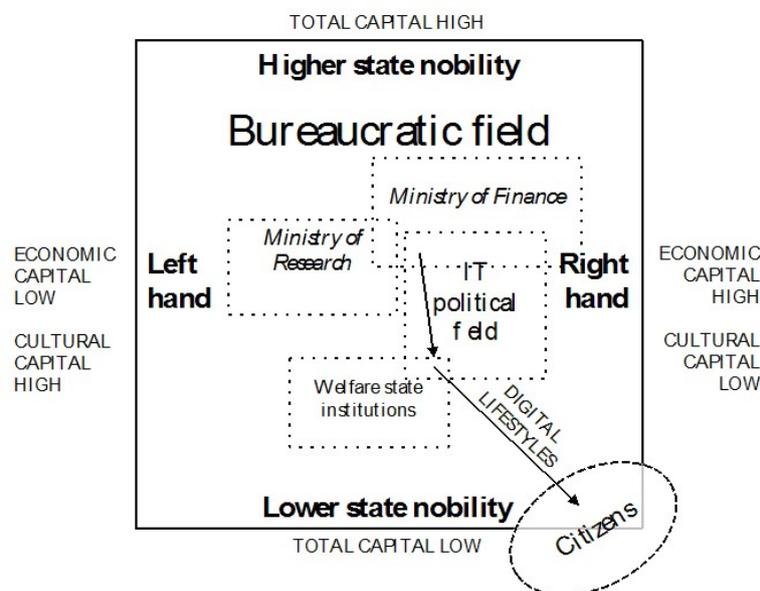

Figure 3: IT political field from 2002 to 2016

Digital lifestyles: From the beginning of the 2000s, a much clearer focus on market logics starts to appear within the IT political field. Within the eyes of the field, the financial sector provides an example of how individual freedom can go hand in hand with efficiency and profit. As a consequence, actors within the IT political field initiate strong structural and organisational transformation processes in order to be able to imitate such examples. External business consultants are employed in different layers of the public sector to help transform organisations into more profitable units. This signifies the gradual transformation of the normative ideals attached to IT: rather than a tool for enhancing democracy, securing participation, and enabling new flows of information, it becomes a device for securing competitiveness, growth and the market to prosper.

With these transformations of the field, a new understanding of digital lifestyles also emerges. Citizens are now expected to function as efficient and efficiency-seeking citizen-consumers. Living the 'proper' digital life implies utilising digital technologies as imagined by the state. Equality, solidarity and Danish values are replaced with an image of digital lifestyles as more or less uniform entities. Danish citizens are seen as constituting a homogenous community of subjects, all capable of utilising the same standardised digital technologies irrespective of economic, cultural,

and social backgrounds. Though citizens may have individual needs, the best way to meet these is nonetheless through standardised solutions. The key concern of the previous period – to include everyone – vanishes almost completely, as digital life-styles are increasingly imagined in terms of market-like dynamics. These new digital lifestyles also become coupled with a turn towards self-service solutions. Administrative tasks previously carried out by welfare state professionals are now transferred onto the individual (Pors 2015a). The individual must be able to take care of, govern and lead herself *as* an entrepreneurial consumer-subject. New forms of coercive digi-talisation, forcing subjects to be self-servicing (Henriksen 2015), have also provided the IT political field with a direct means of symbolic violence. The field now views leg-islation as the best means of digitalising society, rather than providing education and solidarity. Digital lifestyles no longer constitute a choice, but have become mandatory forms of life, imposed through specific institutional setups and disciplinary dynamics (see Figure 3).

4. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Throughout recent decades, the Danish state, one of the leading nations worldwide in terms of adopting digital technologies, has taken decisive steps towards construct-ing a fully digital public sector, relying in unprecedented ways on data-driven infra-structures and digital technologies. Implicitly in this transformation, there has been an image of how the citizenry ought to act in a digital world. The state has constructed and attempted to impose a normative vision of the natural digital life, the "proper" way of enacting citizenship in a digital era. In this paper, we have argued that one way of understanding the construction and imposition of these ideals is through the concept of digital lifestyles.

Using this concept, we have shown how the IT political field has undergone pro-found changes from 1994 to 2016: not only has it come into being as a genuine field of policymaking, but it has also been the battleground of subtle struggles between what Bourdieu (1998a) calls the Left and the Right hand of the state. While initially concerned with IT as a means of enhancing democracy, supporting access to infor-mation, and sustaining local Danish values, the symbolic structures of the IT political field have increasingly become prone to economisation and marketisation. Digital lifestyles have moved from being an opportunity for citizens to become more in-formed and participatory to constituting a novel field of discipline and symbolic vio-lence. Yet while the Right hand of the state has become increasingly powerful, the Left hand has not completely disappeared. In certain ways, the two hands have formed together to produce digital lifestyles both from 'above' and 'below'. Ideals util-ised within symbolic structures crafted by the Left hand have, furthermore, been im-ported and modulated within the contemporary symbolic forms produced mainly by the Right hand. In this sense, digital lifestyles are not only produced within an IT po-litical field that continues to be a hybrid space of compromise and settlements, it is also implemented through hybrid strategies seeing both hands act together. The ideal-typical phases suggested in this paper should, as a consequence, not be seen as mutually exclusive, as the latest phase has in many ways incorporated ideas formed within the initial years of IT policymaking.

Ideological proponents of the 'information society' might argue that these changes simply document the gradual 'maturation' of IT policymaking. While education and digital competences were needed in the formative years, this line of reasoning might argue, it has increasingly become possible to 'reap' the economic benefits of digital technologies. Against such highly depoliticised forms of spontaneous sociology, cir-

culating with the realm of scholars and policymakers alike, our study foregrounds the profound *ideological transformations* rather than *technological maturation* of IT policymaking. We want to suggest that the contemporary ideas have not formed out of the blue, but are rather the outcome of continuous symbolic struggles within the field itself. Digital lifestyles are the result of active policymaking over several decades. This is further highlighted when comparing Danish policymaking to other similar countries. The development of IT policymaking and digital lifestyles in Denmark has for example followed a very different path than in Sweden. According to Verdegem and Fuchs (2013), Swedish IT policymaking has actually *increasingly* incorporated concerns regarding weak or vulnerable citizens, sustainability, democratic participation and inclusion. While these authors doubt the actual effects of these shifts, their findings nonetheless underline how relatively similar welfare state regimes may construct distinctly different visions of digital lifestyles.

While digital lifestyles cannot be reduced to a monolithic ideological formation, we should not downplay or neglect how the normative ideals produced from the early 2000s and up until the present date have overlapped and reproduced neoliberal discourses circulating on a global scale. As a concept, neoliberalism is extremely difficult to define, as it might refer to a very heterogeneous set of processes, practices, and institutions. Scholars such as Crouch (2011, 7) have nonetheless argued that neoliberalism can be conceived in terms of its reliance on and preference for the market over the state. In a staunch critique of neoliberalism, Bourdieu (1998b) has argued that it constitutes an immensely *political project*, concerned mainly with undermining and destroying collectives in favour of economistic market-logics. Adding to these general observations, research inspired by Foucault's work in particular has shown how neoliberal statecraft must be considered as a constructivist project, concerned with actively implementing and imposing market-like dynamics on all parts of the social space through political interventions. Authors such as Brown (2015) and Dardot and Laval (2013) have highlighted how neoliberal statecraft entails the construction of particular normative frameworks based on implementing new forms of *entrepreneurial governmentality*, imposing market-life dynamics on parts of the public sector hitherto exempt from economisation, and recasting the citizen as an *entrepreneurial subject*, seen as essentially competitive, self-governing, responsibilized, and involved in self-work in order to optimise herself as if she was a private enterprise. Within the Danish IT political field, being digital has increasingly converged with these forms of neoliberal rationality. To be conceived as a productive, entrepreneurial, and responsible citizen means to be able to utilise digital technologies, communicate with the state through ICTs, and serve oneself through online platforms. What our analysis suggests, then, is that digital reforms are increasingly being used as a means of neoliberal statecraft, a way of entrenching and erasing existing welfare state logics through the implementation of digital technologies. In this way, the Danish state is quite literally infrastructuring neoliberalism by modelling the entire public sector in terms of certain naturalised digital lifestyles.

This being the case, we should, however, be careful not to mistake these expected digital lifestyles for the actual lived experiences of the Danish population. Any mechanistic model seeing the national field as imposing universal laws on the subjective and cognitive schemata of the citizen should be abandoned (Bourdieu 2005). Yet, precisely because the bureaucratic field has accumulated economic, symbolic and cultural capital over time (Bourdieu 2014, 2005), we should also acknowledge the unique position occupied by this field within the field of power. One of the most peculiar effects of the state as an object of sociological investigation, Bourdieu notes,

is its ability to impose certain ways of life onto its citizenry through "political decisions that are likely to orient agents' preferences by encouraging, or to varying degrees countering, the initial dispositions (…) through administrative measures which function to prevent or promote those dispositions being put into effect" (Bourdieu 2005, 89). In Denmark, this internalisation of the objective structures of the field has, among other ways, occurred through the educational system, in the form of support courses offered to non-digital citizens, and juridical means forcing citizens to adopt digital technologies. In this way, digital lifestyles have materialised themselves as not just freely floating symbolic forms, but as subjective dispositions actively constructed by the state. Moreover, we should not forget that digital lifestyles might be partially driven by citizen demands. While we have focused on the construction of digital lifestyles within the bureaucratic field, the symbolic structures demanded of the citizen's habitus may to a large degree be compatible with these symbolic forms. In an era where digital technologies permeate the everyday life of most individuals, digital services and infrastructures may provide great benefits to the individual citizen. For many, these digital solutions may actually provide an easier access to the public sector. In this way, the individual may easily adapt to the state's digital lifestyles, as the objective structures of the field and the subjective structures of the habitus are already very much aligned. Our argument, then, is not that digital lifestyles are simply brute-forced onto the individual. In a much subtler and oftentimes subaltern way, the state imposes its ideologically overdetermined image of the proper digital lifestyle onto the individual over time. Part of this process is precisely to make it look as natural and neutral as possible.

While the notion of digital lifestyles advanced in this paper has been tied to the specific historical circumstances of the Danish welfare state, it is nonetheless our contention that it may prove useful in other empirical contexts. To our minds, it can serve as a way of connecting the symbolic struggles within the bureaucratic field with the forms of governance being imposed on and internalised within the citizenry. In this sense, our argument extends Bourdieu's initial conception of the state. We show how the state's ability to impose symbolic means of vision and division can be viewed through the concept of digital lifestyles in the case of IT policies. The concept serves as a mediation between the symbolic means of classification crafted in the state and the institutional practices entailed in making citizens behave according to the structures of the field. This has simultaneously allowed us to frame the historical developments of the IT political field as not just a neutral or depoliticised way of upgrading the state, but as a genuine means of statecraft.

These arguments should be considered in terms of their explanatory limitations. Our main concern in this paper has been on the internal dynamics of the IT political field, with an emphasis on its historical genesis, transformations and consolidation. As we have emphasised, digital lifestyles, while materialised through policies, institutional arrangements, disciplinary measurements and symbolic violence, should not be seen as uniformly imposed on the citizenry. In the space between national political expectations and local citizen practices, a multiplicity of *hybrid lifestyles,* corresponding more or less with the structures of the field, may emerge. Instead of seeing this limitation as invalidating our current investigation, we instead view it as an opportunity for future research. Such research could investigate how the historical structures analysed in this paper have been localised within specific sub-fields over time. How have national policies been implemented, negotiated and internalised within local practices? In what ways have such forms of localisation changed the contents of digital lifestyles? And what kinds of both manual and symbolic labour are involved in the

imposition of digital lifestyles? In beginning to map these complex negotiations between the objective structures of the field and the mental schemata of the habitus, a space opens simultaneously for both improvisation and resistance. Showing the internal breakdowns of the economistic discourse of the field may allow solidarity to resurface as a form of immanent critique. Research should furthermore begin to scrutinise how and to what extent digital lifestyles influence and reproduce existing class hierarchies. Do digital lifestyles impact all classes in the same way? Or can we see novel forms of stratification, stigmatisation and marginalisation emerging along pre-existing class divisions?

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