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**Abstract**

This paper inquires about the conditions that enable the rise of new applied undergraduate fields in American universities and colleges. After identifying high-growth fields since 1950, the paper traces their professional development from an embryonic stage until universities and colleges started offering bachelor's degrees in those fields. The experiences of the six fields of this study show that although pressures for academic differentiation were evident, governmental intervention was ultimately crucial. Qualitative evidence indicates that the independence of a new field hinges on the interaction of four factors: societal pressures, state intervention, academic resourcefulness of the field, and professional institutional processes. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)