

Publication of an anthology – Call for participation

## **Transformation Processes in Europe and Beyond – Perspectives for Horizontal Geographies**

Florian Weber, Olaf Kühne & Julia Dittel (eds.)

Europe in all its diversity and complexity has always been – and continues to be – in a state of change. The origin of the term “Europe” is in itself quite spectacular: according to Greek mythology, the Phoenician princess Europe was abducted to Crete by Zeus, who appeared to her in the form of a bull – and thus she became the namesake for the surrounding regions. In ancient times, Europe was understood as a rather diffuse space north of the Mediterranean Sea, based on Greek culture and Roman law – alongside the other two continents known at the time, Asia and Africa. From a geographical perspective, it is quite striking that the borders of Europe as the “Occident” gradually shifted towards the East. Since the epochal turning point of the two World Wars, the construction or (re)production of “Europe” has been inextricably intertwined with the construction of the European Union (EU) and of its respective member states as a process “emanating from the West of Europe”, and has further been accompanied by far-reaching (internal) reorganisation processes of the nation states, by spatial conflicts, and shifting regionalisation processes.

This historical background – as well as recent events and developments – raise a myriad of issues and questions touching upon notions of “European worlds” within multi-level networks, from “Europe in the world” to the local level – with a view “from inside” as well as “from the outside” on Europe-related upheavals. In recent years, negotiation processes surrounding the BREXIT and the so-called “refugee crisis” have attracted particular attention, pushing to the foreground the external borders of the EU and their border regimes. As of spring 2020, Europe’s internal borders have also – quite unexpectedly – been brought into the limelight again: with the Covid-19 pandemic and the reintroduction of border controls or closures in the “heart of Europe”, the assumed certainty and guarantee of open borders within the Schengen Area crumbled, raising further questions regarding trajectories of development perspectives for cross-border cooperation and the resilience of European border regions to crises – questions of particular weight, seeing as more than a third of the EU population lives in border regions. With Russia’s war against Ukraine, the question of how we understand Europe and how Europe defines itself through solidarity, shared values and through visions for the future will be once again brought to the fore.

The joint conference “Europe (Worlds) in Transition – Changing Boundaries” (“Europa (-Welten) im Umbruch – Grenz(ziehung)en im Wandel”) taking place in Saarbrücken in October 2022 and organised by the German Academy for Regional Studies (Deutsche Akademie für Landeskunde) and the Cluster for European Research at Saarland University addresses and discusses these and other issues.

As a follow-up to the conference, we would like to collect our results in an anthology and further supplement and substantiate them with additional contributions. At the centre of the anthology, we position perspectives of “horizontal geographies” through which “transformation processes in Europe” will be illuminated with theoretical-conceptual and empirical analyses – with regard to perceptions of Europe, the European Union in transition, perspectives on Europe and the EU from the peripheries and from outside, with macro-, meso- and micro-perspectives. “Horizontal geographies” – as opposed to “vertical geographies” which adopt a thematically specific focus – refer to comprehensive, synthesising regional analyses which collect, structure and reflect on knowledge with different spatial, social, and cultural contexts. Rather than conceiving these spatialities in terms of distinct and somewhat “isolated” spatial units, we would like to examine reciprocal influences between different scales, emphasising in particular the effects of “world-societal” references within regional contexts and bearing in mind mechanisms of construction and the contingency of spatial and social configurations. In order not to exclude researchers who would like to approach these perspectives but may not have a “European” orientation, we will also consider contributions “beyond Europe” as a comparative background.

### Call for participation

Please participate in our publication project and send the *working title of your contribution* and a *short abstract* (around 500-1000 characters) to [julia.dittel@uni-saarland.de](mailto:julia.dittel@uni-saarland.de) by *November 15, 2022*. If the abstract is accepted, the final articles (in *English or German*, around 25,000-45,000 characters including spaces and excluding references) should be completed by the *end of May 2023*. The volume will be published by Springer VS in 2023/2024.

