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# Editorial: Sociological Stances on Sustainability

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This issue of *Culture, Practice & Europeanization* (CPE) focuses on the topic of sustainability, predominantly from a sociological perspective. Following our January 2017 issue on the phenomenon dubbed Brexit, this is the journal's second themed issue and the first under its new title, "Culture, Practice & Europeanization," which has now replaced the former "Culture, Practice and European Policy." This change of title is one of many steps forward in the editorial development of CPE taken by the journal in recent months. The present editorial aims to expand on those changes, to introduce and contextualize the scholarly contributions to this issue, and to discuss the relevance of the topic of sustainability to society as a whole.

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## **CPE Development**

Since its founding in September 2016, CPE has grown substantially. From a small but ambitious project at the Seminar für Soziologie, Europa-Universität Flensburg, it has now developed into an institutionalized journal with an internationally-renowned editorial and advisory board, as well as substantial editorial and technical support. The current issue is our third over the course of little more than one year, with further issues planned for 2017 and 2018 and a publication volume that has recently risen from two to three issues per year. CPE aims to provide a scholarly platform for high-quality research on the multiplicity of transnational and transcultural encounters in and beyond Europe. The new title, chosen in July 2017 during the first annual meeting of the journal's editorial board, more accurately reflects this focus on Europeanization processes and the idea of "doing" culture, society, and change. It deliberately rejects the rather static, formal, and unintentionally territorial notion of "European policy" represented by the old title in favor of a concept of Europeanization that allows for both top-down and bottom-up perspectives (Mau 2015; Eigmüller 2013; Outhwaite 2008; Fligstein 2008) on practices relating to European ideas. Thus, with reworked aims and scopes and extended staff support, the journal is now fully established.

## **Acknowledgements**

Our vision of founding an international journal dedicated to publishing top-quality scholarly work on the processes of Europeanization has been met with outstanding support from the scholarly community. We owe thanks, first of all, to the new associate editors of CPE, who assembled in Flensburg in June 2017 for their first annual editorial board meeting: Daniel Maul (University of Oslo); Iris Rittenhofer (Aarhus University); Christof Roos (Vrije Universiteit Brussel); and Sebastian Büttner (Erlangen University, Nürnberg). These experts in thematic areas relating to Europeanization will contribute their time to editorial planning and to the further development of the project. We are also very grateful to the top international scholars who agreed to serve as founding members of our (still-growing) International Advisory Board: Hauke Brunkhorst of Europa-Universität Flens-

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### On this issue

The articles of this issue explore the complex relationship between sustainability and society, focusing explicitly on how this relationship affects Europeanization and is affected by Europeanization.

Sustainability, a concept related to the use and finiteness of natural resources which was initially debated within the natural sciences, has recently gained momentum in the social sciences. With the development of different perspectives and applications (critical or descriptive-normative, empirical or theoretical), the concept of sustainability has rapidly become a core term in business, management, and consumer studies (Eccles et al., 2014; Lueg et al., 2016; Rittenhofer et al., 2015; Schaltegger, 2013). Sociologists have recently intensified their work and research on the manifold aspects of sustainability, developing a critical perspective on the term and contributing extensive research into its relationship to social inequality, social institutions, policy-making, and societal change.

In light of these developments, this issue of CPE seeks to enrich our current understanding of the term sustainability by offering a sociological perspective of it and juxtaposing this with hitherto different within-field-foci (see: Opielka, pp. 3 – 19 and Brunkhorst pp. 20 - 32), using the concept as an analytical benchmark for non-exploitable governmental policies (see: Sommer and Hain, pp. 33 - 45), and deliberately taking a critical stance towards the idea of sustainability itself and its impact on social change and societal problem-solving (see: Neckel, pp. 46 - 52). In the four articles published here, five sociologists provide insights into the relevance of sustainability as a general analytical tool and offer a critical sociological perspective on the term. The current pressing political and environmental developments in the European Union ensure that sustainability will continue to gain momentum as a crucially important, contemporary research area within the field of sociology and beyond. In short, our aim here is to substantially and solidly contribute to the relevant ongoing debates on the topic and to provide a pathway for further research and collaboration in related fields of study.

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