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Nikola Tietze, Camille Noûs¹

Space, territories, and borders in Europe

Space, territories, and borders “are created in action and [...] embodied in institutions that pre-structure action” (Löw 2016: xiv). The dual movement from structure to action and from action to structure, which is generally a feature of spatial constructions, is exemplified in the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) implemented by the European Union (EU) in 2004. With the creation of the ENP, the governments of the EU member states established structures for a **space** in the sense of the French word *espace*, which not only refers to distance and time but also to “place,” “site,” “area,” “surface,” or “region” (Shields 2006: 147). Drawing on this spatial construction, the ENP regulates, finances, and legitimates (as well as delegitimates) actions, for example, in the realm of cross-border economic and workplace relations or in infrastructural networks such as rail transport or waste water collection systems connecting the EU and a number of nation-states that border on the EU to the south, southeast, or east (with the exception of Turkey and Russia). Furthermore, this EU program is an essential element of the European **border** regime. The neighborhood space establishes the framework for administering and controlling migration on the so-called external borders of the EU and creates interaction between the EU member states and the nearby states. By creating such interaction, the ENP highlights the general features of political constructions of space that define areas, **territories**, and borders. Such definitions determine who belongs and has access to rights and thus who is included or excluded; they also legitimate domination and the sovereignty of power. With respect to these general features of political constructions of space, the EU is characterized by a unique additional trait: the EU is founded on the principle of supranational governance. In other words, the Union’s spaces intersect with the territorial sovereignties of the EU member states. As a result, in many policy areas, the competence of the European communities and the EU and those of the member states do not constitute “distinctly separate spheres” (Patel & Röhl 2020: 217). This complex interplay also results in flexible redefinitions of state borders.

For sociologists investigating Europeanization, **space, territories, and borders** are revealed in the codification of laws, in the architecture of institutional regimes, in the organization and regulation of markets, in the ways infrastructure is generated, in the coordination of social

¹ We thank Paula Bradish for translating our text into English.

security systems, in the harmonization of criteria, standards, and administrative procedures. In the EU, legal, institutional, administrative, economic, and social processes, practices, and structures reveal specific ways in which space construction overlap with respect to the member states' integrity and identity and to fluid EU borders (Jureit & Tietze 2018).

Nonetheless, EU spatial governance is built on “**phantom geographies**”—“the traces left in contemporary societies by defunct territorialities” (Hirschhausen 2017: 107). Such **phantom geographies** intersect with contemporary EU spatial constructions, be it in the realm of the European neighborhood policy, with respect to the enlargement of the European communities (Vobruba 2003), issues related to labor migration, to Spanish cities in Morocco, to French *départements* in the Caribbean, or to privileged economic cooperation, for example between Polish and Ukrainian companies.

Space, territories, and borders are not only objects of social science research; they are also categories of sociological observation and explanation. As such they offer opportunities for discovering and elucidating the interdependencies, interactions, and discontinuities between various realms of actions related to “**phantom geographies**,” as well as between distinctive territorial scales of political and economic power or between different domains of governance. This perspective focuses on social relations that are ordered by spatial constructions, territorialization, and the drawing of borders. These three spatial categories for observation reveal inequalities and tensions that generate the architecture of a political order or an actor's activities that run counter to such architectures, for example, in the form of illegal border crossings.

In this chapter, the double character of space, territories, and borders—first, as an object of study in the sociology of Europeanization and, second, as a category for observing and explaining Europeanization—is outlined in two steps. After briefly sketching the historical origin of the three categories of spatial governance just mentioned, this chapter will focus on what spaces, territories, and borders have been established in the EU by means of law, institution building, and markets. The following sections consider the spatial categories of sociological observation and explanation and discuss two methodological approaches: the scalar structuration approach (Brenner 2001) and the *jeux d'échelles* approach (Revel 1996).

Box 1: Space as a concept in the social sciences and humanities
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In his book *La production de l'espace* (1974), which appeared in English in 1991 as *The Production of Space*, the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefèbvre referred to space as a complex social construction consisting of meanings, ideas, and practices. As meanings, ideas, and practices, spatial concepts become the basis for action and instruments for structuring interactions. According to Lefebvre, they are thus tools for social control and the enforcement of domination and power. Lefebvre's thinking has had a major impact—first in France and, from the late 1980s, in the English-speaking world—in particular on human and economic geography, which studies the interactions and interdependencies between social, cultural, economic, and political activities and the environments in which they occur. This is reflected in the work of critical urban theorists, among others, who address urbanization and capitalist governance from the point of view of social justice (Brenner 2011, Brenner & Elden 2009, Döring & Thielmann 2008). A continent, a place, a mountain range, a country, a district, a river, a border, etc. are terms used in the social sciences and humanities to denote relations: (i) between actors and structures, (ii) between different activities, and (iii) between activities, actors, and the earth's surface. In this sense, space is a form of order, observation, and communication (Jureit 2012). In the realm of political relations, where power, domination, and control are at stake, the concept of space has found its expression historically in territories and borders. This means, for example, that the designation of a “natural” border (for instance the Pyrenees) naturalizes a relationship of domination. Legal regulations, control devices, and the othering found on either side of the border materialize the definition of the border; physical features on the earth are not what materializes a border.

Space, territories, and borders from the perspective of the history of political ideas

The term space, which is used in this text in the sense of the French term *espace* as outlined above refers to geographical features, that is, “specific arrangements of objects and people” (Löw 2016: xii) and sets social interactions in relation to a specifically constituted environment. The political meaning of space emerged in the early modern period and refers to the territorialization of state rule. In the late Middle Ages in Europe, rulership was tied to a place that was the seat of a ruler such as a castle, fortification or marketplace. But this was frequently accompanied by uncertainties about the limits of domination. Such uncertainties accelerated a process in which governance was territorialized. With the development of the

European territorial states, territory became the basis for the organization of rule and its expansion.

Since the 19th century, *political spatiality* has become intrinsically intermeshed with the spatiality of national territory and of state sovereignty. One result of this development is the emergence and ongoing significance of the sovereignty of nation-states. According to Charles S. Maier, territoriality represents the central concept of European governments in the 20th century. “Territoriality means simply the properties, including power, provided by the control of bordered political space, which until recently at least created the framework for national and often ethnic identity” (Maier 2000: 808). The “control of bordered political space” has not only led to the establishment and consolidation of border regimes (Eigmüller & Vobruba 2016). In the course of the 19th century and in the European context, national territory also increasingly framed economic relations, industrialization and infrastructure policies, resource extraction and the energy supply, and, last but not least, the development of social security and health care systems.

In the 20th century, the “control of bordered political space” found its expression in two different forms of territorial domination, which nevertheless refer to one another: the European nation-state and European colonial empires; that is, the attempts to establish regional spheres of influence or, in Carl Schmitt’s terminology, *Großräume* [large spaces] (Jureit 2012). The conflicts as well as the cooperation of European governments after World War I were based on the understanding that a nation-state consists of and is a territory. Thus, the integrity of a state is damaged when its borders are crossed without permission or when other ruling groups hinder it in exercising its sovereignty. An almost corporeal understanding of law underpins the right to self-determination of peoples, which was of fundamental importance for decolonization processes until well after 1945. The European states, which simultaneously drew on and were in competition with the nation-state understanding of territoriality, nevertheless consolidated and expanded their political power on the basis of their colonial empires and the creation of regional spheres of influence. The first half of the 20th century was therefore also a period in which hegemonic theories of large spaces like Carl Schmitt’s highly controversial theory were taken up and developed. These theories, which are rooted in particular in European imperial traditions, have been instrumental in demarcating an imagined Europe of civilization or culture that was perceived as different from other regions.

The concept of Europe gained political significance in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries in a context marked by the tension between the two territorial forms of rule that enacted competing national and ethnic identities—the European nation-state, on the one hand, and the expansion of their spheres of influence in the form of colonial empires and metropolitan policies, on the other. The competition among nation-states for economic and technical progress as well as for social modernization, cultural development, and the realization of perceived standards of civilization measured in terms of nation-state parameters shaped the spatial experience of European political and economic actors and established the spatial image of a Europe that was seen as being too crowded. Moreover, within the framework of the European nation-state model and in the aftermath of World War I, the notion emerged and was reinforced that social relations can be planned and spatially ordered on the basis of scientific arguments, for example by population resettlement or transfer (Bernhardt 2017; Rosental 2006). With Europe perceived as “too crowded” to allow for the competition among European nation-states that was deemed necessary to achieve progress and modernization, compensation was found in the expansion of colonial empires, in the establishment of colonial trading posts and settlement projects, in the transfer of civilization and culture, and so on. Constitutive for this policy was the idea and production, with the use of force, of “empty areas,” “*espaces de peuplement*,” areas of exploitation,” and of “frontiers” as transition spaces (Jureit 2016).

The contradictions and violent conflicts in the interwar period can be seen as responses to profound changes in global power balances. New nation-states with claims to global political and economic leadership such as the United States had entered the international arena, and South American states that became independent in the 19th century demanded a say in international organizations and negotiations. Moreover, economic interdependencies intensified and expanded to the extent that economic processes could no longer be controlled on the basis of national territoriality. These developments, which continued long after the end of World War II, have meant that the market, and above all the “world market,” has become increasingly relevant for the territorial organization of state rule.

Against the backdrop of these changes, the establishment of the first European communities in the 1950s reflects the attempts of Western European states to respond to global economic interdependencies as well as to wartime devastation by creating common European markets, asserting their place in the emerging bloc formation of the Cold War, and countering the

consequences of decolonization (not least of their own colonial empires) for acquiring raw materials, for trade, and for labor markets (Milward 1992). With this attempt, the governments of the founding states of the European communities at the same time clearly rejected the historical models of hegemonic and violent control of a bordered political space (Wobbe 2005)—not only on the discursive level, but above all by forming a body of European law and building European institutions.

As the history of political ideas outlined here suggests, the sociology of Europeanization encompasses issues that transcend by far, in both temporal and spatial terms, the founding of the European Communities and the European Union. However, in the following I will limit myself to addressing spatial constructions, territoriality, and definitions of border regimes in the context of these legal institutional arrangements.

Spatial constructions, territories, and borders: Three interdependent objects of sociological research on Europeanization

The European Coal and Steel Union (1951), founded in 1951, and especially the European Economic Community (EEC), founded in 1957, laid the groundwork for the “area without internal frontiers,” as it is called in Article 13 of the Single European Act (1986). On the one hand, this spatial construction of a European area overcomes the model of the European nation-state on the basis of a contractually guaranteed and shared sovereignty in certain policy areas. These policy areas are constantly expanding in the course of the European integration process, which has accelerated as a result of the Single European Act. This act replaced the principle of unanimous decision making by member states with qualified majority voting rules. The member states have thus abandoned the paradigm of harmonization of regulations in social relations and facilitated legislative processes on the European level. The area without internal frontiers is founded on European laws that aim to combine and coordinate divergent national legal orders (Patel & Röhl 2020: 81—91). On the other hand, this European area consists of the sum of the national territories of the members of the European Communities and today’s European Union (EU). Article 4 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty of the European Union states as follows: “The Union shall respect the equality of Member States before the Treaties as well as their national identities....[and] their essential State functions, including ensuring the territorial integrity of the State, maintaining law and order and safeguarding national security.” Thus, the structural core of the EU’s current spatial

construction is the way in which both nationally and supranationally guaranteed claims to power and sovereignty and nationally and supranationally guaranteed economic and social orders and forms of solidarity overlap. On the basis of these overlaps, a complex and flexible European border regime has emerged at multiple locations, some of which are extraterritorial; this regime has various instruments of control at its disposal (Eigmüller 2007, Mau et al. 2012). What is more, this regime created opportunities for the European Communities and the EU to expand their sphere of influence, following the logic of “tiered levels of integration” (Vobruba 2004). Under this regime, implementation of classic forms of border control on the periphery of the member states’ territories has become a sign that states of emergency are in effect (for example, following terrorist attacks or during pandemics).

Law and institutions

The overlapping of supranational and national claims to power and sovereignty and of economic and social orders constitutes “spatialities of Europeanization” (Clark & Jones 2008) that shape and influence the relationship between the territories of the member states as well as the territorial frames of social relations and interactions in the area without internal frontiers. The spatialities of Europeanization—which are marked, from a sociological perspective, by the dialectic between Europeanization as a process of opening and as a process of national closure (Münch 2008)—are based to a decisive extent on the legal codifications set out in European primary law, i.e. on European treaties, and secondary law, i.e. European directives, and regulations. The member states that signed the Treaty of Rome in 1958 agreed to four fundamental principles: free movement of goods, free movement of capital, freedom to provide and establish services, and the free movement of persons. By establishing these four liberties, they outlined a European legal space (Vauchez 2015). At the core of this legal space is the prohibition of “any discrimination on grounds of nationality” (Article 7 EEC). These principles ensure equal access to the national legal orders of the member states for companies, investors, service providers, and employees and also form the basis for the development of a constitutional framework for the European Union. The legal space thus not only frames and legitimates the supranational regulation of relations between the sovereign powers of the member states and the hierarchies between European norms and national legal systems. It also enables the institutions that represent this space to define fundamental legal norms, install European citizenship, and enact laws and monitor compliance with them.

From a sociological perspective, the European legal space generates interactions and interdependencies between representatives of the respective member states' governments and public authorities, but also among various groups of non-governmental actors such as market participants, experts, workers, persons covered by different national security schemes, students, etc. The tensions and conflicts associated with these interactions and interdependencies, due to clashes of interests, claims to hegemony, or uneven social developments, shed light on the fractures and discontinuities in the area without internal frontiers. One indicator of these shifting fractures and discontinuities is the extent to which mobile EU citizens do or do not have access to tax-funded social benefits in other member states. In various rulings handed down since 1998 (judgement of the ECJ C-86/96 *Sala v. Freistaat Bayen*), the Court of Justice of the European Union has recognized that EU citizens who reside, because of their job or education, in a member state other than the state whose nationality they have are entitled to social benefits. Such claims to social benefits have nonetheless repeatedly been challenged by national social welfare offices and social courts. Since 2014 (judgement of the ECJ C-333/13 *Dano v. Jobcenter Leipzig*), the European Court of Justice has itself negated such claims in three cases (Blauberger et al. 2018, Tietze 2018). These conflicts of solidarity (Farahat & Krenn 2018) highlight contradictions that have emerged in the legal space of the EU area without internal frontiers as a result of inconsistencies between the right to free movement for workers and trainees and their right to social security, on the one hand, and the social rights guaranteed for mobile EU citizens, on the other. Tax-funded social benefits as a core element of welfare state policies have remained within the domain of member states (Ferrera 2003). Allocation of benefits to mobile EU citizens who become unemployed or require assistance during their training is subject to the European process called coordination among member states (Pataut 2018), which means that, since 2014, access to benefits for mobile EU citizens not recognized as workers or trainees depends more and more on discretionary decisions reached by individual member states.

Nevertheless, precisely the tensions and conflicts in the area without internal frontiers highlight the potential of law to Europeanize political, economic, and social relations and to institutionalize European forms of conflict management. Both the founding of institutions with a material presence in a specific locale—such as the establishment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg (as part of the Treaty of the European Coal and Steel Community of 1952) and the Common Assembly that has become the European Parliament

with directly elected deputies since 1979 in Strasbourg and Brussels—and the establishment of normative institutions such as the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of nationality, the portability of social rights and benefits, and the prohibition of double taxation of mobile EU citizens are all part of these processes.

The European institutional order, in which the area without internal frontiers intersects with the territories of the member states, regulates the formal relationship between the EU institutions and the institutions of the member states, and determines which decision-making competence is assigned to what authority. A complex regime of different layers of regulation structures the European area without internal frontiers and determines the details of, for example, the “free movement of persons” that is constitutive of European citizenship and the area without internal frontiers. A differentiated system of EU and member states’ regulations stipulates who is included in or excluded from the area without internal frontiers under what conditions, for what period of time, and with what options for taking action. The various categories of mobile workers (cross-border workers, posted workers, workers who reside in another member state than their nationality, third-country workers, etc.) shape both contrasting mobilities taking place within this area and distinctive access to the rights that establish it. In this respect the European legal space and the institutional orders associated with it lead to multiple unequal “spatialities of Europeanization”—not only in the domain of the labor relations within the European area.

Markets and social protection

Such differences and inconsistencies in Europeanization contradict the unity and especially the uniformity suggested by the spatial constructions of the European Union and its predecessors, the European Communities. An example of such a spatial construction that suggests uniformity is the single market. The latter was established with the Single European Act 1986 and builds on the free trade zone (1960) and the customs union (1968), which were also spatially constructed. The introduction of the Euro on January 1, 1999 highlighted the symbolic unity of this single market. In reality, however, it established a new space within the single market—the Eurozone. The “spatial image” of the market invokes the “dream” of a society that bases its cohesion on egalitarian exchange relations and the interdependencies of supply and demand.² In this respect, the political decisions of the member states and the legal

² S. Kracauer (1926) called “spatial images” the “dreams of society”.

codifications that materialize the single market represent, among other things, the attempt of the governments of the member states to reduce the complexity of global economic interdependencies and to find an adequate response to economic globalization processes beyond territorially constituted national economies.

“Speaking as one voice, the EU carries more weight in international trade negotiations than each individual member would,” according to an official statement on the EU website (European Union 2019). The EU trade balances, which Eurostat compiles annually on the basis of exports and imports of member states to and from countries outside the EU, demonstrate the existence of the single market and the associated global flows of goods. They also reinforce the importance of the single market for European and non-European economic actors such as companies, investors, national governments, employees, etc. Eurostat statistics and data materialize the construction of space in a market economy by classifying political economic action on the basis of European categories and simultaneously create reference points for political and economic action. In this respect, the statistical office of the European Union reproduces the dual history by linking statistics to the establishment of the European nation-state model and the public policies decided on in the name of the nation-state. On the one hand, statistics serve decision-makers as evidence of the sphere in which specific policies apply, and, on the other hand, as an instrument of justification for their scope (Desrosières 1998; Bartl, Papillaud & Terracher-Lipinski 2019.)

Eurostat statistics and data reveal the basic structure of the single market, which consists of the sum of the economies of the member states (Fink & Lammers 2018). For example, the external trade balances not only inform us that, between 2003 and 2017 (a period in which several Eastern European countries joined the EU and which also includes the 2008—2009 economic and debt crisis), extra-EU exports increased by 117.9%, while extra-EU imports increased by 98.7%. Data also shows that, during this period, Germany was the largest EU exporter with €532 billion, far ahead of the United Kingdom (€ 204 billion), Italy (€ 199 billion), France (€ 195 billion), and the Netherlands (€ 143 billion) (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2019).

Despite its member-state structure, the single market has undoubtedly transnationalized corporate structures, labor markets, infrastructure development, knowledge and technology production, educational pathways, and also individual biographies within the EU, thus

contributing significantly to a convergence of living standards as well as to converging GDPs. The Commission notes in a report published in 2007 an “increase in welfare of € 518 per head in 2006 compared to the situation without the single market (corresponding to a 2.15% increase of GDP over the period 1992-2006)” (SEC (2007) 1521). However, the growth in wealth generated on the single market has both produced and reinforced an uneven distribution of resources and opportunities to participate in the market exchanges. This development could be observed before the EU enlargements of the 2000s, as well as in the aftermath of the economic and financial crisis of 2008–2009 (Beckfield 2009; Heidenreich 2016). The *European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion* (ESPON), for example, observed two dividing lines on the single market in 2011, in particular with respect to competitiveness. These divisions were between regions in the East of the “marketplace” and those in the West and between regions in the South and those in the North (see for example “Lisbon performance and regional economic development, 2001–2011,” ESPON Atlas, Territorial Observation No.3, <https://mapfinder.espon.eu/mapfinder/?p=2432>). Furthermore, the increase of prosperity and the converging living standards in the EU have not abolished the large differences between member states in the portions of their populations that are at risk of poverty. These relative differences have increased significantly in the wake of the economic and debt crisis since 2010. The territorial cohesion of the single market and social inclusion into the European area without internal frontiers are accompanied by large social inequalities, which follow the two dividing lines just mentioned and intersect the prosperous zones of economically strong member states.

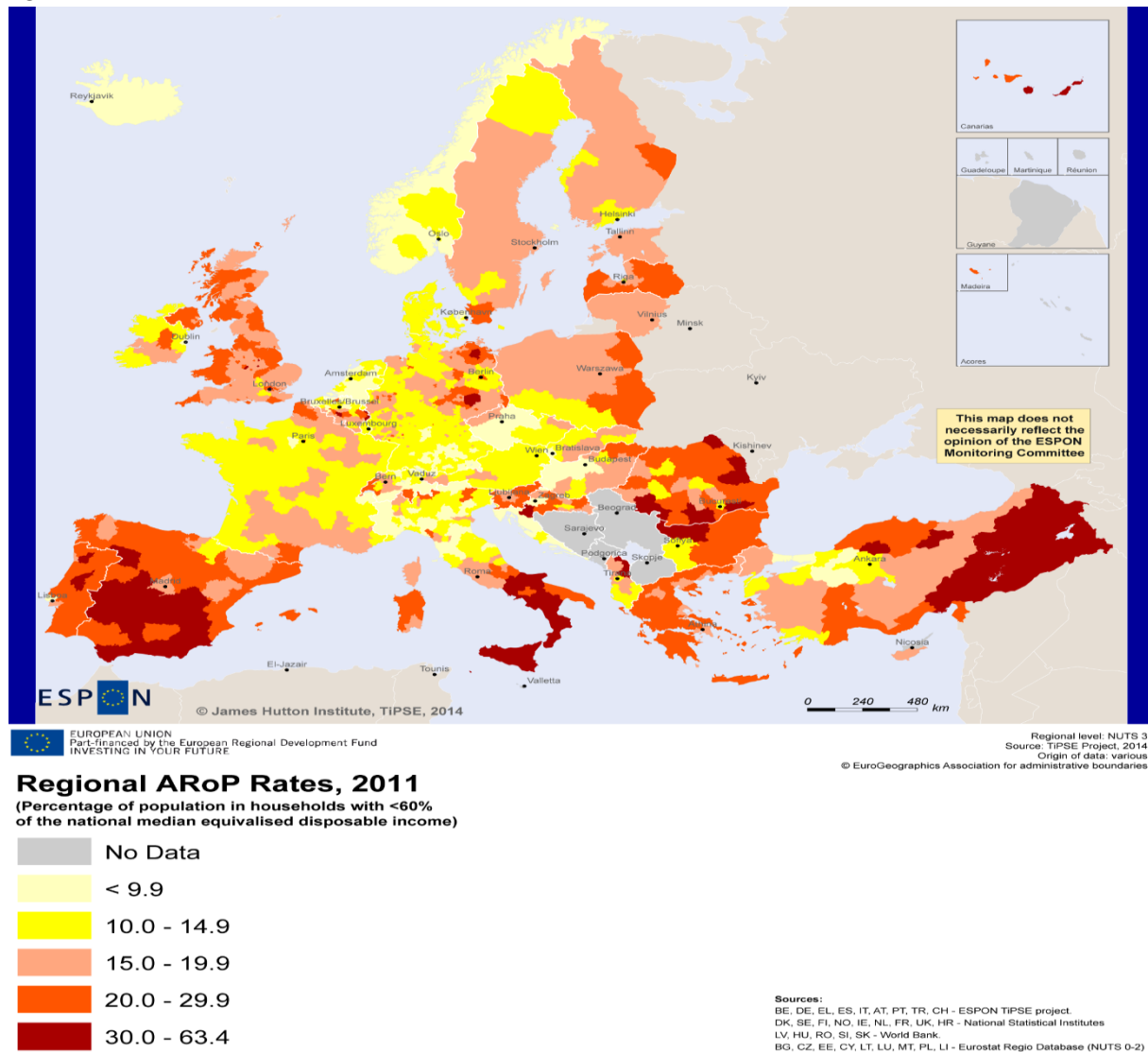


Fig. 1: Regional at-risk-of-poverty (ARoP) rates, 2011 (TiPSE Project, 2014, <https://mapfinder.espon.eu/mapfinder/?p=2520>) copyright ESPON, origin of information and data ESPON EGTC. (The interpretation of ESPON material does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee)

Figure 1, *Regional at-risk-of poverty (ARoP) rates in 2011*, illustrates how economic competitiveness follows regional dividing lines and highlights the uneven topography of converging standards of living. This uneven topography is also found in countries with generally more equal levels of income and distribution of income, in particular in Germany, and countries with large intra-national disparities such as Italy, where economic inequalities reflect underlying weaknesses in the construction of the Italian nation-state. Also, the map illustrates that the single market in part ends at the borders of the member states. Although several border areas—for instance, the region along the Rhine between France and Germany, the area between the Belgian city of Antwerp and the Dutch city Rotterdam, or the Spanish and French Basque region—have low ARoP rates, the ARoP rates of other border areas such

as the Catalan region or the German-Polish Pomerania region point to the impacts of national borders on the capacity of regional actors to take part in competitive single market exchange.

The intra-European asymmetries that the single market generates, perpetuates, or deepens are an indication of the unequal bargaining power of the member states. These inequalities are, to a large extent, a result of the member states' different shares of intra-European trade in goods. Figure 2 summarizes the differences in import and export among the EU member states in 2019.

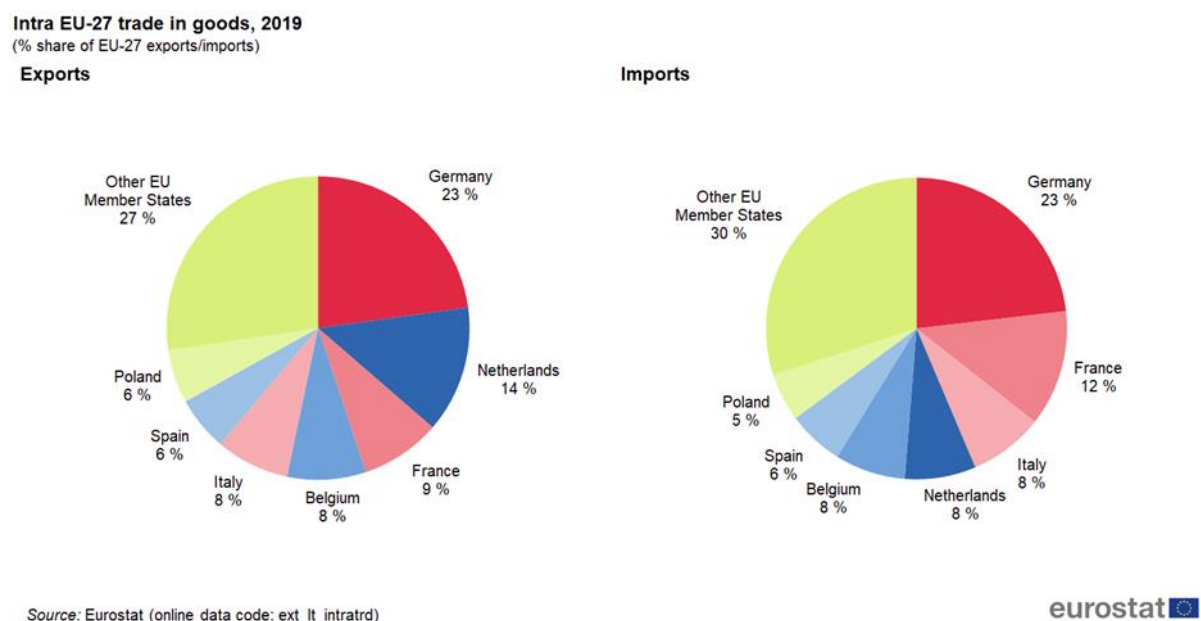


Fig. 2: Intra EU-27 trade in goods, 2019 (Eurostat 2020: 8).

The interstate framework of the single market contributes to promoting asymmetric power relations between the member states, due to unequal participation in intra-European trade leads, which in turns leads to uneven bargaining power (Lechevalier 2018). As a result, economic and social inequalities between member states tend to be reproduced, because the basic structure of the market construction in the member states for the most part prevents processes in which political differences are balanced out at the level of other territorial differentiations.

Regulation of the market is largely in the hands of the governments of the member states and is therefore based on the power of a government to assert itself in negotiations on market regulation in intergovernmental councils. Furthermore, decisions on market regulation are

made in relation to other policy areas, which are differentiated according to the division of competences between the EU and the member states. These policy areas include business and industry, competition, education, training and youth, employment and social affairs, energy, agriculture, environment, regional investment and solidarity and others. The interdependencies and interactions between the European single market, the Eurozone, the European area without internal frontiers, the Schengen area in which border controls have been abolished, and the European legal space of fundamental rights form a blind spot in the institutionalized organization of intergovernmental EU decision-making. However, they give rise to inequalities of inclusion and to uneven territorial cohesion. Indeed, the austerity policies implemented from 2010 on in the wake of the Euro and debt crisis highlight this political deficit of European spatial constructions.

Various funds—including the European Social Fund (ESF) (1958), the European Regional Development Fund (1972), or the Cohesion Fund (1994)—have been established at the EU level to “correct” social and economic “disparities” and “imbalances” between regions and member states and to mitigate the problems associated with unemployment, as the Commission explains. But these funds do not initiate processes that counteract or dismantle the power hierarchies between member states and/or implement the redistribution of social resources on a supranational and or intranational level. Moreover, a significant cause of the uneven bargaining power of the member states is the policy context in which these funds are implemented. Since the late 1970s, measures taken to enhance social welfare and mitigate economic inequality between structurally weak and economically strong regions have more and more frequently been designed to serve the market (Lechevalier 2018). Policy approaches that run counter to market logics or uphold the need for the protection of social welfare and the leveling of regional differences as by-products of an increase in the GDP and converging living standards have lost influence in the single market. Instead, the member states and the European Community as well as the EU define social and infrastructure policy in terms of the goal of increasing the competitiveness of companies and business locations. This shift became apparent from the 1990s on, when the ESF programs, for example in the field of vocational training and retraining, and regional and cohesion policy funding assistance were placed within the ideological framework of “social investment” and “activation”. In the context of “market-driven human resource management” (Bode 2019: 136), regions and urban areas, like companies and employees, are perceived as individual entrepreneurs who manage their own

man- and womanpower. In this perspective, the resources of regions, urban areas, and employees must and should be “activated” with the help of business management instruments.

Observing and describing Europeanization: Space, territories, and borders as perspectives for sociological research

The previous section referred to statistics and maps to elucidate EU spatial constructions, the intergovernmental relations between member states, and the redefinition of border regimes. Statistical categories and cartography are part of the toolkit employed in the social sciences and historical research to observe and describe social realities. However, the intention behind the use of statistical and cartographical instruments in research is to avoid reproducing the power relationships embedded in space, territories, and borders by reflecting on and comparing statistics and maps. By interpreting statistics and maps, social scientists aim to study the processes triggered by the social and political constructions of space, territories, and borders as well as the domination, hierarchization, differentiation and de-differentiation, and, last but not least, (in-)equalities associated with these processes. When space, territories, and borders become devices for the sociological investigation of Europeanization, then such work focuses on the actors who act out and realize the intersections of space, territories, and borders—for instance, mobile workers, street-level bureaucrats in the authorities that deal with applications for political asylum, or experts who establish and elaborate categories for Eurostat or European guidelines (Büttner 2012; Hassenteufel & Palier 2014; Kazepov 2010; Lahusen & Wacker 2019). Utilizing spatial categories for sociological observation and description enables researchers to relate processes on the macro-theoretical and on the micro-theoretical level to one another. The sociological challenge is to integrate the multiple layers of interactions, mobilities, and regulations that inform social relations and power relationships within the EU into a coherent interpretive framework.

Describing the “politics of scales”

The scalar-structuration approach proposed by geographer and political scientist Neil Brenner, drawing on Fernand Braudel and Henri Lefebvre, offers a means of studying these multiple layers. This approach focuses on the question of how **geographical scales** create vertical orders and in doing so (re-)hierarchize market economic exchange between states or regional or urban actors in the context of capitalist globalization (Brenner 2001; 2011). A

“**geographical scale**” represents a site for economic and political action and, according to Brenner, should be distinguished from other social science spatial concepts such as space, place, locality, and territory. In building descriptions of the construction of the European legal space, of the institutionalization of the area without internal frontiers, or of the single market on the analysis of “scaling processes” and “politics of scales,” researchers shed light on the “changing positionalities” in Europeanization (Brenner 2001: 603) and on the multiple “spatialities of Europeanization” (Clark & Jones 2008). The scalar-structuration approach facilitates researchers’ efforts to identify the opportunities that emerge (or fail to emerge) for economic and political actors when their activities interact with European border definitions or with the European intersections between transnational spaces, on the one hand, and respect for the “national identities” of “Member States” (art. 4 TEU), on the other. By taking changing positionalities seriously, such approaches bring into focus the uneven distribution of bargaining power of EU member states as well as the hierarchies and power relations that exist, for example between multinational companies and medium-sized or small companies or between metropolitan areas and border areas or areas with low population density. The sociological observation and description of rescaling processes makes it possible to highlight shifts in power that result, for example, from the re- or decentralization of financing structures in a member state or in the Euro area.

Taking up the actors’ “jeux d’échelles”

The **jeux d’échelles** [games of scales] approach developed by French historians and anthropologists as a tool for observing and describing interconnections in social relations also creates a perspective for the study of multiple layers in the processes of Europeanization and their discontinuities (Revel 1996; Marung & Middell 2019). In contrast to Brenner’s concept of scales, proponents of the **jeux d’échelles** perspective conceptualize scales as yardsticks for gauging action. These yardsticks are not only based on territorially defined scales, like administrative levels of public action, but also on scales defined by professional socialization, by income, by social or legal status, or by historical experience. Depending on the configuration of the social relations, the interactions involve a certain variety of scales that mirror the multilayered character of social relations. According to the **jeux d’échelle** approach, the significance that an EU institution, a single-market freedom, the law of a member state, trade unions, the action of an NGO, etc. assumes in the process to be described arises in each case from experiences on different territorial scales and from the actors’ socialization in specific contexts of interaction. In this perspective, the historical,

anthropological, or sociological observation of the interdependencies and the structures of interactions is based, as a methodological principal, on the intentional variation in the scale focused on, in order to consider the layered structure of the social. This methodological principle is of interest for research on Europeanization in three ways. First, processes on the micro- and the macro-theoretical level can be empirically and analytically conceptualized as interconnected. For example, on the basis of an intentional scale variation, it is possible to relate the construction of the European legal space to the practices of freedom of movement or to the organization of a company, to the work in a local authority, or to access to social benefits in actual practice. Second, an intentional scale variation makes it possible to observe how territorial levels—for instance, European guidelines or the European production of expert knowledge—affect various occupational groups in different ways and to a different extent. Third, the methodological principle of scale variations is associated with a “mobile perspective” (Amelina & Vasilache 2014). This perspective enables researchers to reflect on the flexible ways in which spatial constructions, territorial levels, and border definitions are related to the “immobile;” that is, they can employ this approach to structure the character of political regimes and take into account the regulation of social interactions as something that is always situated in a specific place. Last but not least, the **jeux d’échelles** approach brings into focus the relations between mobile elites in the EU and population groups that are tied to “locales.” The methodological principle of utilizing various focal points and scales induces researchers to reflect on their own position in the research process as sociologists of Europeanization and to integrate their position vis-à-vis the respective objects or subjects of their work into the analysis of over-lapping spaces, territories, and borders.

Concluding remarks

Both the intersections of EU spatial constructions and respect for the identity of member states and their territorial integrity (Article 4, Treaty on European Union), on the one hand, and the overlapping of new shifting border definitions and traditional member states’ borders, on the other hand, create variations and differentiations in the process of Europeanization. As this chapter has elucidated, the multiple forms of Europeanization result from asynchronous processes of legal and economic integration and transnationalization of criteria and standards for public policies. At the same time, the multiple forms of Europeanization are an expression of contradictions in the process of dismantling and constructing borders. The EU asylum regime is one of the most Europeanized policy areas. The construction of European external

borders at times resemble a frontier—for instance, within the European Neighborhood Policy—, at times a control site in the style of historical *comptoir colonial* [colonial trading posts], and at times a border fence. Together they constitute a series of “spatialities of Europeanization” inside and outside of the EU. Another contradiction emerges from the discontinuities between transnational harmonization in the domain of the four freedoms (free movement of goods, free movement of capital, freedom to provide and establish services, and the free movement of working persons) and interstate coordination in welfare state affairs. For example, whereas regulations pertaining to the internal market are “harmonized” across EU territorial borders, social security systems are differentiated and coordinated within the framework set by member states’ borders and last but not least by national egoism. One of the consequences of these contradictions is the threat that Europeanization, as a political integration project, will increasingly be limited to a focus on market efficiency and performance.

Key learning points:

- Political space is mirrored in the territorialization of governance and the establishment of border regimes. Spatial constructions serve as a means of structuring social interaction and as such become an instrument of social control, domination, and power. Space, territories, and borders define membership and access to rights, determine inclusion and exclusion, and legitimate the sovereignty of rule.
- The EU is based on a specific spatial construction, in which nationally and supranationally guaranteed sovereignty as well as nationally and supranationally guaranteed economic and social orders and forms of solidarity are intertwined. The result is that, on the one hand, the member states of the EU share their sovereignty in certain policy areas, which have been steadily increasing in the course of political integration. On the other hand, the EU consists of the sum of the territories of the member states.
- A complex regime of different layers of regulations structures social interactions in the EU. This leads to multiple and uneven “spatialities of Europeanization.” These “spatialities of Europeanization” result, among other things, in unequal opportunities for participating in the “area without internal frontiers” and in the “single market,” as well as in unequal protection of the right to free movement through social policies. The

interstate framework of EU spatial constructions, on the one hand, and the almost exclusively market-based understanding of territorial and social cohesion, on the other hand, prevent measures aimed at mitigating the “multiple uneven spatialities of Europeanization.”

- Sociological observation and description in spatial categories focus on interactions and interdependencies between actors, their actions, and a specifically constituted or structured environment. Spatial approaches offer opportunities for researchers to relate processes on the macro-theoretical to those on the micro-theoretical level. When space, territories, and borders become devices used in sociological investigations of Europeanization, the focus is on the actors who act out and realize the intersections of space, territories, and borders, such as mobile workers, street-level bureaucrats who deal with asylum applications, or experts establishing and elaborating categories for Eurostat or European guidelines. The sociological challenge is to integrate the multiple layers of interactions, mobilities, and regulations informing social relations and power relationships in the EU into a coherent interpretive framework.

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- **Borders in Motion** is a research center at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder). The website of the center gives an overview of research focused on territorial, supranational, and non-governmental borders in the context of migration, work, and conflicts. Link: <https://www.borders-in-motion.de/profil>
- **Eurostat** is the statistical office of the European Union, link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/home>
- **ESPON 2020** is a cooperation program, adopted by the European Commission in May 2016. Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, this program aims at “promoting and fostering a European territorial dimension in development and cooperation” (<https://www.espon.eu/programme/espon/espon-2020-cooperation-programme>) and provides a map database. Link: <https://mapfinder.espon.eu/mapfinder/>
- **Mobilités, Migrations, Recomposition des espaces | Mobilität, Migration und räumliche Neuordnung** is a blog published by the research group of the same name at Centre Marc Bloch to report on its activities. Focal point is the transformation of spaces and forms of mobility such as migration. Link: <https://rm2.hypotheses.org/>

Glossary:

- **Border:** the main instrument for implementing a monopoly on defining legitimate modes of movement and for governing transnational interaction
- **Geographic scale:** a site for economic and political action (e.g. Brenner 2001)
- **Jeux d'échelles:** the interplay of yardsticks for gauging action (Revel 1996)
- **Phantom geographies:** the “traces left in contemporary societies by defunct territorialities” (Hirschhausen 2017: 107)
- **Space:** refers, in the sense of the French word *espace*, not only to distance and time but also to “place,” “site,” “area,” or “region” (Shields 2006)
- **Territory:** represents, in the 20th century, the central concept of European governments for framing economic relations, industrialization, infrastructure policies, and welfare protection (e.g. Maier 2000)

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