Preface

The numerous and far-reaching socio-political transformations that have taken place on the European continent since the mid-20th century have stipulated the emergence of new approaches and research fields in the social sciences. One of these is the development of a Sociology of Europeanization during the 1990s and 2000s against the backdrop of major political changes in Central and Eastern Europe from 1989, the establishment of the European Union (EU) in 1993, and more general processes of transnationalization and globalization. Since then, the long-term processes of European integration and corresponding dynamics of Europeanization have intensified tremendously: The EU expanded within a relatively short period from a community of 12 member states at the beginning of the 1990s to a community of 28 member states by 2013. Today it consists of 27 member states, since with the so-called 'Brexit' of Great Britain in 2021 after the 2016 referendum we have also witnessed the first withdrawal of an EU member state from EU membership. Apart from its huge territorial expansion, the thrust of European integration since the 1990s has also nurtured the social, cultural, and economic diversity of the EU. Beyond this, the establishment of the EU during the 1990s with the enforcement of its four major freedoms (the free movement of goods, capital, services, and labor), the expansion of European policy coordination, and the implementation of a common currency have stipulated multifaceted institutional changes and social transformations that are neither easy to grasp nor to comprehend. Furthermore, during the past decade, Europe has been shaken by several serious and far-reaching economic, social, and political crises, bringing about new social conflicts, strong disintegrative forces, and putting into question overly rosy prospects of a united Europe and shiny visions of an ever-integrating union.

This reflection of major social and societal transformations in Europe is at the center of this book. It is one of the first and most comprehensive introductions to major terms and concepts, theories, topics, and discussions of the Sociology of Europeanization, a dynamically evolving research field within the wider arrays of sociology, and more general sociological reflections on social change and societal transformations. This book comprises 14 chapters, each covering one particular theme of the multifaceted explorations, reflections, and debates of the Sociology of Europeanization – ranging from more general conceptual discussions to the examination of the numerous socio-spatial, cultural, economic, political, judicial, and socio-structural implications of Europeanization. While reading and studying the 14 chapters of this book, it should become clear that the scope of analysis of the Sociology of Europeanization is

limited neither to the territory of the EU nor even to the 'territory' of the European continent in the proper sense. The sociological exploration of Europeanization comprises and requires much more than just focusing on the EU and its member states. In fact, it comprises reflections of the long-term socio-spatial and socio-cultural history of Europe and the tremendous transnational and global implications of 'Europeanization' in both the past and the present. All these different dimensions and aspects of Europeanization are addressed in the 14 chapters of this book, which were written by experts on the different themes and topics that are presented.

All of the chapters are compiled as introductory texts into major topics, terms, and concepts of the Sociology of Europeanization. This textbook is particularly designed as a fundamental reading in study programs and modules particularly focusing on sociological aspects and implications of Europeanization. It can be used as an introductory reading in sociological study programs and in European studies both at B.A. and M.A. levels. Moreover, the book can also serve as a general introduction and information source for those interested in learning more about Europe, European society, and major topics of the Sociology of Europeanization.

While based on experiences from our own lectures and seminars, it strongly and heavily relies on the experience and expertise of all contributors who were open to our ideas about the structure and the style of this textbook from the very beginning. Hence, our first big 'thank you' goes to all authors and contributors, without whom this book would not have come into being. We are grateful for all their efforts, their engagement, and their patience. We are grateful for their openness to adapt their texts in accordance with the format of this textbook and for investing huge effort in compiling highly informative and legible chapters.

Furthermore, we would also like to say 'thank you' to Lucy Jarman from De Gruyter for her support throughout the entire project and to Rainer Schützeichel, the editor of De Gruyter's series *Sozialwissenschaftliche Einführungen*, who approached us initially and encouraged us to edit this textbook. As always, there are many more people and organizations involved in producing, compiling, and editing a book such as this. Hence, we are highly grateful as well to Ahmet Celikten, one of our student assistants, who very much helped us with the copy-editing of the individual chapters, and to Inke Kühl for her final check-ups. Moreover, we would like to thank Tom Alterman and Laura Cunniff for their thorough editing. Our sincere thanks go also to the Viadrina Institute for European Studies (IFES) at the European University Viadrina and the Interdisciplinary Centre for European Studies (ICES) at Europa-Universität Flensburg for having supported the language editing. Finally, we would also like to thank our students for their interest in the

topics of our classes and their valuable contributions which, in one way or the other, also influenced the development of this book. This book was made for you and for all students to come, being eager to learn more about Europe and the sociological implications of Europeanization.

Some final remarks on the didactical concept of this textbook: As this book is divided into 14 chapters, it is conceptualized as background reading for an introductory course or lecture for a duration of one semester or trimester. All texts have about the same length and contain introductions to major concepts and key references. Moreover, they usually also contain overviews of key developments and major empirical findings in each of the different presented areas of study. All texts are written in an accessible style and no in-depth knowledge of sociology or sociological theory is required; however, we invite and encourage everybody who wants to learn more about sociology, and some of the major figures, debates, and concepts mentioned in this book, to learn more about it in further classes and readings. We hope that this book stimulates the interest and curiosity to go further and learn more. Therefore, all chapters end with a short didactical section, in which key learning points, further readings, and major web sources for further explorations are provided. In some of the chapters, you will find a short glossary with explanations of major keywords and concepts. The keywords that are further explained in the glossary of a chapter are usually printed in **bold type** (like this) when they first appear in a chapter.

Finally, we want to point out explicitly that this book is neither designed as an introduction to the EU and to EU politics nor to the history of European integration or the history of Europe in general. However, some background knowledge on the EU, its major organizations, and the history of European integration can be helpful indeed for a deeper understanding of some of the topics and debates addressed in this book. If you need more background information on key developments and facts, we strongly recommend to look at the further readings presented at the end of the chapters and deliberately searching for relevant information online, since most of the basic facts and information – especially key facts and background on European integration and the structure of the EU – are easily accessible. You will find many hints to relevant web sources and background readings throughout this book. Moreover, we have also integrated some extra-recommendations for basic readings and basic information provided online to the didactical section of the first chapter, the introduction to the Sociology of Europeanization. Hence, you can use this first introductory lesson as an occasion to enrich your knowledge on Europe and the history of European integration right at the beginning of this book. We hope that our readers will enjoy their journey throughout the Sociology of Europeanization and that this book will be an inspiring starting point for your course through this fascinating topic.

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