

## **Leibniz ScienceCampus**

### **Eastern Europe – Global Area (EEGA)**

#### **Aleksanteri Conference 2023 on “Decolonizing space in the Global East - Legal Choices, Political Transformations, Carceral Practices”**

**25. -27.10.2023**

**University of Helsinki, Finland**

At the Aleksanteri Conference 2023 on “Decolonizing space in the Global East - Legal Choices, Political Transformations, Carceral Practices” from 25 – 27 October, 2023, the Leibniz ScienceCampus EEGA organized a book discussion on “Eastern Europe: Global Perspectives” (to be published with Bloomsbury in 2024). In public discourse, Eastern Europe is still rather often seen as a place where social, political, and strategic objectives are executed over and above the will, freedoms, or choices of this region’s populaces. Taking a somewhat different approach, the new textbook for MA and PhD education recognizes not only subordination but also agency and scopes of action. It explores Eastern Europe as a dynamic and global area, not in isolation but in the context of constant exchanges, by revealing the multiple ways in which its societies have positioned themselves in and towards global processes through entanglement from the 19th through to the 21st centuries.

Aim of the discussion at the Aleksanteri conference was to reach out to scholars of Eastern European and Eurasian studies, from student to professor, to give a taste of the book and its three parts, and to make a topical as well as a methodological intervention. To do so, editors and authors of the textbook presented some of the most pertinent findings from selected chapters and discussed them with the guests. First, Gilad Ben-Nun (Leipzig University), one of the editors, gave an introduction into aims and structure of the textbook. Then, the round table speakers shed light on aspect of Eastern Europe in relation to international political and legal spheres, via deeper explorations of the ways in which its actors came to participate in and heavily impact on international organizations and structures of global governance. From the influential role played by representatives at the League of Nations and the United Nations to the making of modern international law by East European jurists, they demonstrated how this region shaped the so-called “international community”. Over the past century, Eastern European legal systems have faced several ruptures and have recalibrated the region’s domestic and multilateral legal bedrocks. Konstantin Branovitskii (Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg) gave examples of Eastern European countries' endeavors to break away from the post-Soviet model of civil procedure. He explored the path of the legal reform of selected countries and discusses the significance of involving foreign experts in such reforms. Lena Dallywater (Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography) then presented some of the aspects central to part II of the book, with a special emphasis on migration, mobility (of people and ideas), and transfer. Afterwards, Gilad Ben-Nun depicted Eastern European impacts on modern international law while pointing to other world regions where these principles were later applied. Francis Onditi (Riara University) brought the contributions together in a critical comment from the perspective of International Relations



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and Diplomacy. He offered an intellectual vision of what the aspects presented mean to a different world region, and pointed to the position of Africa in a global system, as agent of decolonisation. Onditi reflected on how the ambition of the textbook might be transferred to other area studies, and ended his commentary with thoughts on human to human bonds and people-dependent diplomacy.