



Call for Papers: Academic Book Project "Us and Them"

The concepts of "Us" and "Them" are deeply embedded in human thought, shaping our perceptions of identity, belonging, and alterity throughout human history. These terms allow us to construct social, cultural, and political boundaries, bringing a sense of order to a chaotic reality. In today's world, fake news, polarization and the rise of identity politics present pressing global challenges that demand urgent attention. From geopolitical tensions to cultural misunderstandings, the dynamics of "Us and Them" resonate across different disciplines, offering a platform to examine the logic of this dichotomy. Our academic book project aims to encourage discussion about various approaches such as integration, tolerance, mutual understanding, or agonistic pluralism emphasizing the value of conflict.

For this collection of academic papers, we encourage submissions from all fields of study. We invite PhD candidates, researchers, and academics from diverse disciplines as well as experts from society to turn toward the formation of gaps and whether these gaps need to be crossed.

Some examples for key questions we would like to encourage:

- How do we define and perceive "ourselves" through "others" or vice versa?
- What role do cultural, historical, economic, legal, artistic, and sociopolitical dimensions play in shaping the 'Us and Them' divide? How do contemporary global events and international relations influence the construction, perception, and potential transformation of these terms across various contexts, including through historical case studies?
- How do people embrace and conciliate different identities (i.e., different ideas of 'Us') in different contexts? Does this generate multiple and conflicting notions of identity and otherness?
- How can interdisciplinary research contribute to addressing the challenges posed by this dichotomy?
- How are the 'Us and Them' dynamics affected by geography, space and the environment? How do space and 'natural' borders shape the 'Us and Them' dichotomy?
- How can linguistic and discursive elements contribute to the understanding, articulation, and elaboration of the dynamics underlying the 'Us and Them' polarity?
- What new challenges does the development of AI bring to the "Us and Them" dichotomy?

Submissions should include:

- A title and an abstract of no more than 300 words.
- The author's name, affiliation, and a brief biography (max. 150 words).
- The paper (length: 8,000-12,000 words; quotation style: Chicago (18 ed.))

Key Dates:

- **Submission Deadline:** December 31, 2025
- **Notification of Acceptance:** January 31, 2026
- **Publication Date:** 2026

Contact Information:

For submissions or inquiries, please contact directly: x0unme1@uni-heidelberg.de.

We look forward to your contributions.