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Introduction: Borderland Studies Meets Child Studies. A European Encounter¹

Abstract: *With the demise of four multinational empires at the end of the First World War (Russian, German, Habsburg and Ottoman), nationalist forces all over Europe claimed the right to a territory for what they considered to be their own people. The peace treaties resulting from the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 caused a major redrawing of the map of Europe. As a result of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany handed over a considerable amount of its territory at its Western, Northern and, most significantly, Eastern borders, to neighbouring states. This edited volume focuses on the regions lying in what one could call a ring around Germany lost by Germany after the First World War. The European border regions of annexation, as I call them, switched their sovereignty as follows: Alsace-Lorraine became French, Eupen-Malmedy Belgian, North Schleswig Danish, various former Prussian Eastern provinces became Polish, the Hlučín region Czechoslovakian, and the Memel region Lithuanian. By setting up a historical comparison of the living conditions of children in European borderlands of annexation throughout the 20th Century, this edited volume provided the context for an encounter of a new combination of categories from different disciplines: Borderland Studies meets Child Studies.*

Although the 20th century experienced a significant number of border changes in Europe and saw European nation-states substantially increasing their interest in children, Europe's borderland children remain under-researched. Starting from the research findings of borderland scholars, who found that borderlands were central sites of power struggle, and of childhood scholars, who delineated how precisely states expressed their plans in their programs for children, this edited volume provides a comparative analysis of the history of borderland children. The contributions revealed various new findings and a new hypothesis. More than their parents, it turned out, it was the children who were envisioned to play

1 I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues in the Institute for Eastern European Studies at the University of Vienna, in particular to Agnieszka Pasieka and Philipp Ther, for formulating thoughtful remarks on an earlier version of this introduction. During the conference 'Growing Up in 20th Century European Borderlands' I organised in Vienna in 2015, Tomasz Kamusella, Katherine Lebow and Benita Blessing provided the individual authors with useful comments.

a crucial role in bringing about the peaceful Europe that representatives at international peace conferences had had in mind while changing the sovereignty of the borderlands these children inhabited. Each of the individual contributions showed the complexity of nationalisation within various, often previously undiscovered, spheres of borderland children's lives. They also deepened our insights into the dichotomy between the nationalist policies executed towards borderland children and the manifest non-national practices of these children that had been investigated by historians for schooling during the interwar period. They shed light on other aspects of interwar children's life-worlds, as well as on borderland nationalist education after the Second World War. Reading the contributions comparatively, one might hazard a new hypothesis. Despite the different imaginations of East and West that had influenced the decisions of peace negotiators after both World Wars, borderland children, in strikingly similar ways on the Eastern and Western halves of the European continent, came to invent creative practices that contributed to the creation of a much more socially cohesive Europe. This seems to indicate that a definition of Europeanisation should be sensitive to the specificity of various historical agents, including children, instead of simply being based on the discourse of those who held the reigns of power at a given time in the past.

Borderland Studies

Implying that history is national, historians for a long time regarded as axiomatic the homogeneity of nation-states. Studies in nationalisation, unravelling the intricacies of nation formation and stabilisation in core-areas of nation-states, have long been popular features of mainstream historiography. Nationalisation covers political and social attempts to get people to identify with the nation-state. In the case of affirmative articulation, the nation-state has been successful in forming its citizens.² A nation-state offers an institutionalized set-up for people with shared values and ideas of order.³

Major border changes on the European continent (respectively the demise of the Cold War set-up following the collapse of communism, the Yugoslav wars, and the enlargement project of the European Union) have inspired historians to readdress or shift their lens of analysis to borders, the physical demarcation lines

2 Krishan Kumar, 'Nationalism and the Historians', in Gerard Delanty, Krishan Kumar, eds., 'The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism' (London: Sage, 2006), 7–20.

3 Dieter Langewiesche, 'Nation, Nationalismus, Nationalstaat in Deutschland und Europa' (München: C.H. Beck, 2000), 14.

between nations.⁴ The recent strengthening of national borders as a response to wandering asylum seekers shows that the topic still lies at the heart of order and safety within Europe. National borders separate the territory of states, but also influence the lives of the people inhabiting borderlands.

Daphne Berdahl explained borders as 'symbols through which states, nations, and localities define themselves. They define at once territorial limits and sociocultural space'.⁵ Whereas borders refer to lines of separations, borderlands encompass areas that come to be divided through the creation of borders.⁶ Peter Sahlins understood the French-Spanish border as a bridge between national and local ideologies. While appreciating the mutual influence the national and local ideologies had on each other, the author aimed to prove the ascendancy of national ideologies over local loyalties.⁷ Later work pointed to the limitations of nationalisation and the flexibility in identifications among borderland inhabitants.⁸ In what Philipp Ther has called *Zwischenräume*, i.e. linguistic, cultural, religious and/or ethic transition areas, historians have found much contesting going on between national movements, a fact which turned these regions, despite their peripheral location, into central sites of power struggle.⁹

- 4 Jörg Seifarth, Etienne François, Bernhard Struck, 'Grenzen und Grenzräume: Erfahrungen und Konstruktionen', in Jörg Seifarth, Etienne François, Bernhard Struck, eds., 'Die Grenze als Raum: Erfahrung und Konstruktion' (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2007), 7.
- 5 Daphne Berdahl, 'Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland' (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1999), 3.
- 6 Libora Oates-Indruchová, Muriel Blaive (eds.), 'Border Communities: Microstudies on Everyday Life, Politics and Memory in European Societies from 1945 to the Present', introduction to a special issue of *Nationalities Papers*, Volume 42, Issue 2, March 2014, 195.
- 7 Peter Sahlins, 'Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees' (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
- 8 Robert Traba, 'Wschodniopruskość. Tożsamość regionalna i narodowa w kulturze politycznej Niemiec' (Poznań-Warschau: Wydawnictwo Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, 2005), 279.
- 9 Philipp Ther, 'Sprachliche, kulturelle und ethnische „Zwischenräume“ als Zugang zu einer transnationalen Geschichte Europas', in Holm Sundhaussen, Philipp Ther, eds., 'Regionale Bewegungen und Regionalismen in europäischen Zwischenräumen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts' (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2003), XII; Tatiana Zhurzhenko, 'Borders and Memory', in Doris Wastl-Walter, eds., 'The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies' (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 74.

Under the influence of this cultural shift, scholars came to understand national appropriation as a construction, that is as experiencing the social world as differentiated between 'us' and 'them', in this way withdrawing from primordialist interpretations that claim identifications as innate characteristics.¹⁰ While researching 'inventions of traditions'¹¹ in borderlands, however, scholars often discovered inhabitants who at moments happened to have distanced themselves from any nation's appeal, while at other moments moved back and forth (possibly multiple times) in their notions about their rights and duties towards their nation-state.¹² Although it is the ambition of nation-states to hold a strong position in policy-making in borderlands, it is indeed social actors who make their own use of policies.

Historians used the methods of the *Alltagsgeschichte* (or everyday life history) in order to unravel how political ideas interact in the lives of non-hegemonic inhabitants of borderlands.¹³ Aiming to shed light on the way local people appropriated, changed or refuted such ideas in their daily life practices, authors are growing away from using a solely top-down approach, and now also approach their microstudies from a bottom-up perspective.¹⁴ Practices, i.e. repetitions in everyday routines, articulate the relationship between individuals and their environment, and provide experiences with one or multiple means of appropriation.¹⁵

10 Rogers Brubaker, 'Ethnicity, Migration, and Statehood in Post-Cold War Europe', in Michel Seymour, eds., 'The Fate of the Nation-State' (McGill: Queen's University Press, 2004), 358.

11 Terence Ranger, Eric Hobsbawm et al., 'The Invention of Tradition' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

12 Bernard Linek, 'Einleitung', in Kai Struve, Bernard Linek, eds., 'Nationalismus und nationale Identität in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert' (Marburg: Herder Institut, 2000), 6.

13 Muriel Blaive, Libora Oates-Indruhová, 'Introduction: Border communities: micro-studies on everyday life, politics and memory in European Societies from 1945 to the present', *Nationalities Papers* 42, 2 (2014), 195.

14 Libora Oates-Indruhová, Wolfgang Mueller, 'Space, Borders, and Borderlands: Global and East European Approaches in Historiography', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 42, 1 (2013), 44.

15 Alf Lüdtke, 'Einleitung: Was ist und wer treibt Alltagsgeschichte?', in Alf Lüdtke, eds., 'Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebenswelten' (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1989), 11–12; Christian Pletzing, Peter Oliver Loew, Thomas Serrier, 'Zwischen Enteignung und Aneignung: Geschichte und Geschichten in den "Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas"', in Christian Pletzing, Peter Oliver Loew, Thomas Serrier, eds., 'Wiedergewonnene Geschichte. Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas' (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 12.

While investigating how inhabitants with different national and local identifications lived in each others' vicinity and learned how to cooperate with each other,¹⁶ historians like Tara Zahra and Tomasz Kamusella noticed a major demarcation line not between two juxtaposed competing nationalisms, but between the national versus non-national attitude of borderland inhabitants. In an attempt to research historically those who would have been deaf to the appeals of nationalism, they came up with new concepts. Tara Zahra tested out national indifference as a category of analysis in her study on the Bohemian lands, while Tomasz Kamusella, in his work on the German-Polish borderlands of Upper Silesia, favoured the concept of 'non-national groups' because he considers its meaning deprived of a teleology.¹⁷ Notwithstanding his, by definition, dichotomous view of the past, Tomasz Kamusella indicated the flexibility of nationalist ideologies and non-national practices. While speaking about the early 19th Century in Central Europe, he came to conclude: 'nationally teleological thinking was increasingly a part of the socio-political reality that the 'nationally indifferent' inhabited and that it gradually more forcefully structured their lives'.¹⁸ Anthropologists like Pamela Ballinger addressed 'the intertwined history of purity and hybridity discourses' earlier and encouraged an unravelling of 'the historical dialogue and interpenetration of languages of purity/homogeneity and hybridity'.¹⁹

Such an approach also requires us to reflect on the relationship between nationalism and regionalism. As both are inherently modern phenomena, contrary to what one might think, they are not competing or mutually exclusive concepts.²⁰ In the interwar period, for example, authorities throughout Europe saw in regionalism a

16 Omer Bartov, Eric D. Weitz, 'Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands', in 'Shatterzone of Empires' (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1.

17 Tara Zahra, 'Kidnapped Souls. National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948' (Sage: Cornell University Press, 2008); Tomasz Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia in modern Central Europe. On the significance of the non-national/a-national in the age of nations', in Tomasz Kamusella, James Bjork, Timothy Wilson, Anna Novikov, eds., 'Creating Nationality in Central Europe, 1880–1950: Modernity, Violence and (Be) Longing in Upper Silesia' (London: Routledge, 2016), 15.

18 Tomasz Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe*, Houndsmill, Palgrave, 2009, 15.

19 Pamela Ballinger, "Authentic Hybrids" in the Balkan Borderlands, *Current Anthropology*: 45, 1 (2004), 48.

20 Celia Applegate, 'A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of *Heimat*' (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

force capable of buttressing their national policies.²¹ This was especially true in borderlands where national sovereignty had changed. In such cases, officials were well aware that regionalism, because inhabitants granted it cognitive affinity, enjoyed more claim than nations, which were imagined as bigger communities.²² An example of this would be Polish Upper Silesia, where the frequent border changes had undermined the stability of any sense of national belonging and opened the path to other orientations. The various regionalisms at work here, such as the Heimat movement and the fostering of what was seen as the Silesian language, were nevertheless supported by nationalist cultural claims, either from the Weimar Republic, or the Polish Republic. Notwithstanding the autonomous status the region enjoyed, political regionalist tendencies never operated outside of nationalist frameworks and did not aspire to take over sovereignty.²³

Child Studies

The field of child studies is increasingly valued for offering an interesting lens through which to view our knowledge of the past, as states tend to define their plans very clearly in their policies towards their future citizens.²⁴ This young but established field of historical enquiry encourages us to learn about the goals of societies through the prism of child policies and children's experiences.²⁵

Children have traditionally been presented as figures on the margins of history, and research on children has mainly focused on what adults said about children in various child policy programmes or child institutions. Because the 'Century of the Child'²⁶ saw an 'unprecedented expansion of state activity' on child-rearing, studies in childhood often start from the viewpoint of a nation-state designing

21 Philipp Ther, 'Zwischenräume', XVI.

22 Benedict Anderson, 'Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism' (London: Verso, 2006).

23 Peter Polak-Springer, 'Recovery Territory. A German-Polish Conflict over Land and Culture, 1919–1989' (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 48.

24 Paula S. Fass, 'Introduction: Is There a Story in the History of Childhood?', in Paula S. Fass, eds., 'The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World' (London: Routledge, 2013), 1–14; Martha Saxton, 'Introduction into the First Volume of the Journal of Childhood and Youth', in Heidi Morrison, eds., 'The Global History of Childhood Reader' (New York: Routledge, 2012), 103–104.

25 Paula S. Fass, 'Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood' (London: Macmillan Reference, 2004).

26 This phrase was first expressed by the Swedish feminist Ellen Key, who at the beginning of the 20th Century, hoped parents would devote more time in order to bring up their

child policies in its capital to serve children on the whole of its territory.²⁷ Historical pedagogy is a well-developed research field in Europe and studies about children's rights and youth movements using a top-down national perspective are available for almost all European countries. The typical kind of conflicts addressed in such studies are related to clashes between state-building processes, based on a traditional notion of the nation's elite, the emancipation of the nation's masses through a prohibition on child labour, the struggle against child mortality, and the introduction of compulsory education.²⁸

Since the 1960s, however, children have also been regarded as important historical co-creators of everyday life. The individual agency of children is far more difficult to grasp since a child is not thought to be rational, which, according to Mary Jo Maynes, is still at the heart of historians' idea of a social actor.²⁹ The cognitive, linguistic and emotional boundaries of children have often been used as an argument against exploring the kind of agency that children possessed at various moments throughout history.³⁰ Perhaps, however, it is time we evaluated child testimonies 'with the same critical scepticism and respect' as other sources, rather than dismissing them.³¹ Historians have already learned from psychological research on child court witnesses the importance of not overlooking children's

children in sheltered environments. See also: Ellen Key, 'The Century of the Child' (New York, 1909).

27 Dirk Schumann et al., 'Raising Citizens in the "Century of the Child": The United States and German Central Europe in Comparative Perspective' (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

28 Pier Paolo Viazza, Carlo A. Corsini, 'The Decline of Infant and Child Mortality. The European Experience: 1750–1990' (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1997); Jean-François Chanet, 'L'école républicaine et les petites patries' (Paris: Aubier, 1996); Jeffrey Tyssens, 'Om de schone ziel van't kind... Het onderwijsconflict als een breuklijn in de Belgische politiek' (Gent: Provinciebestuur Oost-Vlaanderen and het Liberaal Archief, 1998), 216; Jane Humphries, 'Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

29 Saskia Handro, 'Zwischen Identitätsstiftung und historischem Verstehen: Kriegskindheit in deutsch-deutschen Schulgeschichtsbüchern', in Hans H. Ewers, Jana Mikota, Jürgen Reulecke, Jürgen Zinnecker, eds., 'Erinnerungen an Kriegskindheiten: Erfahrungsräume, Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik unter sozial- und kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive' (Weinheim: Juventa-Verlag, 2006), 233–261.

30 Peter N. Stearns, 'Challenges in the History of Childhood', *The Journal of the History of Childhood* 1 (2008), 35–42.

31 Benita Blessing, 'The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945–1949' (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

accounts, but evaluating their strengths and weaknesses. Studies that centralise child sources such as diaries, school essays, drawings and pictures have convincingly shown that shortcomings in children's use of language or references to time and place may not be valid reasons for discarding children's descriptions of interpersonal relations and everyday life conditions as contributions to the reconstruction of a fuller picture of the past.³² Children indeed not only experience situations differently from adults, they often also face other horizons of experience. Young children are, for example, less politically informed and, as a result, do not understand or share the opinions of adults.

There are clear methodological challenges in finding out how children viewed their treatment by adults, how they articulated this experience in their own practices, and how they recall it in sources. Along with using the scarce so-called ego documents children left in the past, historians have recently opted for the oral history method. There is a consensus within the oral history discipline that our knowledge about the past can only be made available through narratives giving meaning to the biographical self at the moment the interview is conducted.³³ Although research findings based on child ego documents and newly created testimonies do not always make it possible to come to far-reaching conclusions about past societal processes, they allow for the inclusion of different voices and add to a more complex understanding of everyday life in 20th Century Europe.³⁴

A key question, deriving from an increased focus on child experiences, is how to define children. This is especially true of the 20th Century when the period of childhood was elongated, thanks to children spending more time in school, entering the labour market later, and youth organisations flourishing. Whereas scholars have traditionally followed the logic of the systems they were studying, in which schoolchildren are defined according to rules concerning obligatory

32 Nicholas Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', *Past and Present* 161, 1 (1998), 191–235; Margaret Peacock, 'Broadcasting Benevolence: Images of the Child in American, Soviet and NLF Propaganda in Vietnam, 1964–1973', *The Journal of History of Childhood and Youth* 3 (2010), 15–38; Lawrence Graver, 'An Obsession with Anne Frank: Meyer Levin and the Diary' (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

33 Machteld Venken, 'Straddling the Iron Curtain? Immigrants, Immigrant Organisations, War Memories' (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011).

34 For an example see Machteld Venken, 'Child forced labour: an analysis of ego documents throughout time', *European Review of History – Revue européenne d'histoire* 22, 2 (2015), 368–388.

school attendance valid at the time,³⁵ others delineate age cohorts and follow child experiences for a time-slot they consider of political relevance, such as youth in Communist Poland.³⁶ A third research line investigates the extent to which children shared the spirit of a time and enjoyed a generational experience that influenced their behaviour also later in life.³⁷

While scholars have demonstrated the importance of turning age into a central category of analysis, they are also finally aware that it has taken some of their attention away from another major category, namely gender. Boys and girls were indeed objects and subjects of history in different ways.³⁸ As much as childhood policies reflected other ideals of nationalisation for both sexes, so too are the ways such policies were experienced and articulated into speech gender-specific.

Europeanisation?

At the end of both the First and Second World Wars, imagined visions of Europe found themselves in the heads of decision-makers responsible for reshaping borders in Europe. In the last year of his life, Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929) reflected on the decisions he had made a decade earlier while representing France at the Paris Peace Negotiations in 1919, where after the defeat of Germany the map of Europe was redrawn. He defended the Treaty of Versailles as 'the greatest victory of all' because it had realised a 'peaceful Europe founded on right'.³⁹ Clemenceau was attacked by nationalists in France, who believed that the Rhineland, a region that belonged to the interwar German state and held borders with France, should have simply been annexed following the First World War, instead of being only temporarily military occupied. In the Anglo-Saxon world, moreover, politicians grumbled that Clemenceau and representatives of the other victorious Great

35 See for example Krzysztof Kosiński, 'O nową mentalność: życie codzienne w szkołach 1945–1956' (Warszawa: Trio, 2000).

36 Hanna Świda-Ziemba, 'Młodzież PRL. Potrety pokoleń w kontekście historii' (Wydawnictwo Literackie Kraków, 2011).

37 Dorothee Wierling, 'Geboren im Jahr Eins: der Jahrgang 1949 in der DDR: Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie' (Berlin: Links, 2002).

38 Yulia Gradskova, Helene Carlbäck, Zhanna Kravchenko, 'Introduction', in Yulia Gradskova, Helene Carlbäck, Zhanna Kravchenko, eds., 'And they Lived Happily Ever After. Norms and Everyday Practices of Family and Parenthood in Russia and Eastern Europe' (Budapest: CEU Press, 2012), 1–22.

39 Georges Clemenceau, 'Grandeur and Misery of Victory' (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1930), 166–77, 185–87, 198–201, 205–07, 379, 386–88.

Powers had not shared Woodrow Wilson's idea of installing a supranational order based on liberal principles, preferring instead to attain national security.

Not long before the end of the Second World War, the leaders of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union gathered in Yalta in order to consider the rehabilitation of pre-war European nation states. Upon his return to the United States, Franklin Roosevelt argued that, following the signing of the Declaration of a Liberated Europe, he came 'from the Crimea with a firm belief that we have made a start on the road to a world of peace'.⁴⁰ One of the agreements had been to shift the Polish border westwards to the Curzon Line. Soon after the Second World War had come to an end, it turned out Stalin would violate the conditions of the Treaty, by, *inter alia*, preventing true free elections to take place in postwar Poland.

The discourse of a peaceful Europe had already started to function as an impulse for increased cooperation and an understanding of common belonging in the beginning of the modern period when, because of frequent religious conflicts, the trope of Christianity had lost much of its appeal.⁴¹ The territorial changes introduced in the international treaties concluded after the First and Second World Wars affected the lives of many people, especially of those living in borderlands changing sovereignty. Does this observation enable us to say that 20th century borderland inhabitants experienced Europeanisation? Let us have a look at two scientific approaches towards Europeanisation.

According to the first approach, Europeanisation is used as a way to correct the imbalanced knowledge we possess of the characteristics of nationalisation on the European continent. Having noticed that Western European historiography was practiced by scholars without knowledge of East Central European languages, and that the research topics of East Central European historiographers focus solely on the East Central European territory, Michael Geyer made a plea for what he called the Europeanisation of European history.⁴² Larry Wolff places the roots for drawing a mental border through Europe in order to separate what becomes constructed as a backward and peripheral Eastern part from a more prosperous

40 Joanna Potts, Simon Berthon, 'Warlords: An Extraordinary Re-creation of World War II through the Eyes and Minds of Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin' (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2007, 291).

41 Wolfgang Schmale, 'Geschichte Europas' (Stuttgart: UTB, 2001).

42 Michael Geyer, 'Historical Fiction of Anatomy and the Europeanization of National History', *Central European History* 22(3–4) (1989), 334.

and civilised Western part not, as it is commonly believed, in the early days of the Cold War, but already in the late 18th Century.⁴³

Going beyond this binary view, Ulrike von Hirschhausen and Jörn Leonhard compared nationalisms in Western and Eastern Europe. They eroded the predominant importance of what long has been seen as the different essence of German nationalism (based on the Herderian concept of language), and, for example, French nationalism (based on the revolutionary ideas of citizenry). Through comparing nationalisms in various countries, they found out that there is not something like a 'uniform big thing' lying behind a concept legitimising a nation, but a 'pluralism of competing interpretations' dependent upon, *inter alia*, state structures and societal dynamics.⁴⁴ In demonstrating further how ideological and religious segmentations were paramount in Eastern Europe,⁴⁵ and how symbols and rituals enabled the inclusion of competing interpretations of nationalism in nationalist discourses,⁴⁶ the authors contribute to a breaking down of juxtaposed constructions such as Western civic nationalism versus Eastern ethnic nationalism.⁴⁷

Due to the fact that most studies on nationalism in borderlands are limited to a region situated on the borders of neighbouring nation-states, historians have already proposed researching similarities and differences between border regions. In approaching Europe as a collage of many interdependent spaces, Christian Pletzing and others, for example, combine concepts used in Borderland Studies with those of practice in research on Europeanisation.⁴⁸ Since such comparisons

43 Larry Wolff, 'Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment' (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 4–6.

44 Ulrike von Hirschhausen, Jörn Leonhard, 'Europäische Nationalismen im West-Ost-Vergleich: Von der Typologie zur Differenzbestimmung', in Ulrike von Hirschhausen, Jörn Leonhard, eds., 'Nationalismen in Europa. West- und Osteuropa im Vergleich' (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001), 44.

45 *Ibid.*, 31.

46 *Ibid.*, 38

47 Stephanie Zloch, 'Gibt es einen "osteuropäischen Nationalismus"? Anmerkungen zur Persistenz einer historischen Interpretationsfigur', in Miloš Řezník, Pavel Kolář, 'Historische Nationsforschung im geteilten Europa 1945–1989' (Köln, SH-Verlag, 2012), 51.

48 Christian Pletzing, Peter Oliver Loew, Thomas Serrier, 'Zwischen Enteignung und Aneignung: Geschichte und Geschichten in den "Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas"', in Christian Pletzing, Peter Oliver Loew, Thomas Serrier, eds., 'Wiedergewonnene Geschichte. Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas' (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 9.

generally stayed within the framework of the big European nations⁴⁹ and within their mental map of Europe⁵⁰ there remains a need for elaborated empirical historical comparisons at a regional and local level, also in less studied Western and East Central European areas. Some recent publications have called the supremacy of the 'communist versus capitalist rivalry in Cold War bordering' into question and demonstrate how all European political authorities had nationalising purposes in mind while designing policies for their borderlands.⁵¹

With much of the research on Europe throughout the 20th Century still being concentrated on smaller time periods, Europeanisation can also encourage us to search for continuities and changes throughout the longer 20th Century.⁵² Such an approach goes against the trend of seeing the emergence and functioning of an enlarging European Union as a teleological process, and provides us with the image of what Norman Davies has called a 'tidal' Europe, a Europe with an ever-changing shore and sea in terms of territory, as well as of political, economic and social ambitions.⁵³

It might also be appropriate, as well as more ambitious, as Ulrike von Hirschhausen and Kiran Klaus Patel argue, to utilise the concept of Europeanisation in the 20th Century 'not as a fact, but as a thesis to be tested'.⁵⁴ Europeanisation then is defined as 'a process (or processes) that happened' or 'a discourse which, by influencing the way in which actors have seen the world, has had an impact on the shape of the European 20th Century'.⁵⁵ In order to speak about

49 Jörg Seifarth, Etienne François, Bernhard Struck, 'Grenzen und Grenzräume: Erfahrungen und Konstruktionen', in Jörg Seifarth, Etienne François, Bernhard Struck, eds., 'Die Grenze als Raum: Erfahrung und Konstruktion' (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2007), 7–32.

50 Hans Lemberg, 'Grenzen und Minderheiten im östlichen Mitteleuropa – Genese und Wechselwirkungen', in Hans Lemberg, eds., 'Grenzen in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Aktuelle Forschungsprobleme' (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2000), 159–182.

51 Muriel Blaive, Libora Oates-Indruhová, 'Introduction: Border communities: micro-studies on everyday life, politics and memory in European Societies from 1945 to the present', *Nationalities Papers* 42, 2 (2014), 197.

52 Ulrike von Hirschhausen, Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Europeanization in History: An Introduction', in Martin Conway, Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., 'Europeanization in the Twentieth Century: Historical Approaches' (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.

53 Norman Davies, 'Europe: A History' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

54 Ulrike von Hirschhausen, Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Europeanization in History: An Introduction', in Martin Conway, Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., 'Europeanization in the Twentieth Century: Historical Approaches' (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.

55 *Ibid.*, 16.

Europeanisation, the authors find it essential to establish whether or not historical actors came to define the processes they experienced as European. In the case of the territorial changes Europe experienced as a result of international peace talks, it is hard to answer that question. At the decision tables, different ideas on how a peaceful Europe could look like played a role, but so did other, more nationally minded views. Rather than being claimed as a successful product of Europeanisation, the peace negotiation outcomes have always been subject to harsh critique from both people in favour of more Europeanisation and those wanting less.

By means of this edited volume, I came to search for the relationship between the polemicised Europeanising character of the peace conferences and the ways in which borderland children affected by the consequent border shifts affirmed, rejected or redefined their meaning. The late Tony Judt did not interpret the 20th Century primarily as a clash of various (whether democratic, fascist, or communist) ideologies, but saw it characterised by the rise of state involvement in all European countries.⁵⁶ Scholars' interest in researching state involvement in children together with the process of Europeanisation dates from more recently. The relationship between the state and the family with regards to child-rearing is often only discussed within a Western European context. Such an approach is either motivated by the fact that state involvement in Eastern and Southern Europe was patchy and thin on the ground for a long time, or because socialism is believed to have produced a particular type of family. Machteld Venken and Maren Röger pointed out, however, that it would be misleading to suggest that the divide in Europe regarding family values was due to the fact that communist authorities were only able to successfully imbue children with their ideology thanks to the reduced influence of the family in this part of Europe. The nuclear family, for example, was just as common in East and Central European societies as in Western ones.⁵⁷ Similarly, nationalising children was a phenomenon characterising all European political regimes, whether democratic, authoritarian or dictatorial.⁵⁸ Such an insight indicates that a research focus on a group

56 Tony Judt, Timothy Snyder, 'Thinking the Twentieth Century' (London: Vintage Books, 2013), 386.

57 Machteld Venken, Maren Röger, 'Growing Up in the Shadow of the Second World War: European Perspectives', in Maren Röger, Machteld Venken (eds.) 'Growing Up in the Shadow of the Second World War. European Perspectives', European Review of History – Revue européenne d'histoire, 22, 2 (2015), 206.

58 Klaus Schleicher, 'Nationalism in Education' (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993).

that nation-states considered to have been of pivotal importance has significant comparative potential.

An integrated approach

The case study carried out in this edited volume offered a selection of borderlands from both the Eastern and Western part of the European continent whose sovereignty switched as a consequence of international beliefs about the interdependency of safeguarding peace in Europe and changing its borders. I chose to use the overall concept of borderlands to embrace all of the German territories that were contested during the First and Second World Wars, and whose sovereignty shifted after those wars came to an end. The reader needs to keep in mind that, whereas some of these borderlands already had a long history of border shifting on the verge of the First World War I (such as Upper Silesia), other territorial entities were only called into being through the Treaty of Versailles (such as Eupen-Malmedy and the Memel region).

After the First World War, the complex negotiations about the shape of the new independent Polish state, which had previously been divided among the Habsburg, Prussian and Russian Empire, yielded to an international policy on the protection of minorities. The ideas of nationalists striving for the primacy of one religion, one culture, and one language clashed with the presence of the many inhabitants whose characteristics evidently varied. Poland was the first of a list of states in Central and Eastern Europe for which the acceptance of a minority treaty was made a condition for its recognition as a state on an international level. Whereas the Great Powers had already in the 19th Century required new independent states to guarantee religious rights, the League of Nations now stood for a guarantee of 'national' rights for whole minority groups.⁵⁹ In the interwar years, ethnic or linguistic minorities were to coexist within nation-states.⁶⁰ Although the *unmixing of populations*, as it was formulated in the Treaty of Lausanne (foreseeing the population exchange of borderland inhabitants living in Greece and Turkey) was only presented as an ultimate solution for the stabilization of peace in Europe, some practices in the European border regions of annexation already pointed out that minorities, and not nation-states, came to be seen as endangering the

59 Mark Mazower, 'Minorities and the League of Nations in Interwar Europe', *Daedalus* 126, 2 (1997), 51.

60 Hans Lemberg, 'Grenzen und Minderheiten im östlichen Mitteleuropa – Genese und Wechselwirkungen', in Hans Lemberg, eds., 'Grenzen in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Aktuelle Forschungsprobleme' (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2000), 168, 179.

stabilization of order.⁶¹ In 1919, France violated the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles by cleansing Alsace-Lorraine of about 150,000 inhabitants of German and Austrian descent, and in 1922, following the division of Upper Silesia, around 200,000 inhabitants opted to cross the border and settle in either the Polish or German part of the region instead.⁶²

Yet far from holding a universal character, the minority rights designed at French negotiation tables were notably paternalistic. Although it affected the majority of the minorities created by the border changes after World War I (i.e. those living in Central and Eastern Europe), Western European states did not have to adhere to any international supervision over the way they treated their minorities. The whole international set-up had therefore something of a civilisation mission for the Eastern part of the European continent, which turned out all the more problematic when one of these Western states, Germany, ostensibly started to include anti-Semitism into its state policies and refuted the national categorisation of its neighbours by aspiring to the unification of all the people it considered of German blood into one empire.

The way interwar European nationalisms affected policies for children in borderlands of annexation has already received some scholarly attention. Most noticeable in this respect is an international comparison of educational policies among non-dominant ethnic groups throughout Europe. Andreas Kazamias and others came to the conclusion that whereas various national authorities considered schools the main vehicle to integrate minorities and realise the homogeneous nation states they had in mind, the results of their efforts were at the very best only marginal, and often did not meet their objectives at all, either because minorities wanted these schools to play a role in their political emancipation, or because people appeared nationally indifferent.⁶³ Publications focusing on the

61 Philipp Ther, 'The Dark Side of Nation-States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe' (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 419; Hans Lemberg, 'Grenzen und Minderheiten im östlichen Mitteleuropa – Genese und Wechselwirkungen', in Hans Lemberg, eds., 'Grenzen in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Aktuelle Forschungsprobleme' (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2000), 169.

62 Philipp Ther, 'The Dark Side of Nation-States', 137, 144; For a comment on the failed implementation see Vladimir Solonari, 'Book Reviews 2015', *Slavic Review* 74, 2 (2015), 372.

63 Andreas Kazamias, Knut Eriksen, Robin Okey, Janusz Tomiak, 'Governments and the Education of Non-Dominant Ethnic Groups in Comparative Perspective', in Andreas Kazamias, Knut Eriksen, Robin Okey, Janusz Tomiak, eds., 'Schooling, educational policy and ethnic identity: Vol. 1: Comparative studies on governments and non-dominant ethnic groups in Europe, 1850–1940' (New York: New York University

education of one minority group within one border region serve to support the observation that borderland pupils were objects of nationalisation policies, who were predicted to homogenise their community and the mainland and ensure the stability of the national borders.⁶⁴ Recent historical research has engaged in a widening of aspects of children's life-worlds, such as leisure time.⁶⁵ Some researchers have even explored the extent to which children enrolled in borderland youth organisations absorbed nationalising policies and articulated them in their life practices as subjects.⁶⁶ The three contributions shedding light on the time period between the First and Second World Wars included in this edited volume need to be placed within this newest research trend.

In the first contribution of this volume, Maurer and Ripplinger looked at the situation of unfortunate children in the French-German borderlands during the first half of the 20th Century. They showed how the Alsace region functioned as a laboratory where intensive experiments were carried out concerning how orphans should be taken care of. At the centre of their analysis was the Strasbourg orphanage, which developed during the period when the city first belonged to France (1681–1870), and continued functioning after the city switched to German sovereignty (1870–1918), and later again to French rule (1919–1940). While

Press, 1991), 390, 410, 415. For the concept of national indifference see Tara Zahra, 'Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis', *Slavic Review* 69, 1 (2010), 93–119.

64 Ingo Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott! Die Deutsche Minderheit in Polen und ihr Schulwesen 1918–1939' (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2010); Carlo Lejeune, 'Tafel, Griffel, Rutenstock. 150 Jahre Eifeler Volksschulleben.' *E. Volksschule*: Warlich, 1989), 227–242; Erik Nørre, 'Nationalpolitik og skolebyggeri. Det hemmelige statstilstskud til gennemførelsen af folkeskoleloven i Sønderjylland 1937–1970', *Sønderjyske Årbøger* (2014), 235–287.

65 Nina Jacobsen, *Tysk nazistisk ungdomsarbejde i Nordslesvig 1933–1945*, *Sønderjyske Årbøger* (1996), 195–222.

66 Jürgen Zinnecker, 'Soziologie der Kindheit oder Sozialisation des Kindes? Überlegungen zu einem aktuellen Paradigmenstreit', in Hans Rudolf, Leu Michael-Sebastian Honig, Ursula Nissen, eds., 'Kinder und Kindheit. Soziokulturelle Muster – sozialisationstheoretische Perspektiven' (Weinheim und München: Juventa-Verlag, 1996), 31; Herbert Ruland, „Stets für das Deutschtum eingetreten“ oder „Wie aus Eupener 'Volkstumskämpfern' der Zwischenkriegszeit Bürger der Bundesrepublik Deutschland wurden“: Biographische Notizen zu Bernhard und Billy Bredohl, Josef Thielen und Mine Cremer-Thielen, in Christoph Brüll et al., eds., 'Eine ostbelgische „Stunde Null“? Eliten aus Eupen-Malmedy vor und nach 1944: Annalen des Symposiums im Staatsarchiv in Eupen am 15. September 2012' (Brüssel: Generalstaatsarchiv, 2012), 29.

comparing care for Alsatian orphans with the way it was organized in other places in both France and Germany, the authors revealed several specificities. Because French legislation about the secularism of childcare had been developed when the Alsace region belonged to the German Empire, when Alsace joined the French Republic, the orphanage was still managed by Catholic nuns (the Soeurs de la Charite de la Strasbourg). By the end of the 1920s, however, they had to step back and could only fulfil an assisting role comparable to those elsewhere in France. Overall, the authors found much similarity in the way German and French nationalists expressed their ideas, but detected the horizon of thinking regarding local caregivers and orphans to be mainly oriented towards what the authors call the *small Alsatian homeland*. Whereas Alsatian regional identities were strong enough to be fought for both by French and German nationalists, they had no real chance to take over sovereignty.⁶⁷

In the second text, Ruth Leiserowitz mapped out interwar child experiences in the Memel region, a piece of land that was part of Germany until the end of the First World War, after which it was granted autonomous status within the new independent Lithuanian state. The author's thorough search for ego documents of children enabled her to reconstruct the life-worlds of children. Her main conclusion is that whereas structures set up for children, such as schools and organised leisure time activities, initially allowed for dialogues across ethnic and nationalist lines, they became more separatist throughout the 1930s. Leiserowitz's analysis of Jewish children offered a good example of this. Stimulated by the Lithuanian government and attracted by economic opportunities in the port city of Memel (nowadays Klaipeda), Jewish settlers migrated to the border region in large numbers. Their children visited schools in German or Lithuanian, and parents made that decision based more on the availability of schools in their vicinity than on their political preferences. Only in 1936, when national socialist ideology had begun to penetrate school rhetoric, was it felt necessary to set up a private Jewish primary school. Children in cities, moreover, were much less exposed to such intensified political polarisation than children living in the countryside, because school authorities kept their pupils away from political hot topics and prevented secondary schools from becoming bastions of nationalist indoctrination.

Over a much greater timespan (1918–1970), Julien Fuchs demonstrated how the idea of a nation was constructed within Alsatian youth movements. The author delineated their evolution in five periods of time, thereby offering

67 Philipp Ther, 'Zwischenräume', XXI.

landmarks of development that, due to regional specificities, differ from those characterising youth movements in the rest of France and Germany. In all, Alsatian youth movements gradually moved closer to the French State over the years. Fuchs' contribution shows that the regionally specific way in which Alsatian youth movements operated did not yield to the establishment of particularisms. The deeply interwoven patriotic, religious and political stakes did not prevent the training of numerous trade union leaders, representatives of Youth and Sport authorities, and high-ranking civil servants for the French State.

The Third Reich eventually gobbled up the ring of lands lying around its borders. The first two borderlands of annexation joined the Third Reich during what have since been called peaceful annexations, although the overwhelming German military pressure exerted should leave us in no doubt about how 'peaceful' they were. Together with the Sudetenland, the Hlučín territory was annexed in September 1938 as a result of the Munich Agreement. The annexation of the Memel region followed in March 1939, a few days after German troops had marched into Prague and had installed the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact from August 1939 lay at the basis of the German intervention in Poland on 1 September, starting the Second World War. As a result, the Western borderlands of Poland were annexed to the Third Reich and German authorities installed a General Government on the rest of what had been Polish territory. Germany's expansion to the West followed in May and June of the year 1940, when the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and a big part of France were invaded, and the borderlands Eupen-Malmedy and Alsace-Lorraine were annexed. Unlike the other regions Germany lost after World War I, North Schleswig was never re-annexed by the Third Reich during the Second World War, although it was occupied between 1940 and 1945. It has been argued Nazi ideology prevented annexation, because Danish citizens were considered equally Aryan and the local inhabitants of North Schleswig were supposed to facilitate contact making between Danes and Germans.⁶⁸ It lasted until the autumn of 1944 when Allied forces reached the Alsace and the northern part of the Eupen-Malmedy region. The southern part of the latter region, including the city of Sankt-Vith, became the battlefield for Hitler's Last Offensive in the Winter of 1944–45. In the East, the Red Army reached the Memel region in the beginning

68 Steffen Werther, 'An Unimaginable Community: The SS Idea of a 'Greater Germanic Reich' and the German Minority in Denmark', in Norbert Götz, 'The Sea of Identities: A Century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class, and Gender' (Huddinge: Södertörn University, 2014), 85–108.

of 1945, and marched on to the pre-war Polish borderlands of annexation within a couple of weeks. The Hlučín region, however, remained annexed until the end of the Second World War in May 1945.

We possess little comparative insights on the way the Second World War affected the European borderlands of annexation. The first systematic comparison of the persecution of Jews concluded that Nazi anti-Semitic policies were not simply implemented from above, but were adjusted to the local contexts of the borderlands, the international situation, and the changing interests of Nazi authorities themselves.⁶⁹ With reference to the war situation of children in borderlands, most attention has been paid to the Slavic and Jewish children who were most likely to be killed, Germanised or forced into child labour.⁷⁰ Other researchers, however, showed that the division lines Nazi war policies drew between racial groups (often privileging children from the West above those coming from the East) were often obscure and reached the widest form of elasticity in borderlands. Both in the Alsace and in East Upper Silesia, Ryszard Kaczmarek argued, nationalist policies aimed to include many borderland inhabitants into the German *Volksgemeinschaft*. The means to achieve this goal, however, were different. Whereas in the Alsace, borderland inhabitants could easily receive German citizenship, in the annexed territories of former Poland, such citizenship was only granted after a clear examination of the individual's past and present activities. Interestingly, in both regions, youngsters often received German citizenship earlier than their parents, because it facilitated their enrolment in the German army.⁷¹ Hagen Stöckmann displayed a transnational history on German educational experiments in borderlands of annexation where pupils of what were considered inferior races were given a genuine German education in order to find out whether it could turn

69 Jörg Osterloh, Wolf Gruner, 'Einleitung', in Jörg Osterloh, Wolf Gruner, eds., 'Das "Großdeutsche Reich" und die Juden. Nationalsozialistische Verfolgung in den "angegliederten" Gebieten' (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2010), 10.

70 Ines Hopfer, 'Geraubte Identität: die gewaltsame "Eindeutschung" von polnischen Kindern in der NS-Zeit' (Wien: Böhlau, 2010); Dieter Steinert, 'Deportation und Zwangsarbeit. Polnische und sowjetische Kinder im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland und im besetzten Osteuropa 1939–1945' (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2013).

71 Ryszard Kaczmarek, 'Zwischen Regionalismus, Autonomismus und Separatismus. Das Elsass und Oberschlesien, 1871 bis 1945', in Christian Pletzing, Peter Oliver Loew, Thomas Serrier, eds., 'Wiedergewonnene Geschichte. Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas' (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 183.

them into valuable members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.⁷² Ruth Leiserowitz, lastly, pointed to both the changeability of nationalist policies towards *Wolfskinder*, German orphans who during and shortly after the war wandered around in Lithuania, the Memel region, and Kaliningrad, before migrating abroad, and the way these children gave meaning to their experiences later in life.⁷³

Once the Second World War was over, nation-states throughout Europe considered the annexations of their interwar territories to have been illegal and re-annexed their borderlands. The territories that shifted back and forward in the 1930s and 1940s remained more or less the same, except from in Poland. Whereas interwar Poland had included most of the Prussian province of Posen, most of the province of West Prussia, the east part of Upper Silesia and a small area of East Prussia, as a result of the international conference in Potsdam in 1945, its successor also incorporated East Prussia, the rest of Silesia, Pomerania, East Brandenburg and the city of Gdańsk. Contrary to the situation after World War I, the prevailing conviction during international peace negotiations taking place after the Second World War, was that an ethnically clean nation-state was deemed desirable, with minorities being considered 'a cause of conflict per se'.⁷⁴ As a result, the massive number of about 16 million people in Eastern Europe were asked to leave or were deported between 1944 and 1949 (compared to 2.8 million people between 1912 and 1925).⁷⁵ About 7.5 million Germans, for example, left, fled or were expelled from the territories that were annexed to Poland in 1945. About 6.5 million Polish citizens settled in these territories between 1944 and 1949.⁷⁶ In

72 Hagen Stöckmann, 'Being educated or being selected? Processes and dynamics of childrens' education in schools for 'ethnic Germans' and 'national political institutes of education' between centre and periphery', Conference Paper, 'Growing Up in 20th Century European Borderlands' (Vienna: University of Vienna, 2015).

73 Ruth Leiserowitz, 'Von Ostpreussen nach Kyritz: Wolfskinder auf dem Weg nach Brandenburg' (Potsdam: Brandenburgische Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2003).

74 Hans Lemberg, 'Grenzen und Minderheiten im östlichen Mitteleuropa – Genese und Wechselwirkungen', in Hans Lemberg eds., 'Grenzen in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Aktuelle Forschungsprobleme' (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2000), 179.

75 Philipp Ther, 'The Dark Side of Nation-States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe' (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 416.

76 Witold Sienkiewicz, Grzegorz Hryciuk, 'Wysiedlenia wypędzenia i ucieczki 1939–1959' (Warszawa 2008).

the Hlučín region, in addition, 2,500 local inhabitants lost the rights to the land they had previously bought.⁷⁷

Danish, Belgian and French authorities decided to handle postwar questions of war criminality within their systems of legal principles, rather than opting for deportation, but it could be asked whether the consequences were often not similar for the people experiencing them. In the case of Eupen-Malmedy for example, Belgian courts annulled the Belgian citizenship of 1,325 male citizens, along with their families, who saw no reason to stay and left, mostly for occupied Germany.⁷⁸ One should also not forget that its inhabitants were better informed about the imminent arrival of the U.S. army, than many inhabitants in Central and Eastern Europe were regarding the arrival of the Red Army. As locals in Eupen-Malmedy who had been cooperating with the Nazi regime had had more time to leave, less were left to be condemned in the early postwar period.

The obsession with ethnically pure nation-states diminished the ambitions of supervision over the treatment of non-dominant groups on an international level. The successor of the League of Nations, the United Nations, focused on individual freedoms instead of on rights for what had in the interwar years been called minorities.⁷⁹ This change put an end to the special conditions minorities in Eastern Europe had enjoyed, and foresaw a one-dimensional integration of the borderlands of annexation within their nation-states. The Memel region, East Upper Silesia and the Free City of Danzig all lost the autonomous status they had held during the interwar years. The international approach towards minorities was enhanced by the geopolitical set-up that would dominate European politics over the next 40 years. As conflicts over minorities between nation-states operating either before or behind the Iron Curtain threatened to erode the internal political stability of the bloc during the Cold War, they were brought to a halt. The reaction to the protests in the Polish border city Poznań in 1956, for example, made it very clear for Warsaw Pact countries that the acceptance of Soviet hegemony was something they needed to live with.

We possess less insights into the past life-worlds of children in European borderlands of annexation for the period after the Second World War than for the interwar period, because relevant archived policy documents are often not yet accessible for historical research and the people who experienced the 1940s

77 René Petráš, 'Zánik meziválečného systému práv menšin v poválečné ČSR', in Václav Houžvička, 'Odsun Němcůz Československa 65 let poté' (Brno: CDK, 2012), 97–109.

78 Carlo Lejeune, 'Die Säuberung, Bd. 2: Hysterie, Wiedereingliederung, Assimilierung (1945–1952)' (Büllingen: Lexis-Verlag, 2007), 83–85.

79 Mazower, 'Minorities' 59.

and 1950s as children are only now coming into the crosshairs of oral historians. Machteld Venken discovered similar nationalising mechanisms at work in the purification of the teaching profession in Eupen-Malmedy and Upper Silesia in the early years after the Second World War.⁸⁰ As it turns out, the making of politically reliable borderland inhabitants was not 'a unique communist phenomenon'.⁸¹ In many borderlands of annexation, researchers have recently started to record the stories of ordinary borderland inhabitants.⁸² Based on interviews with family members of different ages, the sociologist Helena Kubátová, for example, recently researched changes in the way of life of borderland inhabitants in the Hlučín region over the last 60 years. She discovered modernisation processes influenced the lives of borderland children later than elsewhere in Czechoslovakia because the local population devoted more time to their families and the practice of their religion.⁸³ The three contributions this edited volume offers about the post-Second World War period drew on archival material not previously subjected to historical interpretation, and whether or not in combination with newly created oral interviews, shed light on various aspects of children's past life-worlds.

Beata Halicka investigated the situation of children in the Western borderlands the Polish state gained after the Second World War. As a result of forced migration and, in many instances, the almost complete exchange of populations, this region experienced a significant social transformation. Halicka used the personal memoirs settlers sent in for a writing competition organised in the late 1950s in order to unravel childhood memories on family life and school experiences, as well as the mechanisms lying behind the construction of these memories. Despite the fact that the collection only enables us to get to know the viewpoints of settler borderland inhabitants, and not, for example, about the children whose families

80 Machteld Venken, 'Nationalization Campaigns and Teachers' Life Paths in Belgian-German and Polish-German Border Regions (1939–1956)', *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 42, 2 (2014), 223–241.

81 Blaive, Oates-Indruchová, 196.

82 Reiner Mathieu, 'Knechte: Einblicke in den Alltag ostbelgischer Jungmänner im 20. Jahrhundert' (Eupen: Grenz-Echo Verlag, 2010); Reiner Mathieu, 'In Stellung: Einblicke in das Leben ostbelgischer Dienstmädchen im 20. Jahrhundert' (Eupen: Grenz-Echo Verlag, 2008); Reiner Mathieu, 'Wir durften studieren' (Eupen: Grenz-Echo Verlag, 2014); Klaus-Dieter Klauser, Carlo Lejeune, 'Die Säuberung. Band 3: Verdrängte Erinnerungen – 340 Zeitzeugen berichten' (Büllingen: Lexis Verlag, 2008).

83 Helena Kubátová a kol., 'Mezigenerační proměny způsobu života na Hlučínsku' (Praha: SLON, 2015), 332.

had inhabited these borderlands for a longer time, it offered a unique insight into the way children experienced harsh living conditions, dealt with wartime memories and longed for a lost homeland.

Tobias Haimin Wung-Sung analysed how what he called North Schleswig German identities were negotiated and manifested in children's education, from the end of the Second World War until 1970. The most revealing insight is that North Schleswig's *Sonderweg* during World War II, as it was the only territory of the European borderlands of annexation which was occupied instead of annexed, did not yield to a significantly different Danish policy once the Second World War was over. Just like in the border regions that had been annexed, the new regime sought ways to compensate for the war damage. In North Schleswig, German private school buildings were confiscated and education in German was banned. Wung-Sung showed how local inhabitants redefined their identifications primarily by means of their visions on primary school teaching. Because speaking German was regarded as vital for the collective's survival, major efforts were invested in enabling and proliferating private teaching in German again from the 1950s onwards. Gradually, binary views on national identities were replaced by an inclusive stance combining regionalism with legal loyalty to Denmark and a cultural connection with Germany.

The contribution of Andreas Fickers brings us to the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, when the cultural emancipation of Belgium's German speaking border inhabitants was negotiated. His piece goes against the current dominant belief in the region that autonomy was achieved through political negotiations, and argues that the reason for the radicalisation of the autonomy debate can be found in the generational conflict between those who experienced the Second World War as children and those born during or shortly afterwards. The latter grew up in an atmosphere of political lethargy and only became aware of their political potential when they were called to take up positions in the debate between Flemish and Walloon students about the linguistic profile of the Catholic University of Leuven. That experience lay at the basis of the negotiations about the region's autonomy this younger generation had with older political representatives. In the end, Fickers argued, the postwar children turn out to have been more of a transition generation characterised by genealogical tensions than the founding generation of autonomy they today profess themselves to have been.

Borderland Studies Meets Child Studies

Taken together, the contributions first and foremost show the complexity of nationalisation within various, previously often undiscovered, spheres of borderland children's lives. In the various empirical contributions to this volume, one can detect nationalist practices in their purest form. Christine Maurer and Gabrielle Ripplinger pointed to the crucial importance German nationalists bestowed upon social child policy in the Alsace region. At the beginning of the 20th Century, German architects designed a pompous modernist building for Strasbourgian orphans that could hardly remain unnoticed by their French neighbours across the border as a demonstrative landmark of progressive hygienist beliefs. Unfortunate Alsatian orphans came to live in the most progressive buildings in their region, one of the first buildings with well-equipped bathrooms, running water and showers. Germany brought the best it had on offer to the borderlands and used social child policy as a weapon in the symbolic battle of modernity. Halicka revealed how unaccompanied German-speaking children lost out as a result of flight, expulsion and deportation, finding themselves in the borderlands that had just become Polish territory, experienced a lack of human compassion due to scarce resources being distributed along national lines. While Polish children had a greater chance to receive material support and medical aid, German children were charged with the sins of their parents. The way societal difference was practiced in the early period after the Second World War reached an extreme in the treatment of children⁸⁴, and the mixed population in Polish Western borderlands makes it easier for historians to observe the outcomes of such practices. At the same time, as Maurer and Ripplinger observed, while researching the practices of caregivers operating within the Strasbourg orphanage, they found very little on nationalist ideology. As discussed above, non-national practices also held sway in the way children from borderlands of annexation approached primary schooling.

The contributions in this edited volume deepened our insights into the policies nationalists developed for borderland children after both World Wars. After the First World War, conceptions of civil versus ethnic nationalism were decisive for organising collective rights as minorities in the East of the European continent, but not in the West. Interwar nationalist educational policies in European

84 Machteld Venken, Maren Röger, 'Growing Up in the Shadow of the Second World war. European Perspectives. Introduction', in: Maren Röger, Machteld Venken. *Growing Up in the Shadow of the Second World War. European Perspectives*. Special Issue of: European Review of History – Revue européenne d'histoire 22 (2/2015), 199–220.

borderlands of annexation, however, did not reflect the dichotomous spatial way of thinking about nationalism that had prevailed at French negotiation tables in 1919. Evaluating the way nationalists allowed German-speaking inhabitants to develop their own activities in, *inter alia*, European borderlands of annexation, Ingo Eser placed Polish nationalists in between 'softer' Danish and 'harsher' French nationalists.⁸⁵ The first evidence about the youth organisations operating in European borderlands of annexation provided in this edited volume serves to support that insight. Julien Fuchs found Alsatian youth movements on the whole to be Francophile and characterized pro-German movements as marginal, politicised and separatist. Ruth Leiserowitz revealed that authorities required youth organisations in the Memel region to hold profiles different to those in the rest of Lithuania after the coup d'état of 1926. Despite being very similar to their Lithuanian counterparts, sport clubs in the Memel region were not allowed to speak out on political matters. Although the Lithuanian Ministry of Education also forbade some political youth organisations to operate in Lithuania's heartland in 1930, other than in the Memel region, this measure was only initiated on the basis of concrete experiences of political provocation. In contrast, in the Eupen-Malmedy region, North Schleswig and the Polish interwar borderlands of annexation, youth organisations of German minorities appeared to have had more freedom to develop a regional (whether politicised or not) profile.⁸⁶ Taken together, these insights revealed that the openness of youth organisations towards people with different national, ethnic or religious affiliations was not primarily defined by their territorial location in either the East or the West of Europe.

The authors in this edited volume also provided evidence that widens our knowledge about the characteristics of nationalist education in borderlands after the Second World War, when the recipe to guarantee peace on the European continent was believed to lie in a combination of putting borders in place and creating a more homogeneous population within the borders of nation-states. This edited volume offered insights into the consequences that recipe entailed

85 Eser, 666.

86 Katja Schenk, 'Les mouvements de jeunesse germanophiles dans le canton d'Eupen pendant l'Entre deux-guerres', Thesis, Université de Liège, 1997; Peter Nasarski, 'Deutsche Jugendbewegung und Jugendarbeit in Polen: 1919–1939' (Würzburg: Holzner, 1957); Eric Wiesemes, 'Die Organisation "Hitlerjugend" im Gebiet von Malmedy-St. Vith 1940–1944' (St. Vith: Zwischen Venn und Scheifel, 2000); Nina Jacobsen, 'Tysk nazistisk ungdomsarbejde i Nordslesvig 1933–1945', *Sønderjyske Årbøger* (1996), 195–222.

for children attending schools in borderlands of annexation. Beata Halicka delivered the clearest example of the importance borderland inhabitants attached to their schools. In the devastated lands that had just joined Poland, setting up schools was a spontaneous social activity lying at the very basis of the process of rebuilding community life. Only when state representatives took over control were schools turned into tools for nationalisation. As Andreas Fickers and Tobias Haimin Wung-Sung showed in this edited volume, school representatives in Eupen-Malmedy and North Schleswig had similar aims. At the same time, however, the effect of such attempts were limited because nationalist policies were either not addressed towards the specific needs of borderland children, or children appeared more influenced by the lifestyle of their parents who were still coming to terms with the legacy of the war. Wung-Sung therefore advocated opening up the nation-central approach research on education tends to take. Without looking at the family context of the borderland pupils in North Schleswig, he argued, one cannot understand the reasons for the failure of the Danish school system's attempt to enhance pupils' integration into society after the Second World War. Even within the Danish language association, it became clear that the challenge did not primarily lie in making children from German-minded homes enjoy Danish schools, but in building trust with many of the children's parents.

These insights display continuities with what Andreas Kazamias and others revealed about the educational policies developed for non-dominant groups in Europe in the interwar years. As was the case before the Second World War, such policies were equally nationalistic in Western and Eastern Europe, and non-dominant groups all over the European continent appeared reluctant to accept them, if they did at all. Two important observations, however, mark significant differences between the two time periods. The requirements of nationalists with regards to children's language teaching were harsher after the Second World War, than they had been in the interwar years. In the late 1940s, German was banned from or reduced to a minimum in school curricula in all European borderlands of annexation.⁸⁷ The idea prevailing by that time that non-dominant groups, instead of nation-states themselves, were endangering the stabilisation of peace and order in Europe, found a very clear articulation in school politics. In addition, borderland children made use of the chances offered by the democratisation of secondary education after the Second World

87 Piotr Madajczyk, 'Niemcy polscy 1944–1989' (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2001), 32; Ursel Schmitz, 'Zur bildungspolitischen Entwicklung des Sprachenproblems in den belgischen Ostkantonen seit 1945' (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993).

War later than children in other regions of their countries.⁸⁸ They often opted only to fulfil minimal educational requirements, which contributed to the fact their regions remained for much longer, as Andreas Fickers formulated it in this volume, 'educational deserts'.

Reading the contributions together, I came to develop a new hypothesis. With his analysis of the Danish coloured caps, which the first pupils of the reopened secondary schools for German speakers in North Schleswig wore on their graduation ceremony in the early 1960s, Tobias Haimin Wung-Sung showed how youngsters who were supposed to act as the German-speaking new elite no longer shared the isolationist national convictions of their parents. Adopting a Danish tradition did not threaten their identity, but was considered an asset in functioning in a border region where different cultural spheres meet. In his analysis of Alsatian youth movements, Julien Fuchs explained how Claude Marx, a member of an Alsatian youth organization, offered a useful solution for youth organisations in the entire French country to break through the crisis they were experiencing at the end of the 1950s, when members found their organisations too institutionalized and too much controlled by adults. Claude Marx came up with the idea to install youth councils that based their working on the views of young people and allowed for cooperation beyond the existing institutional set-up. First tried out in the Alsace, the model of youth councils spread throughout the country in the following five years. That the solution was proposed by an Alsatian troop leader does not come as a surprise. While in exile in the centre of France during the Second World War, Alsatian youth movements had learned to put aside their differences in order to be able to cultivate Alsatian solidarity and to rescue Jews. Although successful, youth councils became less popular after the French Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports established a centralised system promoting direct intervention in 1966.

Andreas Fickers analysed how student protests at Belgium's biggest university in 1968 provoked the politicisation of the students from the Belgian Eastern borderlands, who were later able to negotiate a form of cultural autonomy fitting within the framework of the dismantling Belgian nation-state. Beata Halicka cited the memoir of a little girl, Izabella Grdeří, who after having moved from the eastern borderlands Poland had just lost, settled in the Western territories Poland had just gained. Her parents kept on longing for their lost homeland and did not

88 Andrzej Sakson, 'Stosunki narodowosciowe na Warmii i Mazurach 1945–1997' (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1998), 261; Helena Kubátová a kol., 'Mezigenerační proměny způsobu života na Hlučínsku' (Praha: SLON, 2015), 331.

develop the social skills that would have enabled them to live comfortably. Izabella, on the other hand, did not have such a strong attachment to the place where she was born, and as a result found it easier to find her place in society. When she and her brother later started to work, they could even provide not only themselves but also their parents with the financial means to improve their living conditions.

These are all examples of creative solutions borderland children worked out in active negotiation with nationalists from the heartland in order to solve the problems they experienced in their daily lives. These practices emerged after borderland children had engaged with nationalist ideas, and offered solutions that could be integrated within the policies of the nation-states the children inhabited. Whether or not their solutions were integrated in policies depended on the degree of openness nation-states displayed. Both in the Polish Western borderlands and in the Hlučín region, for example, such openness was noticed already in the early aftermath of the Second World War, where new communist regimes sought to encourage the social advance of children with a peasant or blue-collar working background. Beata Halicka made clear that that idea yielded its most concrete results among children who had come to settle in these borderlands, since, deprived of material belongings, they found it relatively easy to switch their attachment from goods to knowledge and skills. The youth councils developed in the Alsace provided the answer to the over-institutionalised youth culture in France in the 1960s, until the Ministry made clear its ambition to play a central role in organising the leisure time of French youth in 1966. Only four years later, in contrast, did the Belgian nation-state witness the first state reforms in response to the Flemish demand for cultural autonomy. A Belgian nation-state slowly falling apart had more opportunities to handle the demands of its Eastern borderland youngsters for an increase of their autonomy in 1973 than the French nation-state had in 1966.

The fact that the creative solutions of borderland children to the problems they came to define for themselves in their environments appeared in both the Eastern and Western European borderlands of annexation ought to prompt us to rethink the obvious explanations we have been given. Perhaps communist callings for social advance did not prove decisive, but were in fact only an additional factor in bringing about such practices in the East, a factor that caused them to appear earlier than in the Western borderlands of annexation witnessing a continuation of liberal political ideology. And perhaps the cause for the appearance of such creative practices in Western borderlands of annexation cannot be reduced to the bilateral agreements nation-states signed with Western Germany, such as the Belgian-German bilateral cultural agreement from 1956, influenced by the idea of political supranationalism the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)

had been emulating since the early 1950s, and the Copenhagen Declaration from 1958 enabling West Germany's entrance into NATO.⁸⁹ What the initiators of these creative practices held in common was that their home grounds had shifted as a result of international decisions concerning the safeguarding of peace in Europe. The kind of Europeanisation peace negotiators had in mind after the Second World War, implying the one-way integration of non-dominant groups within their nation-states, also may as well have been spontaneously supported by borderland children through some of their practices.

The authors of the empirical studies offered in this edited volume all point to differences in opinion between parents and their children, and, notwithstanding the actual age of the historical actors, put a decisive factor for the emergence of their creative practices in demography. This may not come as a surprise, as the children found themselves at the centre of nationalist interests in political programs about the integration of their borderland of annexation into the nation-state. Since their practices offered specific responses to local circumstances, and could be noticed when nation-states provided the openness to pay attention to them, an attempt to put borderland children into more precise age categories may fail to discover these practices in the first place, and certainly does not enable us to compare them throughout 20th Century Europe.

Although coming up with solutional practices seemed more common after the Second World War than before, only more diachronic research can shed light on what, in Julien Fuchs's study, appears to be the tidal rhythm of their emergence and disappearance over time. Albeit youth councils did not receive French political support after 1966, in the years between the First and Second World Wars, Alsatian youth hostels were needed in order to give the French political ideal of pacifism a concrete location. Opposing the militarist Republican doctrine from before the First World War, this ideal was a political goal that intended to increase cohesion in interwar French society. As a matter of fact, the first French youth hostels arose in the 1930s in the Alsace region and were inspired by the German youth hostel movement, which enjoyed a much longer tradition. The Alsatian youth hostels provided the place where German and French youngsters could meet and express their antimilitarist convictions. In this way, the borderland enabled youngsters to contribute considerably to the dissemination of the French political ideal of pacifism.

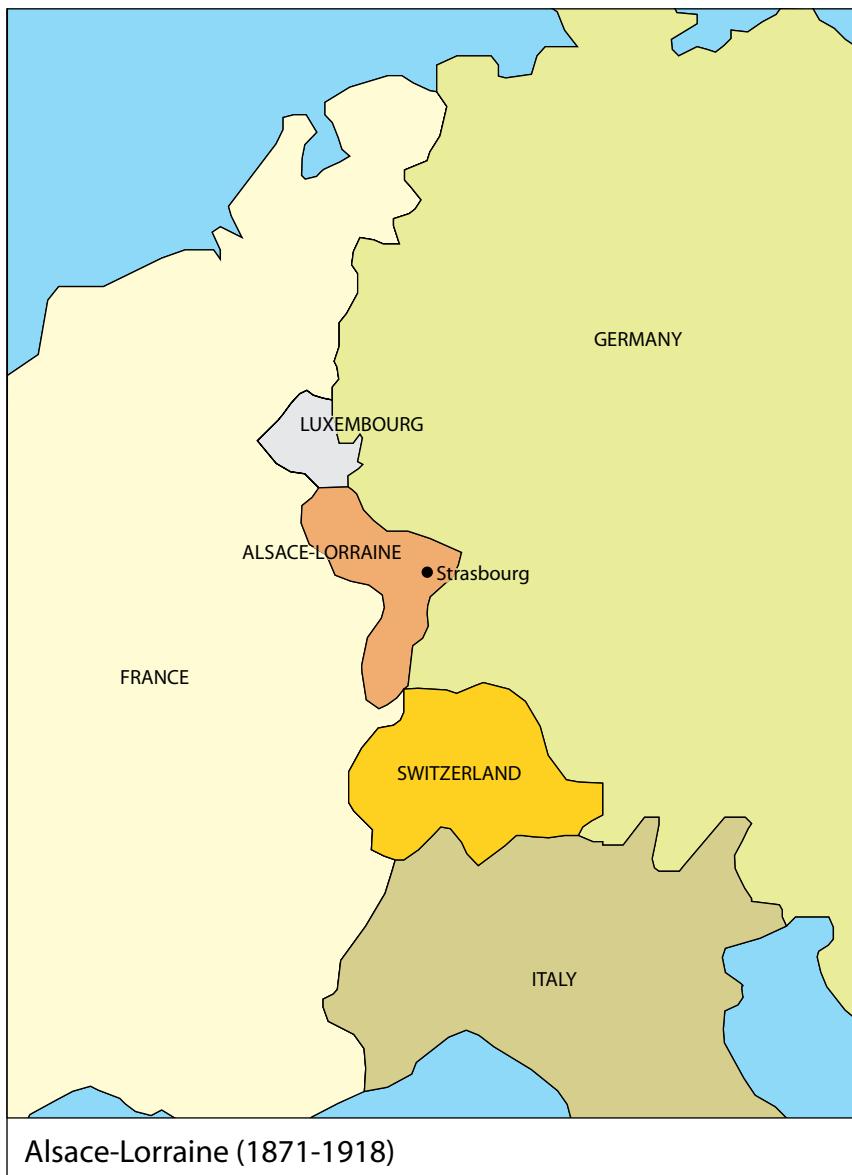
⁸⁹ Carlo Lejeune, 'Die deutsch-belgischen Kulturbeziehungen 1925–1980' (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 1992), 322; Karl Christian Lammers, 'Living Next Door to Germany: Denmark and the German Problem', *Contemporary European History*, 15, 4 (2006), 453–72.

I have been granting much more attention to what I call the creative solutional practices of borderland children than the authors of single chapters in this edited volume, not because they were more numerous or more important than the nationalist and non-nationalist practices the authors often foregrounded, but in order to risk venturing beyond a dichotomous dialectic and to present borderland children as historical actors capable of producing various kinds of practices in a place where meaning remained contested.

What ultimately did the case-study on children's past in European borderlands of annexation tell us about Europeanisation? It revealed that where children from borderlands of annexation grew up, either in the East or in the West of the European continent, was not a decisive factor in the practices they developed. It also demonstrated prevailing continuities in the characteristics of their practices between the interwar period and the period after the Second World War. How then, finally, to answer the question concerning Europeanisation? What is the relationship between the polemicised Europeanising character of the peace conferences following both World Wars and the practices of children inhabiting European borderlands of annexation? Thanks to a comparative reading of the chapters in this book, I can hypothesise that children, through some of their practices, put themselves to the fore in contributing to a more stable, peaceful Europe. And yet, although borderland children offered creative and context specific solutions to the way international order had been established in Europe, they never referred to their practices as Europeanising. Peace negotiators held intense discussions about Europeanisation, and the various European borderlands of annexation called into being as a result of these discussions embodied the contradictions that had been lying at the heart of their debates. Borderland children, however, often saw the world through local glasses while solving such contradictions through verbal or non-verbal practices that helped to integrate their borderlands of annexation into their nation-states, and vice versa. Still, we can detect a 'similar process' in the way their practices 'impacted the shape of the European 20th Century', and here we are back at von Hirschhausen and Patel's definition of Europeanisation. Afraid to 'succumb to an essentialist, normative and selective view of Europeanisation', they proposed that historians use the term Europeanisation only if historical actors used it at the time.⁹⁰ But in the light of the findings presented in this edited volume, that proposition appears to be too rigidly based on a traditional assumption

90 Ulrike von Hirschhausen, Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Europeanization in History: An Introduction', in Martin Conway, Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., 'Europeanization in the Twentieth Century: Historical Approaches' (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2, 10.

of what constitutes a historical agent, i.e. a rational person able to exert power over the word. The agency borderland children presented in this volume should encourage us to broaden that definition so as to include those whose actions, in a variety of local settings, contributed to making Europe more socially cohesive and thereby unwittingly furthered the cause of Europeanisation. Since the first evidence gathered in this edited volume is of a necessarily preliminary character, there is a need for further development and elaboration of this hypothesis in future research.



Map 2: Alsace-Lorraine 1871-1918.