A Framework of Comparison

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With the development of border studies as an interdisciplinary field in the post-Cold War era, a concomitant desire to provide a grand theory arose.[1] However, the conceptual and contextual burdens such a work entails have discouraged most scholars from doing so.[2] Anssi Paasi remarked: 'It remains a challenge for the imagination of the researcher to conceptualise and study empirically contextually manifested practices that may have their origins on diverging spatial scales and bring together events and processes from these.'[3] Most of the conceptualisation and theorisation within border studies has taken place without the involvement of historians, despite the obvious need for a historicisation of the questions being addressed.[4] Moreover, it is precisely because borders and borderlands are historically contingent processes, and historical comparative borderlands studies require a thorough reconstruction of the context, that the latter are rarely carried out.[5]

This book's analysis of the way in which borderland pupils were taught languages in interwar primary schools uses a newly developed framework of comparison. An inspiring template was found in Nenad Stefanov's detailed investigation of how a late Ottoman province turned into a divided space along the interwar Bulgarian-Yugoslav border by means of the three analytical axes of multiple loyalties, phantom borders, and micro/local history.[6] This book significantly enriches this framework with insights from human geography, political science and border studies. The three analytical axes are called: borders and human territoriality, power and multiple loyalties, and microhistory within a multilayered context.

Borders and Human Territoriality

Since the nation-state has long been perceived as being 'a natural power container, clearly demarcated and situated in measured space', individual

nation-states were obvious units of historical research, and concepts of nationalisms the most common analytical tools at hand.[7] Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, studies of borderlands on the European continent were often carried out in order to support nationalist claims. Within interwar Germany and the new Polish state, for example, such research was used to underpin political ideologies.[8] In the period after the Second World War, such claims were made by the inhabitants from interwar Polish and Belgian borderlands who settled in (mostly Western) Germany.[9] By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, space, which had been functioning in the background of most historical analyses, began to be foregrounded: 'Rather than assuming that space exists independently of humans and that historical processes unfold within it as a closed vessel and are even predetermined by it, present-day theorists conceive of it as a product of human agency and perception, as both the medium and presupposition for sociability and historicity.'[10] An understanding of space as 'a social, political and cultural product' invites us to approach borderlands as flexible and historically changing phenomena.[11] What then becomes visible is that 'all space created through economic, social, cultural or political movements and interactions – and this applies even to the nation-state itself – is "transient space", in the sense that it is meaningful for historical actors only in relation to a specific set of perceptions, interests and strategies, and in a given temporal context'.[12]

In order to facilitate a deconstructive stance on space, a distinction is made throughout the book between the concepts of state border lines, borders, borderlands and border regions. Laura Di Fiore referred to a state border line as 'a line dividing two states conceived as the fixed layout, traced by state agents, through diplomatic agreements, between two territorial, political entities'.[13] State border lines are not static. Thomas Nail, for example, compared state border lines to 'motors' that constantly need to be 'maintained, reproduced, refuelled, defended, started up, paid for, repaired and so on', and eventually 'leak'.[14]

A border is here conceived as the spatial effect generated through the drawing of a state border line. A border reveals how division is manifested within social space through multiple and recurring interactions between state agents and local inhabitants at different levels of decision-making, such as the regional, national, international, transnational and supranational levels. When Henk van Houtum called a border 'a verb', he intended to bring the question of how a border is made to the centre of attention, and to encourage research into the dynamics of border processes as brought about and experienced by borderland inhabitants.[15] In this book, for example, it will be shown how the recruitment of pupils in borderland primary schools in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of

Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy became a crucial way of making the border at certain moments during the interwar period.

In this book, the concept of borderlands refers to pieces of land where sovereignty changed hands over the course of time, that Germany lost following the Treaty of Versailles and switched to either Polish or Belgian state sovereignty: Polish Upper Silesia and the border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Polish Upper Silesia corresponds to the province of Silesia (Województwo Śląskie), as it was called in Poland at the time. The border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy referred to in this book are identical to the administrative entity of Eupen-Malmedy in which they were gathered in 1920; after the dissolution of Eupen-Malmedy in the second half of the 1920s, this area was included in the Belgian province of Liège. The term borderlands does not refer to pieces of land finding themselves on opposite sides of one state border at the same time, which is the most common definition.[16] Given the fact that Germany never abandoned its aspiration to regain the pieces of land it had ceded following the First World War, the pieces of land in this book match this definition: 'A borderland is both a place and a historiographic methodology, although historians often combine the two uses. A borderland, in its loosest definition, is a place where two entities (usually nations or societies) border each other. As a methodology, borderlands studies question what happens when distinct societies rub against each other or contest lands in between.'[17]

Moreover, bordering also has a temporal dimension. Borderlands have already been referred to as palimpsests: manuscripts 'on which two or more successive texts have been written, each one being erased to make room for the next'.[18] Whereas the erasure can offer us a picture of the past as rupture, a group of mainly German historians has preferred to understand it as an activity of layering well captured by the concept of phantom borders. Phantom borders are 'earlier, most commonly political borders or territorial structures that, after they were dissolved, continued to structure the space'.[19] The concept of phantom borders allows us to look at how, after a switch of state sovereignty, certain structures, discourses or practices from the past can reappear, be reassembled, or lost through human activities. The search for what remains in new and changing situational contexts concentrates on the way in which historical actors gave meaning to a new geographic-political order. Borders are thus approached as complex historically contingent processes, and borderlands as places where different ideas on belonging are negotiated and renegotiated whilst making use of, adapting or ignoring past structures, discourses and practices depending on the situational context.[20] In this book it will be shown, for example, how the primary school buildings constructed in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy during German times later functioned

as a phantom border during negotiations about language learning in the 1930s.

Negotiations in borderlands have dynamics. In what Philipp Ther has called *Zwischenräume*, i.e. linguistic, cultural, religious and/or ethic transition areas, much contesting takes place, a fact which turns these regions, despite their peripheral location, into central sites of power struggle.[21] Border scholars have invited us to look at borders and borderlands as spaces of 'excess', an excess that can take the form of either intensive border struggles or ostentatious control.[22] An investigation of 'the fault lines, conflicts, differences, fear and containment that borders represent' exposes when and how understandings of the inside and the outside were pushed beyond their limits and resulted in new reconfigurations.[23] Struggles could thus turn borders and borderlands into resources, into spaces where new chances appeared.[24] Equally possible over time were situations where these resources were not made use of, and borders and borderlands were turned into contentious sites of control. Despite their obsession with developing an abundance of legal rules, however, state institutions found themselves unable to prevent legal normativity from fragmenting.[25] As a result, borders and borderlands became the places where the meaning of what was to be shaped as national space collapsed.[26]

Offering a closer insight into the dynamics of struggles over space, human geographical thought has come up with an explanation of why such struggles have a tendency to become excessive. Human geographers have shown how the constant process of redirecting division over space has a dynamics of its own, a dynamics that can be similar in different contexts. The Swiss geographer Claude Raffestin, most prominently, referred to territory as 'the most material expression there is of the needs of humans'[27] and saw territory as the consequence of human territoriality, the latter being defined as the 'ensemble of relations that a society maintains with exteriority and alterity for the satisfaction of its needs, towards the end of attaining the greatest possible autonomy comparable with the resources of the system'.[28] In interpreting human territoriality relationally, Raffestin, writing in French, approaches human territoriality radically differently from Robert Sack, whose understanding has become more well-known internationally. Introducing Raffestin to the Anglo-Saxon world, Klauser explained: 'Raffestin's ambition goes far beyond Anglo-American readings of territoriality, which are concerned, predominantly, with the study of geopolitical strategies of control/defence of space and with the resulting political-territorial arrangements. The association of territoriality with politically bounded space in Anglo-American geography is such that, for some scholars, territoriality and relationality have come to be seen as opposites.'[29]

Claude Raffestin's thinking is founded on the notion that networks of social relations and understandings produce territory. For Raffestin,

human territoriality can be found in the diverse and changing interactions between human beings and 'material and/or immaterial reality'.[30] Language learning, then, can be approached as a material reality codified in school buildings, teaching branches, textbooks, language exams, school curricula and suchlike, and as an immaterial reality of ideas on education and styles of teaching. Indeed, Raffestin's perspective invites us to unravel the everyday life practices that bring about territory, practices that are more complex than the strategies of control over space referred to by Sack. Sack's concept of human territoriality was grounded in an interpretation of politically bounded space congruent to the modern state apparatus that linked territoriality to the assertion of strategies of control over a geographical area.[31] Whereas Raffestin's primary interest has been the composition of socio-spatial systems, rather than what happened to and within these systems later, Sack's interpretation of human territoriality invites us to study territoriality 'as a system that produces relations, rather than as one that is produced by relations'.[32]

Alexander Murphy read Claude Raffestin and Robert Sack against each other and worked out a complementary understanding based on the recognition that not all socio-spatial systems are fluent in the same way.[33] This observation enables the geographer to put forward an interpretation that will be used throughout this book: 'When ideas and practices that create geographically differentiated spaces congeal into territorial projects rooted in the formalized control of space, they come to be shaped by a long-lasting highly sticky system that even though relationally constituted, derives much of its power from the properties of the system itself.'[34] The book therefore takes up the proposition of Charles A. Maier, a historian proliferating Robert Sack's ideas, to use territoriality as an alternative narrative for the modern era by means of analysing 'the emergence, ascendancy and crisis of territoriality', all the while paying tribute to Raffestin's relational approach in order to understand and compare dynamics of relations within certain of these processes over time.[35] This approach will become most clear in chapter four, where a detailed comparison is made of language learning struggles in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the late 1920s. The second axis of analysis, power and multiple loyalties, will make clear how in other periods of time the exertion of control was too prominent in order to set in motion complex dynamics of changeable interactions with regards to language learning.

Power and Multiple Loyalties

A second analytical axis consists of a combined reading of the concepts of power and multiple loyalties. As Charles A. Maier pointed out, in modern

thought, territory as bounded space was 'envisaged not just as an acquisition or as a security buffer, but as a decisive means of power and rule'.[36] Power was to be spread over the lands between state borders; these were to be firmly controlled by the power apparatus of modern states. As Claude Raffestin showed, however, relations between people played a crucial role in the creation and functioning of such a socio-spatial system. The second analytical axis brings together insights from historiographical literature on relations of loyalties with those of political science on power. Combining the concept of multiple loyalties with a deconstructive stance on power facilitates the situation of interwar language learning in places on the European continent more precisely within their respective historical contexts. Taken as a whole, this axis refines the comparative investigation of how negotiations over language learning in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy evolved over time after the switch in state sovereignty following the Treaty of Versailles.

This book offers a differentiated understanding of what power is and how it works. Power is defined as a certain system of power composed of both power structures and power strategies. Whereas structures are 'modes of limiting interaction, which create conditions of possibility',[37] strategies refer to the goal-oriented aspect of power. And while power structures can be observed as they are at a given moment in time, power strategies serve to keep these structures in place, or provoke them to change. Power has long been defined as either 'power over someone' or 'the power to do something', and these have been presented as different to each other, the former equating to power as domination, the latter power as emancipation. Much effort has been invested into understanding 'power over' as a multidimensional phenomenon. 'Power over' came to be seen as having different dimensions which are not mutually exclusive, but can appear within social processes in various constellations at different moments in time. Over the last decade, moreover, political scientists have developed an understanding of power beyond the dichotomist perception of domination and emancipation. Mark Haugaard has been influential for this book in his widening of the well-known framework of four dimensions of power as domination in order to include power as emancipation. In his analysis, Haugaard leans on Hannah Arendt's idea of communicative power emerging, as the philosopher wrote, 'whenever people get together and act in concert'.[38]

Acting together in the public sphere is a possible interaction between individuals, groups or institutions within equal power relations. However, by systematically taking the position of the ruled, instead of the rulers, researchers found a whole gamut of coexisting and possibly partially overlapping practices, which individuals in the past used in order to ap-

prove, refute or resist specific power structures over time.[39] In order to stress the multiple character of such practices, as well as their changeability over time, they have been approached as expressions of multiple loyalties.[40] The concept of multiple loyalties is here preferred over the concept of identity, which presumes an essential stable core of an individual's personality; loyalties are by definition 'partial, mediated and contingent'.[41] Loyalties are also relational. To put it most simply, only when orders articulated by rulers are followed by the ruled do they have consequences, and only when these orders are interpreted correctly will they generate the intended effect. When looking at the matter in a more complex way, the opposition between rulers and the ruled ought to be questioned, as not all rulers are equal among themselves; and nor do these rulers hold power over a homogeneous group of the ruled, but rather, mutual interdependencies among changing groups of rulers and the ruled appear at different moments in time. In addition, the motives of the ruled to engage may be multiple. Interpreting their acceptance of a power strategy issued from above as an act of passive obedience reduces the potential for obstinacy of historical actors, who through their behaviour could give another meaning to their actions; accepting or distancing themselves from a power structure or power strategy do not necessarily need to be opposite practices, but could appear simultaneously.[42] With reference to Polish Upper Silesia, for example, Brendan Karch has already demonstrated that, despite the ardency of national activists, local inhabitants choosing a school for their children 'weighed their decisions against other values and consequences: the need for their children to learn German in a German-speaking community, the social isolation of students in the Polish schools, the quality of teacher instruction, or a desire to promote bilingual education'. Karch saw multiple loyalties in 'the accumulated choices that arise from such interpretations between nationalist activists and instrumentally minded Upper Silesians'.[43] Meanwhile, borderland inhabitants of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy adopted the decisive strategy of 'a wait and see approach'.[44] As the historians Andreas Fickers and Christoph Brüll recently argued, looking away or ignoring did not mean inhabitants were simply doing nothing. On the contrary, they were choosing to do nothing as a deliberate strategy in order to articulate their discontent with the system of power as it unfolded at the time. Doing nothing was an act of 'situational opportunism', of exploiting 'the individual's room for manoeuvre on the basis of an assessment of what is considered opportune in a concrete situation'.[45]

In order to come to a closer understanding of how relations of loyalty were influenced by power, their interaction within the four-dimensional framework of power will now be displayed in greater detail. This well-

known framework originally started off as the three-dimensional framework of power developed by Steven Lukes.[46] The one-dimensional view of power with which he begins his framework presents forceful domination. It is 'the ability of A to prevail over B, by making B do something which B would not otherwise have done'.[47] Haugaard, however, suggests that this form of power does not necessarily have to turn into a situation in which A wins what B loses, but that the process of power in itself can have emancipatory potential. Giving the example of a democratic regime, the political scientist shows that when A and B both stand for election, and A wins and B loses, the power structures of democracy are being reinforced, which in itself creates the opportunity for B to develop a power strategy for the future.[48] The shape of power structures and power strategies (to be understood as capable of inhering both 'power over' and/or 'power to') at a given moment in time determined the context in which subjects could express their loyalties by means of their practices, thereby adhering to, negotiating or rejecting a given system of power.

The one-dimensional view of power understood in Haugaard's sense, i.e. both as 'power over' and as 'power to', is of crucial importance in order to come to a deep understanding of language learning practices in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. While this will be demonstrated in greater detail throughout the book, most prominently in chapter three, two examples serve to motivate the argument here. The supranational involvement of the League of Nations in the ruling of language learning in Polish Upper Silesia was both an example of the Great Powers' coercive domination over the new Polish nation-state and the paternalism with which various nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe, but not in Western Europe, were approached in the aftermath of the First World War. At the same time, however, the installation of this power structure served to ensure that German-speaking pupils could learn the language their parents called their mother tongue and encourage these pupils and their caregivers (teachers, pedagogues, politicians and clergymen) to develop a power strategy to maintain that opportunity after supranational involvement came to an end fifteen years later.

In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, meanwhile, the system of power installed after the switch of state sovereignty was one of coercive domination in its purest form. Belgian politicians supported the installation of a colonial regime in the borderlands, where the Belgian Constitution did not apply. At the same time, however, it was envisioned that the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy would be steadily integrated into a country with a constitution respecting the diversity of its inhabitants. As a result, borderland inhabitants were granted more rights in choosing in which language their child could receive primary education

than was the case before the switch to Belgian state sovereignty, a fact even appreciated by the harshest critics of the colonial regime. The head of that regime was Herman Baltia (1920–1925), a Belgian military leader who had been made Royal High Commissioner of the new regions incorporated into the kingdom. The son of a Belgian general and a German mother, his methods of governing were considered quasi-dictatorial. Nevertheless, borderland inhabitants applauded the fact that he based the legitimacy of his regime more on traditional authority than on the rational-legal authority of modernisation, bureaucratisation and legalisation that had characterised the system of power in the German Empire. Traditional authority, as pointed out by Max Weber almost a century ago, leant on religiousness and people's respect for their ancestors.[49]

In retrospect, one could be inclined to think that a clear linear mission towards integration within the Belgian Kingdom underscored transition policies, whereas in reality local rulers did not know how long the transition period was going to last and offered context-sensitive solutions to existing challenges on an ongoing basis.[50] For example, at the same time that a specific rule was issued forbidding borderland pupils from receiving their primary education in Germany, paradoxically enough, young borderland adults who had finished a teaching degree in Germany prior to the switch to Belgian state sovereignty, and who had thus been exposed to German nationalist ideas during their entire education, were invited to teach borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

A two-dimensional view of power, in the words of Lukes, 'allows for consideration of the ways in which decisions are prevented from being taken on potential issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests'.[51] The question here concerns why certain topics are discussed within political circles, whereas others are not. As Haugaard points out, whereas the mechanism of including and excluding is immanent to structuring in general, the outcome can appear different. These preventive, often unspoken tactics may take the form of 'power over' in the sense that they continually ignore the same people or ideas. On the other hand, a system of power may also be balanced on a mutual understanding between parties of what is politicised and what is not. The longer parties consider a reinforcement of such power structures advantageous, the more durable a system of power becomes.[52] It goes without saying that the preventive tactics the two-dimensional view of power refers to also influence the changeability of loyalties that individuals and groups develop. When one can expect a certain balance of power to remain in place over time, loyalties are likely to become more consistent.

The two-dimensional view of power is the crux to understanding how the Belgian Kingdom functioned in the interwar years, and why the sys-

tem of power was so different from the one within the Polish nation-state. Notwithstanding the frequent government changes, the Belgian Kingdom presented a balanced system of power regarding the two domains crucial for interwar language learning, one being the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church, and the other between the state and parents. How to divide responsibilities over primary schooling between the state and the Catholic Church had been one of the biggest topics of political debate in the second half of the nineteenth century. The so-called School Wars had distilled a clear power structure with the church having the freedom to develop its activities within Catholic schools, which were and remained more numerous than state schools. Even after the implementation of compulsory education following the First World War, no political party was interested in reopening the debate. Within the new Polish nation-state, by contrast, the church and the state never ceased in their attempts to resolve satisfactorily the issue of responsibility for the language learning of primary school children.

A similar struggle could be observed between the state and the guardians of children (mostly fathers) entitled to choose a primary school. As will be shown in chapter three, in interwar Belgium a guardian had the right to decide what the mother tongue of his child was and send them to a school offering primary education in that language.[53] Of importance was the language the guardian mentioned, not the actual language the child spoke at home or other languages they knew. In the north of the country, there were some guardians who spoke Dutch at home but claimed their children spoke French in order to be able to send them to a French-speaking school, thus (as they believed) increasing their children's chances on the future job market. If a guardian's right to choose was not recognised, he could take his claim to court, and the guilty party could be obliged to pay a fine.[54] In Polish Upper Silesia, by contrast, the right of guardians to decide remained subject to debate throughout the interwar years, as representatives of the Polish state constantly challenged this right and eventually tried to overrule it, which they were able to do in 1937, when the legal framework of supranational control, the Geneva Convention, came to an end.

A three-dimensional view of power concerns the relationship between power and 'the consciousness of social actors'.[55] It covers the relationship between how power structures are reinforced or changed by means of power strategies and the way in which social actors give meaning to these phenomena. In the case of power as domination, a certain system of power remains unquestioned by the ruled, since the way in which power is structured and evolves is perceived as how things naturally are and is therefore considered acceptable. However, as Haugaard argues, the evo-

lution can also be made from a person or collective doing things ('practical consciousness') towards articulating the things done ('discursive consciousness'), a process that allows for a reflection upon structuration. It is in this 'consciousness raising' that Mark Haugaard sees the power of emancipation.[56]

When comparing the situation of pupils learning how to read and write in German in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the early 1930s, the three-dimensional view of power helps to indicate a crucial difference. Whereas in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the conditions for that learning process were a given and could therefore remain practical consciousness, in Polish Upper Silesia, children needed to take a test in order to be allowed that language training. The test can be seen as an act of consciousness raising in itself, in the sense that it had the potential to encourage borderland pupils to reflect upon their practices and influence their loyalties. Whether or not such practices, through which borderland pupils could come to question power structures and power strategies, were inherent to primary school systems had an influence on how loyalties were expressed and possibly adjusted.

Peter Digeser proposed adding the French philosopher Michel Foucault's view on the correlation between power and knowledge as a fourth dimension (he used the word 'face') to Steven Lukes' three-dimensional view of power.[57] In Foucault's words, this is 'a form of power that makes individuals subjects',[58] in which human behaviour is guided through discipline.[59] In this respect, his concept of governmentality is to be understood as a normalising technique of government to shape and discipline human behaviour through the internalisation of certain routinised beliefs and practices.[60] If understood as power as domination, this power strategy based on internal disciplinisation aims at the unreflective submissiveness of the individual. However, practices brought about by internalised discipline do not by definition have to create a situation in which A gains what B loses. Haugaard points out that an intrinsic characteristic of modernity includes a 'deferral of gratification through the internalisation of self-restraint'.[61] In this view of power as emancipation, B can accept that A holds power over him or her because B feels guaranteed that this power will only be used within specific structured confinements, leading to outcomes that may also be beneficial for B.[62]

In chapter five, I shall highlight the case of a Catholic school principal in Eupen. He conveyed the message that borderland pupils ought to submit to the way they were to internalise discipline in his school, and that parents were not entitled to offer any criticism. Given the balance of power between the church and the state within the Belgian Kingdom,

and the absence of non-Catholic schools in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the Catholic school principal spoke from a hegemonic power position and could dictate his vision of disciplined loyalty to borderland pupils. It will also be shown how in Polish Upper Silesia, reform pedagogues instead wanted to find out more about the living conditions of borderland pupils, because they believed their research findings could help to develop didactic materials that more appropriately supported language learning practices, which would in turn lead to borderland pupils achieving better school results. That idea aligned with the ideology of the political regime at the time to privilege children who spoke Polish and expressed their loyalty towards the state to advance professionally. One of the regime's power strategies was to guide the future behaviour of borderland pupils through the knowledge being generated by scientists.[63]

Microhistory within a Multilayered Context

The third and final axis of analysis within the framework of comparison this book provides is microhistory in a multilayered context. Microhistory has long held a minority status within professional historiography. Philipp Ther, for instance, compared the historiography of modern Europe to 'a commode, only consisting of national drawers. Within these drawers, there is a certain leeway for regional history, micro history, everyday life history and other fields'.[64] This book shares the argument that a microhistory needs to go beyond the analysis of one case within a local context (a focus not rarely associated with an endorsement of political separatism), and be approached as an interesting gateway to point to the limits of national loyalties in general.[65] Borderlands are especially useful objects of analysis, since limits within systems of power become more visible when a greater number of competing loyalty offers are on display.[66]

In offering a comparative microhistory of borderlands within a multilayered context, this book invites us to leave the commode altogether, as it were, and to approach the late modern era as a time where various spatial frames, such as the imperial, national, local and the regional coexisted, interacted or overlapped.[67] In order to compare language learning in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the wider context of local, regional, national, transnational, bilateral and supranational power interdependencies and multiple loyalties needs to be examined. In this way we shall be able to uncover how borderlands 'developed as spatial units alternative to, but not independent of, the political design defined by the administrative borders, whose importance is not denied but indeed remains pivotal for structuring and redefining the

regions themselves. The key point therefore is to analyse how these alternative geographies intertwined with political-administrative spatiality.'[68]

Recent historiography on Polish Upper Silesia has shed light on the limitations of programmes of nation-building in borderlands and has pointed to the prevalence of religious, ethnic, regionalist or other allegiances in the appropriation of collective belonging.[69] The argument goes that, with the depiction of the nation as Benedict Anderson's 'imagined political community' eagerly taken as an assumption, historians closed their eyes to phenomena outside these socially constructed collectives.[70] Arguing that the conviction of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalist thinkers should not determine our knowledge about the past, scholars have placed what came to be referred to as failed national projects at the centre of historical investigation.[71] This enabled them to recognise the specificities of historical time and place for the shaping of collective belonging, as well as the inconsistency of nationalist motivations throughout the life course of individuals.[72]

Most authors using a microhistorical approach favour foregrounding the complexity of mechanisms of nationalisation in Upper Silesia over developing concepts or models. Presenting Upper Silesia as a puzzling unique path (*Sonderweg*) in the history of nationalism, scholars have shown in great detail the volatile character of belonging in the region during the interwar period.[73] Political preferences, they warn, should not be seen as an expression of a fixed national identity. During Silesian post-plebiscite festivals throughout the interwar period, for instance, the political allegiances available to inhabitants could be appropriated to a discretional degree on both sides of the border dividing the region between Poland and Germany.[74] Political and, as we have seen in the introduction, linguistic choices, moreover, did not clearly overlap. Whereas German-minded political parties in the Polish part of interwar Upper Silesia in the early 1920s received more votes than the number of German speakers listed in the 1910 census, when the economic situation in Poland stabilised, they saw their number of votes fall.[75] In contrast to political and linguistic articulations, religious preferences have been found to be decisive for the allegiances of a majority of people. This is sometimes presented as a static juxtaposition between 'the State's national-linguistic [basic interpretation] on the one hand, and the Church's confessional-religious on the other',[76] but more often referred to as 'the strength of transnational, regionalist and sub-national allegiances and of allegiances other than nationality, for instance, religion'.[77]

In addition, many authors working on Upper Silesia have highlighted the importance of bilateral or supranational relationships. The concern of nationalists in both the Polish and German part of Upper Silesia to define

their own group in correlation to an imagined collective other, for example, is found to have had a destructive influence on the bilateral political dialogue between Poland and the Weimar Republic.[78] Scholars have also shown that the League of Nations had been set up precisely in order to defuse conflicts over the loyalties of borderland inhabitants by lifting them out of their regional and/or national environment.[79]

The increasing body of historical studies has left the suitability of Upper Silesia for comparative research largely untested.[80] A symmetrical comparison of two case study borderlands for differences and similarities inevitably requires us to go beyond two of the concepts usually applied in historiography on Polish Upper Silesia, national indifference and regionalism, as these hold little explanatory value for the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. A concept foreign to most historians working on borderlands, but all the more present in the work of geography and anthropology, on the other hand, that of the borderscape, can support a symmetric comparative microhistory in a multilayered context.

The concept of national indifference serves to unravel 'how and why people allied themselves politically, culturally and socially from the ground up' outside of imagined national communities as a reaction to modern nationalist politics, as well as how these allegiances changed over time.[81] Although the concept was first applied to borderlands with a history in the Habsburg Empire, it later travelled, inter alia, to the desks of scholars dissecting the past of the Polish-German border region of Upper Silesia.[82] In an attempt to avoid the normative assumption that the indifferent individual is to become a national citizen at some point in the future, the borderland people of Upper Silesia hitherto glossed over in mainstream historiography have also been referred to as non-national/anational groups, 'groups that are not defined and/or do not define themselves as nations, nationalities or somehow national'.[83] Scholars found proof of the importance of national indifference in the Upper Silesian plebiscite of 1921 stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles, which attempted to determine the national belonging of local inhabitants but failed to clarify matters.[84] The plebiscite was organised at a moment when German and Polish national agitation encountered a local population that had not yet come to think primarily in national categories.[85] The alternative, Upper Silesia as a nation-state project in itself, failed because it was devoid of a gradually developed and decisive political structure, as well as an influential mass media.[86]

National indifference as an analytical category has recently been judged inadequate because of the plenitude of contradictory convictions harboured within Upper Silesia: 'Those who acted indifferently embraced many different 'isms' and behaviours – and sometimes had little in common.'[87]

The concept also inevitably remains associated with nationalists and their perceptions of the world, as can be seen in archival documents. As Tara Zahra stated: 'The coherence of the category, I believe, ultimately lies in nationalists' own use of it to mobilise potential recruits'.[88] And lastly, the argument has been put forward that not enough attention is paid to the fact that, in an era where nation-states were the European norm, remaining nationally indifferent could have real consequences for borderland inhabitants.[89] In his comparison of violence in Upper Silesia and Ulster between 1918 and 1922, Tim Wilson proved that national indifference can be the cause of destructive actions and should therefore not be conceived as a desirable alternative to national identification.[90] In chapter four of this book, moreover, it will be seen how such destruction could continue in times of peace. Borderland pupils were not allowed to attend a school of their choice, and their parents could lose their jobs or be sent to prison if they did not opt for a specific primary school.

The (changeable over time, yet still binary) understanding of finding oneself inside or outside an imagined national community turned out to be unsuitable for shedding a comparative light on the multidimensional lifeworlds of borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. A prevailing consensus among historians of Upper Silesia, for example, is that religious and national identifications in the interwar years were mostly distinct one from another. Throughout the nineteenth century, nationalist mobilisation which aimed at transforming local inhabitants of Upper Silesia into either Germans or Poles aggravated uncertainty in people about their national identifications. Despite the fact that the Catholic Church contributed to the essence of what the Polish nation stood for, just as the Protestant Church did for the German nation, local inhabitants of Upper Silesia saw in religion an alternative identification enabling them to position themselves above national understandings altogether.[91] These dynamics often remained in place when Poland regained independence; its political representatives styled it a secular state and formulated ambitions in domains of public life that had traditionally been monopolised by the church.[92]

Upon gaining independence in 1830, however, the major European rulers (the Habsburg Empire, the Russian Empire, Prussia, the United Kingdom and France) required the Belgian Kingdom to guarantee the religious rights of its citizens. Joining the kingdom almost a century later, local inhabitants of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy therefore enjoyed more freedom of religion than they had been entitled to while living in the German Empire. In addition, borderland inhabitants did not adopt other possible sources of loyalty, be they linguistic, cultural or ethnic, in order to position themselves against nationalisms as a whole. Admittedly,

in prescribing a free use of languages, Belgian nationalists approached language significantly differently from how Polish nationalists did. That approach was nevertheless fervently contested by Flemish nationalists at the time the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy joined the Belgian Kingdom.[93] The fact that the Belgian nation-state later, from the early 1930s onwards, provided borderland pupils with more prosperous language learning conditions than the supranational legal framework controlled by the League of Nations serves as another example of why borderland inhabitants had no reason to protest against nationalisation by means of an attitude of national indifference.

Another branch of historical literature has looked at Upper Silesia's interwar past through the concept of regionalism. People who do not aspire to sovereignty or statehood, but express loyalty towards their regional history, have been reported to constitute a majority of the local inhabitants at the beginning of the interwar years, and their number only seriously dropped after Polish nationalist policies accelerated at the end of the 1930s.[94] Strong regional loyalties are found to have developed as a reaction to the cultural and political centralism practiced by competing German, Polish and Czech national movements since the nineteenth century, and to have been supported by an understanding of Upper Silesia as a region with a distinct historical past. That distinctiveness was not articulated through a strong regional political self-understanding, but by means of everyday religious practices bridging the linguistic divides various nationalists aimed to create.[95] In the interwar years, moreover, the transnational ambitions of German foreign policymakers – of Upper Silesia's 'external national homeland' – and the 'nationalising' policies of the young Polish nation-state, to use two concepts of Rogers Brubaker here, were not necessarily in competition with regionalist allegiances.[96] In the age of mass politics and mass education, it was not only the Polish, German and Czechoslovakian governments but also the governments of many other nation-states in Europe who chose those regional traditions they considered related to their national imagination in order to popularise their (trans)nationalist ideas.[97]

Whereas interwar Polish Upper Silesia can be classified as a strong region, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy certainly cannot.[98] Prior to the First World War, these areas had not witnessed a clash of different nationalisms. At stake for the minority of Prussian Walloons at the end of the nineteenth century, for example, was the desire to regain the freedom to use the Wallonian vernacular that they had enjoyed before the *Kulturkampf* within the Prussian state, not to bring about or endorse a Wallonian regionalism or Belgian nationalism across state borders.[99] The regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were never an entity with a

separate legal status before they joined the Belgian Kingdom, and regional understandings were weak and at the very least plural. The five years the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy functioned as the entity Eupen-Malmedy under the dictatorial regime of Herman Baltia could not foster the emergence of a common regional understanding, and as early as 1925 the decision was made to include the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the Belgian province of Liège. The dynamics between national and regional loyalties as articulated in language learning practices also developed differently in the case of Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy during the interwar years. Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, representatives of the Polish nation-state tried to increase their power over borderland pupils, representatives of the Belgian nation-state continued to favour their pre-war power strategies of decentralisation and prevention. As a result, municipalities in Belgium's newest borderlands received much of the decision-making power over interwar primary schooling, as did the Catholic Church.

The concept of the borderscape can steer the investigation of the multilayered phenomenon of language learning in and beyond Polish Upper Silesia and the border regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, since it allows for a focus on the local level of the everyday life in the borderlands, while at the same time taking into consideration when and how bordering processes exceeded the borderlands. Border scholars have called into existence the concept of the borderscape in order to draw attention away from the spectacle of struggles at the border and within borderlands, and to focus on transient space instead. This entails tracking how, after the drawing of a state border line, the spatial division is given meaning through the construction and proliferation of discourses and practices in relation to, and in interaction with, perceptions, interests and strategies within certain levels of decision-making at different moments over time. The concept of the borderscape focuses on the dynamic location of the border as a result of shifts in systems of power and multiple loyalties, shifts driven by the multiplication of division inherent to human territoriality.[100]

Rather than functioning as an empirical category, borderscapes are here considered a lens through which bordering processes can be approached. The word 'borderscape' unifies the words 'border' with the suffix '-scape', the latter having a double meaning.[101] In the first interpretation, the suffix refers to the continuous multidimensional dynamics of 'shaping and carving' the border.[102] In the second, the suffix relates to the border as it relates to the word 'land' in 'landscape'. As is the case with a landscape, a borderscape is 'a thing that is also the representation of the thing'.[103] Modern culture has developed a thinking about space through the landscape painting of the Dutch/Flemish school, where 'the landscape is reduced to

an image used by a contemplative subject kept at a distance', and later 'the initial reference to a genre of painting ended up being shifted to designate its real referent, the territory'.[104] That representation is the aggregate of historically affected and culturally embedded interpretations and reformulations of the border brought about through interactions between institutions and people at different levels of decision-making processes.[105] In order to reconstruct the borderscape of language learning in interwar borderland primary schools, this book follows the shuffling of papers concerning language learning on and across many tables, within individual borderland schools, city councils, provincial cabinets and national parliaments, all the way up to the International Court of Justice in the Hague.[106]

Notes

1. Newman, 'On Borders', 13.
2. An exception has been Thomas Nail, who in his recent book *Theory of the Border* provides a theoretical framework explaining the historical conditions in which borders – which he understands as the fence, the wall, the cell and the checkpoint – originate (Nail, *Theory*, 12).
3. Paasi, 'Border Theory', 28.
4. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 3.
5. Judson, 'Preface', XIV.
6. Stefanov, *Erfindung*, vol. 65, 7–16.
7. Haugaard and Goverde, 'Power and Space', 191.
8. Büsching, 'Aufstände', 144; Dietz, *Griff*, vol. 2; Piskorski, Hackmann and Jaworski, *Deutsche Ostforschung*; Struve, 'Geschichte und Gedächtnis', 3.
9. Ruland, 'Deutschtum', 21–68; Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 11.
10. Mishkova and Trencsényi, 'Introduction', 2.
11. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 38.
12. Müller and Torp, 'Conceptualising', 613.
13. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 39.
14. Nail, *Theory*, 7–8.
15. Van Houtum, 'Mask of the Border', 50.
16. See Asiwaju, 'Borderlands in Africa', 2.
17. DuVal, *Borderlands*, 3.
18. Price, *Dry Place*, 6.
19. Von Hirschhausen et al., *Phantomgrenzen*, 18.
20. Esch and von Hirschhausen, 'Wahrnehmen', 13.
21. Ther, 'Einleitung', XII.
22. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 183.
23. Mohanty, *Feminism*, 2. Fickers and Brüll already used the concept *Zwischenräume* for their analysis of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy; Fickers and Brüll, 'Zeit-Räume', 12–14.

24. For a detailed discussion of borders and borderlands as resources, see Feyissa and Hoehne, *Borders*.
25. Ibid., 183; Teubner, 'Fragmented', 327–41.
26. Price, *Dry Place*, 118.
27. Raffestin, 'Space', 136.
28. Ibid., 121.
29. Klauser, 'Thinking Through Territoriality', 110.
30. Raffestin, 'Space', 123.
31. Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 19.
32. Murphy, 'Entente Territorial', 167.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 169.
35. Maier, 'Consigning', 807.
36. Ibid., 818.
37. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 38.
38. Quoted in Arendt, *Crises*, 151.
39. Grandits, *Herrschaft*, 16; See Grandits, Clayer and Pichler, 'Introduction', 5.
40. Schulze Wessel, 'Loyalität', 10.
41. Ibid., 2–3; Karch, *Nation*, 14.
42. Lüdtke, 'Einleitung', 13–14 and 50.
43. Karch, *Nation*, 20–21.
44. O'Connell, *Annexation*, 144.
45. Fickers and Brüll, 'Experiment', 22.
46. Lukes, *Power*, 19.
47. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 35.
48. Ibid., 38.
49. Bendix, *Max Weber*, vol. 2, 382–83.
50. Grandits and Brunnbauer, 'Ambiguous Nation', 23.
51. Lukes, *Power*, 25.
52. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 41.
53. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 116.
54. Mallinson, *Power*, 114.
55. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 42.
56. Ibid., 44.
57. Digeser, 'Fourth Face'.
58. Foucault, 'Subject and Power', 212.
59. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 193; Foucault, 'Meshes of Power', 158.
60. Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 'Foucault's Lectures', 1–33.
61. In this respect, Mark Haugaard refers to Max Weber's work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976, 2nd edition) and Norbert Elias' work *The Civilizing Process* (1994), and concludes: 'While the theories are different, both Elias and Weber agree that the deferral of gratification through the internalization of restraint is intrinsic to modern discipline' (Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 49).
62. Haugaard, 'Rethinking', 50.
63. Ibid.
64. Ther, 'Einleitung', X.
65. See Stefanov, *Erfindung*, vol. 65, 14.
66. Ther, 'Schlesisch', 171.
67. Di Fiore, 'Production of Borders', 48.
68. Ibid., 49.

69. See Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 6; Polak-Springer, *Recovered*; Karch, *Nation*.

70. Anderson, *Imagined*; Zahra, 'Imagined Non-Communities', 94–96.

71. Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia', 10.

72. Judson, 'Preface'.

73. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1; Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 17; Struve, 'Geschichte und Gedächtnis', 31.

74. Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 269.

75. Ther, 'Schlesisch', 169–202.

76. Novikov, *Shades*, 56.

77. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 1.

78. Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 85; Karch, 'Polish Nationalism', 165.

79. Eser, *'Volk, Staat, Gott!'*, 20; Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten*, 12.

80. Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia', 27. For examples of comparative studies, see Wilson, *Frontiers*; Kaczmarek, 'Zwischen Regionalismus'.

81. Zahra, 'Imagined Non-Communities', 118.

82. See Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*; King, *Budweisers*.

83. Kamusella, 'Upper Silesia', 14–15.

84. Bjork et al., 'Introduction', 6.

85. Lesiuk, 'Entstehung und Entwicklung', 43.

86. Ther, 'Einleitung', XXI.

87. Karch, *Nation*, 17.

88. Zahra, 'Imagined Non-Communities', 104.

89. Karch, *Nation*, 17.

90. See Polak-Springer's review of Wilson's book, Polak-Springer, 'Violence', 1–4.

91. Bjork, *Neither German*; Lamberti, *State*, 40; Porter, 'Thy Kingdom Come', 238–39.

92. Schulze Wessel, *Revolution*.

93. The concept of national indifference is not without any explanatory value for Belgian history. Maarten Van Ginderachter, for example, discovered that Flemish nationalists complained about the lack of interest they encountered among ordinary people at the end of the nineteenth century (Van Ginderachter, *Het rode vaderland*, 212–13).

94. Ther, 'Schlesisch', 170.

95. Struve, 'Erfahrung', 141.

96. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 55–58.

97. Ther, 'Spell', 85; Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 13ff.

98. For a discussion on strong and weak regions, see Sundhaussen, 'Šumadija', 277–312.

99. Scharte, *Preußisch*, 133–37.

100. Brambilla et al., 'Introduction', 2.

101. Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 5.

102. Brambilla, 'Critical Potential', 23.

103. Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 10.

104. Brambilla, 'Critical Potential', 23.

105. Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 10.

106. Earlier interpretations of the concept of the borderscape include presenting the 'borderscape as an area, shaped and reshaped by transnational flows, that goes beyond the modernist idea of clear-cut national territories' (as put forward by Arjun Appadurai), and 'offering an image corresponding more or less to a border region' (by A. Harbers and Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper); see Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary, 'Introduction', 7.