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Children as Social Butterflies

Navigating Belonging in a Diverse Swiss Kindergarten

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For Hans

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PROLOGUE

In the course of around two and a half years, this ethnographic study was carried out with and around the children of a specific kindergarten class in a diversified neighborhood in a not-so-wealthy outlying district of Zurich, Switzerland. Accompanying these children proved to be a particular way to shed light on (future) society and the constitution of social relations: seeing the world through the children's everyday lives revealed mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion and situated boundary-making of different scales and scopes. It brought to the fore the simultaneous banality *and* stress of cultural differentiation.

The children I came to know better over the years of fieldwork were not considered privileged within Swiss society. Most of their parents migrated to Switzerland, and life at times was tough. This book can and will do little to counter this. However, the many hours I spent with them enriched and dynamized the picture. What I like most about ethnography is that fieldwork is the best teacher, that it destabilizes, makes you stumble. The encounters with interlocutors and the immersion into their everyday lives do not often give you what you already know. Looking and listening closely challenges what is taken for granted.

But it might take some time.

Throughout the following chapters, attention is paid to the difficulties these children and their families face due to, among other things, a harsh migration regime, xenophobic harassment, and schooling mechanisms that do not acknowledge the children's everyday life sufficiently. Personally, I would welcome this ethnography having a political and pedagogical impact. But readers of *Children as Social Butterflies* might draw conclusions which differ from mine. Ultimately, this is not up to me to control, and it will not be the focus of this study.

Instead, *Children as Social Butterflies* will be about understanding the changing configurations of social belonging as the children navigate across different socio-spatial orders. Along the children's pathways of belonging, the analysis clears the way for what I seek to understand as *everyday multi-referentiality*.

Before that, however, I will briefly indicate how the childhood ethnographer behind this text might be presented, how academic interests resonate with positionalities, and how this has influenced the writing of this book.

Navigating Politicized Places of Research

School ethnographies very often state that they are *critical* of schools and their actors in a political sense. There is a solid—often inspired by the pioneering work of Bourdieu—analytical language to identify, describe, and critique the power of schooling institutions in the (re-)production of social inequality. They show how children with a migration (or peasant or blue-collar) background are systematically disadvantaged—empirical findings that can be statistically validated. Year after year, children from academic/high income majority families continue to have the greatest chances of, for example, going to university. The barriers to educational success for children from poorer families and families who have immigrated to the respective countries (from poorer countries) are disproportionately higher. It is this fact that makes schools one of the politically most contested fields for more equal societies.

The analyses of the (re-)production of social inequalities in schools are so sophisticated that one can hardly go into the field without finding the systematic failure of these institutions in fighting inequality confirmed in every social practice. Sedgwick (1997, 4) coined the kind of sedimentation of a knowledge repertoire and analytical language which is also strongly linked to the researcher's gaze as "elements of the intellectual baggage." With reference to Ricoeur, she speaks of a *hermeneutic of suspicion*, meaning that thinking critically about certain matters and approaching them intellectually "may have had an unintentionally stultifying side effect: they may have made it less rather than more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, knower, or teller." Against this backdrop of an overwhelming tradition of critique of the schooling system I ask, Can we see more—and other—stories when studying among the children of a kindergarten class in a stigmatized and (for Swiss standards) poor neighborhood?

Regarding the intellectual endeavor presented here, a twofold, rather interesting process has been underway over the course of the research process. As Katz notes, "Initial hypotheses float around almost all ethnographic projects in the form both of cultural opinion and as implications from prior studies" (2001, 465). Starting fieldwork, I was puzzled by how directly teachers identified, for example, "annoying" and "anxious" mothers and how clearly they also admitted that there was so much they simply did not know and could not know. Much later, when I looked again at my (sometimes tape-recorded) first transcripts and field notes, I was no less surprised: the assessment got suddenly much more ambivalent. It has to do with the epistemological axioms in the study of practices of differentiation. Already equipped with a significant amount of "intellectual baggage" when entering the field, I took careful note when cultural differences were drawn, when it was *once again* commented that the child

speaking Turkish at home who could not tie his shoes, when it was *once again* the Muslim father flagged as having a violence problem, and I looked quite cynically at the recognition of diversity, for example, when songs were sung in different languages. But I had the chance of doing long and intensive fieldwork, including sitting over my data for an extended and intensive time. The intellectual baggage was constricting. The critical gaze gave no language for situations where teachers wanted to convince parents that their child was really talented. It lacked analytical figures for parents to pity me for doing this—according the them—boring, exhausting and poorly paid study, gave no repertoire for all the ambivalences that my political self could not properly classify.

In order to formulate a response to the diagnosis of Sedgwick and others that the political critiques constrict possibilities of thinking too greatly, the goal was to find figures of thought that are not always already critical (Wortmann 2019), employing epistemologies freed from the mindset that could *only* see the social world as a given social system of oppression. The challenge would be to think beyond the established repertoire of critique, to allow different "intellectual moods" and shifting epistemologies (Felski 2015). The book that has now emerged takes account of the critical analysis of divergent epistemologies. A deliberate attempt was made to sometimes break out of the description of social inequality and ask other questions. Attention will be given to ethnographic reflection and analytic sensitivity also in the attempt at political restraint during the research. Maybe it allowed me to listen more carefully to what my interlocutors, young children and their fellow inhabitants of Mühlekon (parents, teachers, caregivers), had to tell. I recognize this endeavor most stringently in a piece brought into the debate by the anthropologist Candea. It is the critical reflex, he writes, that needs to be at least temporarily suspended for ethnographic research and analysis, "[f]or if we lose sight of the need to separate 'taking seriously' from 'engaging critically', we will lose [the] claim to a distinctive scholarly voice—and therefore ultimately also to any political or practical relevance" (2011, 331).

Attempts to Situate the Author

The intellectual problems that researchers explore do not occur in a vacuum, and the "politics of the 'I' do not just dictate what is worthy of study and how it will be studied, but suffuse the human encounter at the heart of the ethnographic endeavor," as Kromidas once wrote so accurately (2016, 10). When I first met the children that are in the focus of this book, Zaylie, Arian, Victor, and their fellow kindergarten classmates in Mühlekon, I had just turned 30. Also, I had just moved back to the country in which I grew up and where I went through 14 years of (mainly successful, academically speaking) schooling, including kindergarten. After having lived abroad for around ten years, I migrated back and entered those school buildings again, first as a substitute teacher in primary

schools and then as a researcher. I also returned to a known geopolitical location, and some words on Switzerland are in order. Switzerland has become very rich over the last century. The small alpine country has not only survived the horrors of the two world wars relatively unscathed, but has also been able to present its own position thereafter in a very brilliant light, denying quite successfully any form of guilt and unjust enrichment. With four official languages and as a so-called nation of wills, Switzerland has managed to be recognized as an idealized image of successful ethnic plurality and lived democracy. However, it is not only the democratic country with its sometimes rather funny popular votes (about cow horns and the like) that brings it to international attention. The Swiss People's Party, as the party with the most voters for many years now, was increasingly making headlines with ever more xenophobic initiatives, serving as a model for the political Right all over. In various ways, the driving force of my thinking is linked to the social implications of those political and historical happenings and discourses.

I grew up in a working-class neighborhood with much immigration and attended the kindergarten and the primary school together with the other children from those housing estates with rather low rents. This meant that many of my childhood friends probably had family histories similar to those of the children in Mühlekon whom I worked with a good twenty years later. While we only spoke Swiss German at home, most of my classmates brought other cultural and linguistic references to the school. My parents were politically engaged (on the left) and were primary school teachers by profession. They raised my brother and me with working-class awareness, even though we probably had no real qualification for it apart from the residential address and our mother's experiences of poverty. When I was around twelve, my father became a full-time politician, responsible later, among other things, for the education department in our region. For many families (also within this study), class boundaries are much more blurred once you look at them closely. My father's subsequent job repeatedly put me in situations that were far removed from what could be termed working-class culture. *Children as Social Butterflies*—a book on conflicting social positions and divergent arenas of status negotiation—certainly resembles parts of my own biography. Being able to move through different social orders without attracting much attention (I think) could be one of my "inherited privileges" (Brubaker 2015, 21).

Ethnographic Byproducts

Bourgois once stated that "writing about what really matters to the people ethnographers work with by implication becomes a secondary instrumental byproduct that is not necessarily relevant to high theory or intellectual creativity" (2002, 418). Knowledge changes depending on who produces it, takes it up, and

uses it. At a time when the claim to truth is multiplying, and the balancing act between denying polyphony and pointing out "fake news" becomes more explosive, social analysis is in greater demand than ever. But it has to face precisely those fractures and different demands on its analysis, through reflexive social research that addresses blind spots, lays out its methodological approach, and points out where one's voice is politically motivated. This also means that a work can follow different goals. *Children as Social Butterflies* tries to sharpen some intellectual figures of thought that everyday life has made me consider as I have traveled the ethnographic pathways with these children. There are, however, plenty of Bourgois's "secondary instrumental byproducts" that, even though not included here, are pursued elsewhere.

Children as Social Butterflies

Introduction

Sitting at one of the small kindergarten tables at Wiesengrund Kindergarten, Zaylie (age 4), Kenny (6), Tereza (5), and Arian (5) were in a tense mood. Kenny had just been punitively reassigned to this table by Mrs. Gasser, the kindergarten teacher. It was too noisy and bustling when he sat with Pedro and Victor, she explained, and now he kept glaring at his former playmates on the other side of the kindergarten, who were still having a good time. To state his discomfort with his new imposed playmates, he complained about what he was supposed to join in with here: Tereza, Arian, and Zaylie had a board game in front of them in which wooden snails crawl round a racetrack depending on a dice roll. "This is so *bubig*! Only caterpillar children do stuff like this!" he said disdainfully and so loud that he got the teacher's attention again. "Kenny, stop it. You're already a butterfly, show the caterpillar children what else the snails can do when they get to the finish line!"

The school year in Switzerland had just begun, with eight new children starting their lives as pupils in Wiesengrund Kindergarten in the Mühlekon neighborhood in the outskirts of Zurich. Zaylie, Tereza, and Arian were three of them. They were about to find their way in a pedagogically informed daily routine and to establish relationships within the social order in class. They were supposed to learn how to play the board game with the snails, how to sing the *Grüezi* song (hello all together), and how to hop over a big foam die the same number of times as the pips showing while the whole class counted along—backward, too. And they were supposed to learn to differentiate between the younger cohort, the so-called caterpillar children, and the older cohort of the butterfly children, while the configuration of their social belonging started to be rendered pedagogical.

As an ethnographer interested in childhood, migration, and schooling, I visited Wiesengrund Kindergarten, located in the diversified neighborhood of Mühlekon. Fieldwork started the day Zaylie and her fellow caterpillar

companions entered the kindergarten building for their very first time. As with many ethnographic studies, it is the unpredictability of encounters that allows intellectual problems to gain shape only over time. Hence, when I started visiting Wiesengrund Kindergarten, I still had no idea that sixteen months later I would be present when Zaylie, squealing with excitement, experienced the waves of the Gulf of Guinea for the very first time.

December a Year Later, Cape Coast, Ghana, on the Porch of a Family House

It did not take long for Zaylie to figure out where she could score against her rebellious, feisty cousin Zoe. The two girls had not seen each other since they were babies, and the reunion in Ghana for Christmas, when both just turned six, was emotional and tense. Spitting and biting and a lot of tears were involved. "OMG! Playing UNO is so *bubig*! Zoe doesn't get it at all. And she does not even know how to count backward. Look, Zoe, I'm gonna show you small: ten, nine, eight . . ." (hopping up and down the stairs).

While Zoe lived in Cape Coast and would start school the following year, Zaylie already was in her second year at Wiesengrund Kindergarten. She had already grown from a caterpillar child to a butterfly child and was now part of the older cohort of her class. Every working day, she had been attending Wiesengrund Kindergarten, close to where she lived with her mother, Rose, and her younger sister, Debby. *Bubig* is a Swiss dialect word Zaylie knew from class. Usually, it was a word she was afraid of. She tried to avoid being called out by her peers for not being able to do things that are *bubig*. *Bubigi* things are supposedly so childishly easy that even children should be able to do them easily. It is difficult not to say the word in a disparaging tone that resonates with contempt, just like Kenny expressed it referring to the snail game, just like Zaylie expressed it with Zoe. She probably learned the emotionality of the word before she could define it precisely in terms of content and had obviously learned how to use it. The word and the emotional package showed its effect: Zoe left insulted, even without knowledge of Swiss German. Zaylie could prove her cousin wrong, could prove herself temporarily more competent, and was able to demonstrate this to me, the ethnographer accompanying her from Switzerland to Ghana, too.

CHILDREN AS SOCIAL BUTTERFLIES is an ethnography about a kindergarten class in a diversified Swiss neighborhood I came to call Mühlekon. It examines the children's everyday lives and, in particular, the changing configurations of social belonging as the children navigate across different socio-spatial orders. The focus is on Zaylie and her fellow companions such as Tereza, Mathumai, Arian, Kenny, Victor, Harun, and Adana, children aged four to seven, who all attended Wiesengrund Kindergarten for at least one year between 2016 and 2019.

It started with an interest in differentiation practices in kindergarten and an assumption that this also had something to do with practicing and envisioning a future Swiss society.[1] Building on that, I explored how social belonging and all the "personal, cultural baggage" that the children brought with them to class every day was dealt with and how it was received, acknowledged, or problematized through the school system and within the peer group. I spent weeks and months with the children and their teachers at Wiesengrund Kindergarten, attended the morning lessons, 8:00–12:00, and time and again participated in their daily interactions. Being with them in the classroom, insights into their everyday lives were just ephemeral, and their teachers—as well as I—only had vague assumptions about how the children's lives would be like after leaving, and were before entering, the kindergarten. So, after a few months, leaving the building with the children whenever and wherever I could and was allowed to seemed to be the indicated research move. The abandonment of a supposedly clearly defined field of study—not surprisingly—dynamized the empirical case and its intellectual endeavors.

Much of *who Zaylie is and where she belonged,* with whom she related, how she was addressed, and how she positioned herself changed when she left the kindergarten building each day at noon, and some of it also changed over time in class. And it was this navigation between different socio-spatial orders and recall of divergent references that got my attention.

Of course, this was not only the case with Zaylie: When I first met her kindergarten companions Arian and Tereza the day they all enrolled (Arian crying, Tereza appearing self-confident and quite independent), I did not yet expect that their families traveling back and forth from Switzerland to Kosovo would contribute to the thinking about families with large income differences across transnational space or how their ideas about the Swiss state shaped the families' attitudes toward schooling. When I first met Mathumai, I could not imagine sitting in the family's apartment, tasting sweet potato chips her father had just imported from Sri Lanka, talking about civil wars and transgenerational lives in exile. These insights led to a stronger contextualization of ordering powers in childhood and brought into question the omnipotence of the Swiss school system in negotiating children's sense of belonging. Accompanying the children in class, through the neighborhood, and beyond proved more and more to be an exciting window for studying social configurations of belonging at large (Gilliam and Gulløv 2019).

Over time, the children of the kindergarten class brought the study into their fantasy worlds and into their rooms at home, to their afternoon day-care centers and social welfare offices, and onto the football pitch. Ethnographic data were collected around cultural celebrations, shopping malls, temples, and churches. I followed some children abroad—in the case of Zaylie even to a different continent. Together, we took part in negotiations of a plurality of configurations of social belonging, and children "convicted" me of incongruence as

much as I "convicted" them. The material gathered along the ethnographic pathways that opened up by following children put presumed insights into perspective and destabilized ascriptions of social belonging that were taken for granted. And it made me think about the constitution, entanglement, and relatedness of multiple social orders which were simultaneously and in different ways relevant in the everyday life of the children. So, what is this about, and how does it contribute to the scientific debate?

Aims and Questions

Children as Social Butterflies pursues two intertwined yet dividable objectives. On the one hand, the aim is to describe the everyday life of a kindergarten class in that neighborhood I came to call Mühlekon. It aims to contribute to the ethnographic research on childhood that focuses on children as social actors across divergent places of their (educational) everyday life (Kromidas 2016; Bellino 2017; Gilliam and Gulløv 2017; Lareau 2011; Erstad and Smette 2017; Ahn 2023). I aim to describe as carefully and in as much detail as possible how children navigate through different socio-spatial orders, making use of various categories and different configurations of social belonging. The gained insights are worth recounting in their own right. For this rather descriptive endeavor, I borrow the image of navigation from Vigh, who writes that navigating in a social sense has to do with a certain uncertainty. The question, therefore, is how the children "steer their lives across a shifting and volatile terrain" (Vigh 2011, 153). What happens, hence, to these configurations of social belonging when children navigate through their everyday life? What happens to the attribution of being a kindergarten child (with all its attached behavioral expectations) once the child is at home or in Ghana? How are skin color, German skills, and knowledge of a given TV series connotated, performed, and felt differently in different sites? Which categories of the children's social belonging do not eventually enter kindergarten at all, and likewise, how is an established order in class imagined and referred to in a day-care center in the afternoon? What happens to the category of the butterflies once the child is not in class anymore?

The different ethnographic pathways that opened up by following the children of that particular kindergarten class gave, in the words of Pache Huber and Spyrou, "a unique perspective with which to explore the fluid and shifting character of children's daily interactions with peers and adults" (2012, 295). The children's simultaneous incorporation into multiple socio-spatial orders made me think of what I came to call a childhood-migration-schooling nexus, against which the children learned to negotiate sameness and difference. This first objective leads to some broader epistemic reference problems. One is the question of what research with children can look like and how it differs from research with adults (Punch 2002; Khoja 2016; Abebe and Bessell 2014; Christensen 2008). From

this discussion about child-centered qualitative social research, we can outline an area of tension between the analytical added value of research with children on the one hand and research ethically justified restraint on the other hand, which is too rarely discussed broadly, apart from exceptions (Holloway, Holt, and Mills 2019; Hammersley 2017; Spyrou 2011). *Children as Social Butterflies* contributes to these discussions and shows how the situational handling between research ethics and scientific value cannot be solved theoretically or on an abstract level, but only pragmatically, and with a view to the social consequences (also of what research on children's perspectivity is able to release). This is demonstrated, for example, by the empirical data of the tragic death of Tereza's father and the question of how ethnographic research could be conducted in this context (see appendix). Second, there is the question of field constitution. What happens to an ethnographic field and to field relations when you navigate with children through their neighborhood and beyond? This book contributes to the intellectual debate around (multi-)sitedness in ethnography (Coleman and von Hellermann 2011b; Falzon 2009; Marcus 2009) but by thinking consistently from the children's navigation across socio-spatial orders. These intellectual challenges are dealt with in different ways and with different foci in the following chapters and the appendix.

On the other hand, the study pursues a second objective. The experiences along the various ethnographic pathways taken with Zaylie, Arian, Mathumai, Tereza, and their fellow kindergarten colleagues are used to consider how we can theoretically reflect on the contingency of complex configurations of social belonging. How can different socio-spatial orders be related to each other? Which figures of thought and epistemic approaches can be used to study social belonging across time and space? How could we conceptualize and further develop an analytical language that is useful to meaningfully comprehend and describe the social locations of these children? The intellectual treatment of these questions contributes to the literature on belonging and social negotiation of social relations (Yuval-Davis 2006; Gammeltoft 2018; Abu El-Haj 2015; Feldman-Savelsberg 2016; Moran 2019; Hirschauer 2023), which is too rarely thought through in social theory with a focus on the new generation.

Combining the different aims of this book, a more intense engagement with theoretical approaches to grasping childhood, migration, and schooling was due. Bringing divergent bodies of literature into the conversation decisively informed the empirical case and fruitfully destabilized the taken for granted perspectives on a kindergarten class in a diversified and stigmatized neighborhood.

Children as Social Butterflies: The Case and Its Wider Intellectual Appeal

This book is about children managing sameness and difference with regard to changing social orders. It is dedicated to the children's everyday lives during

their first years in the Swiss school system. All the *social butterflies* visited the same kindergarten, Wiesengrund Kindergarten, and grew up Mühlekon, a neighborhood which, in Swiss terms, is poor and suffers from a bad reputation. Mühlekon's comparatively cheap flats have increasingly been rented out to people who have immigrated to Switzerland. This is also reflected in Wiesengrund Kindergarten: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Edo, English, Farsi, Italian, Kurdish, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Twi, and Urdu were spoken by one or several children in the class. No parent, apart from one father, had themselves attended a Swiss school. Thus, for the children I met in the course of this research, *coming from somewhere else* was a normal thing. And even if the picture eventually became much more differentiated and complex, the question of negotiating sameness and difference in terms of their social belonging was often strongly associated with migration and (global) economic inequalities.

These days, kindergarten is the first educational institution all children in Switzerland must attend.[2] Enrolment in the national education system is accompanied by the obligation for children and their guardians alike to physically stay on the spot for most of the year. This is as banal as it is momentous for the daily organization of the children's lives. Along with attendance in kindergartens, children are knitted more into an "official" social fabric of the Swiss society, with certain expectations on those pupils to-be and their families. In many cases in Mühlekon, kindergarten was the first place for the children where the linguistic arrangement was almost exclusively in (Swiss-)German and where the children had to attend without the presence of family members. This makes kindergarten an interesting case with regard to the questions of interest here.

References across Socio-spatial Orders

Being around Zaylie, Tereza, Harun, Arian, Mathumai, and their companions in class, one could notice how they were drawing very elaborate boundaries within the children's group and referred to very different categories of social belonging depending on given situations. They built up relations and became friends (or not), they negotiated their social belonging to an infinite number of categories and relations of different scale and scope and of different intensity. As the chapters of this study will reveal, sometimes those affiliations were situational and highly volatile and sometimes persistent: the girls, all those who like football, everybody from the day-care center "CB II," those making fun of Mathumai, all those who understand Kurdish. Sometimes, it was decisive to come from a certain country, say, Turkey; sometimes completely different children came from the same country, because all those who could count from one to ten in Turkish, for example, were given the status of being Turkish. They interacted with each other, with their teachers, and with me, drawing on a situated

and changing behavioral repertoire. Simultaneously, they were categorized and assessed by the teachers according to things such as their knowledge and command of German, their ability to listen carefully, their phenomenological awareness, the worries teachers had about anticipated glimpses into the families, and much more. The question of which of these categories of differentiation became (situationally) relevant for children's negotiation of social belonging and which did not is part of this empirical study.

But the case study got more complex.

By leaving the kindergarten with the children, easy attributions (migrant, working-class, stigmatized) became more and more blurred, even destabilized. Zaylie, for instance, who was a shy, mostly quiet child in kindergarten, was able to appear quite resolute in the day-care center when she played in English with her friend Kim during the afternoons, and even more so when she spent time with her younger sister Debby. On the beach in Ghana, she was clearly recognized as a child of migrants (i.e., the rich people); street vendors gathered around her and wanted her to get on horses, and even more wanted her mother to pay and tip well. And as the opening sequence showed, she could also look down on her cousin for not attending a Swiss kindergarten as she did.

The simultaneous incorporation in social and local respects was not understandable as incorporation to antagonistic others. The children's everyday life within the families, in class, and at their day-care centers, for instance, was not just different. Children navigated through different social orders *which kept referring to each other*, and it could be somewhat ambiguous on which principles of order social positions or children's belonging were negotiated. These negotiations across time and space, and the relations of the in-between, caught my attention more and more. I tried to shed more light on the constitution of different socio-spatial orders and how they were entangled with the complex configurations of children's social belonging. Based upon the empirical findings, I have become increasingly engaged in theorizing multi-referentiality, and the chapters of *Children as Social Butterflies* are intended to help this take shape.

Social Belonging in Multi-referentiality

This book deploys a heuristic of multi-referentiality. Theorizing multi-referentiality, thereby, is more than "a set of logically related propositions that summarize and generalize from what has been documented in the form of empirical generalizations." Following Katz's approach in the development of an analytical language, theory is thought here to be "useful in the meaning of a set of guides when exploring the unknown" (1999, 225). Some associated analytical figures help to get closer to an understanding of the intellectual problems raised above. When I speak of multi-referentiality, I thus assume that people (including the children of this ethnography) are aware of the contingency

of social orders and situationally refer to different orders in order to negotiate social belonging.

Social belonging, in turn, has often been theorized starting from national issues of inclusion and exclusion and the argument about who actually is and can/should be part of a particular ethnic or national group (Abu El-Haj 2015; Anthias 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006). This work borrows from this but is more oriented toward figures that describe belonging more generally in terms of a "way of expressing relatedness" (Feldman-Savelsberg 2016, 8) and human differentiation (Hirschauer 2017), in order "to capture the sense of attachment that people . . . articulate . . . when describing the ties of mutuality that bound them together with others and into larger social communities" (Gammeltoft 2014, 13). In the various socio-spatial orders, the respective configuration of social affiliation changes, and thus also the respective consequences that a certain attribution, an achievement, or a sense of belonging entails. The simultaneous incorporation in social and local respects cannot be understood as incorporation into antagonistic others but must be conceptualized as *mutually generating and constituting*. So, if one objective of this book is about understanding the everyday lives of these children and how they navigate social belonging, multi-referentiality helps to operationalize this intellectual agenda. Multi-referentiality thus refers on the one hand to a knowledge of the *contingency* of social order (e.g., being a girl could and in fact is also thought of and felt quite differently elsewhere) and on the other hand to the *simultaneous* negotiation of divergent social orders in one and the same situation. It provides an analytical language for grasping conditions of social belonging in terms of their configuration and constitution across time and space, on the multiple referentiality to what happens socially in a given moment.

The focus on schooling and its practices of rendering social order pedagogical, however blurred and contested these practices may be in situ, serves as a point of reference against which social order, above all within the daily life in Swiss institutions, is legitimized. This interplay is important to better understand the children navigating through different social orders and managing (sometimes) contesting modes of social belonging. Wacquant once described the entanglement to the boxer's everyday life outside the gym as the unique feature of the boxing center: "One cannot understand the relatively closed world of boxing outside of the human and ecological context in which it is anchored and the social possibles of which this context is the bearer. Indeed it is in its *double relation of symbiosis and opposition* to the neighborhood and to the grim realities of the ghetto that the gym defines itself" (2004, 17; italics in original).

SIMILAR TO THE GYM, the pedagogical order in the kindergarten, too, was shaped with reference to the children's families and the neighborhood. Not only the reference to the migrant, but also possible threat topoi (The parents smoke too much! The children sit in front of the TV too much! The children eat

unhealthy things! There is violence and problems!) conditioned how kindergarten classes were practiced, and what became more and more clearly shaped into a social order that was rendered pedagogical. But it was not only the adults who shaped the respective social order on the basis of references to elsewhere; the children also carried these different references from one place to another and drew on shifting configurations of social belonging, depending on the situation.

Structure and Glimpses into the Chapters

Children as Social Butterflies is organized around the core intellectual problems it wishes to address. It is divided into five chapters and an appendix, each taking up and dealing with a specific issue regarding kindergarten children navigating belonging across socio-spatial orders. Chapter 1 relocates the childhood-migration-schooling nexus within a bigger academic realm. It is a chapter that brings the various studies and debates relevant to this book into dialog. The next two chapters delve into kindergarten life. Together they shed light on how the children's different modes of social belonging work and work together and how this is intertwined with the established social order in class. Chapter 2 takes a closer look at the children's everyday lives in the kindergarten, revolving particularly around questions of the effectiveness and establishment of a school order and questions of the negotiation of children's social belonging within it. It elaborates how children familiarize themselves with school and what it takes for a child to become a kindergarten pupil. A second line of inquiry to understand kindergarten life joins this by exploring how schools categorize and organize the children from the kindergarten class. Chapter 3 thus asks about current educational assumptions about good childhood and the role that the kindergarten seeks to play in the lives of children. It scrutinizes how ephemeral insights into the children's extracurricular lives permeate everyday life in class and how the simultaneous processes of involvement and demarcation are intrinsically entangled with the practice of kindergarten care. Chapter 4 elaborates what happens to the established configuration of social belonging in class when children leave the pedagogically inclined order of the kindergarten and navigate (at times together) through different social orders across time and space. The last chapter, chapter 5, develops multi-referential perspectives on the neighborhood, Mühlekon, and beyond, using the migration stories and the everyday life of the children's families. It examines how growing up and living in Mühlekon is interfused with both the fact of being located on the rather deprived outskirts of Zurich and the various struggles with poverty and social problems, as well as with the Swiss migration regime. The conclusion summarizes the main findings and discusses multi-referential openings for further research with children like Zaylie, Tereza, and Mathumai.

In between, there is space for some shorter interludes. More descriptive in tone, they are intended to enrich the more analytically inclined chapters with empirical insights.

In the appendix the reader is taken on an ethnographic pathway. It elaborates metaphorically but constitutes also quite literally, the field that this study explored. Focusing on one girl, Tereza, and her mother Blerta, the argument expands on the methodological and methodical entanglements of ethnographic research with children, and it directs the gaze toward the possibilities, surprises, and limitations of participant observation around young children.

Notes on Language

The research has been carried out mainly in several Swiss dialects and German, and sometimes in English. Victor's mother and I sometimes spoke a mixture of Portuguese (her) and Spanish (me); I learned to respond to the question "Ɛtɛ sɛn?" with a long "Bɔkɔɔ!", to the laughter of my Twi speaking acquaintances in Ghana; and the door-and-fishing chats with Sinopa's mother were carried out in Italian. I tried to grasp some other sentences and words of the many languages spoken whenever possible, but without immersing myself in the study of one of the languages unfamiliar to me. I started learning Turkish in 2019, too late to enter conversations with Harun's grandmother. Translations were often done for me, undertaken by those present and able to do so, including the children.

Ethnographers often have local field assistants, someone who most likely has an affinity for research but above all the necessary language competence to conduct interviews and help with translation and analysis if the researcher is not sufficiently skilled. Obviously, this was not possible in a research project like the one presented here. This linguistic weakness is, however, also an analytical strength, rendering visible the "inevitable partiality of cultural knowledge" (Coleman and von Hellermann 2011a, 4) as well as the everyday Babylonian linguistic diversity, where time and again people notice only a fraction of what is spoken.

Like any work that deals with translations, this one also involves the danger of alienation or exaggeration. When I incorporate passages from interviews or statements by informants and show them as direct quotes, they are translated in most cases. Longer excerpts from transcripts are furthermore typographically marked. The fact that the sentences in (Swiss-)German were not always correct, presented with foreign accents, and switched between dialect and German words might be relevant to the respective situation. I tried to render this mainly through descriptions and terminological notes on the translation. Some words are retained in the local Swiss dialect and explained, like *bubig*. They appear when it seems relevant for the analysis.

1

Anthropology and the Childhood-Migration-Schooling Nexus

It is a genuinely anthropological endeavor to study how people grow up, relate to each other, learn to deal with new things, position themselves within given contexts, and draw social boundaries.[1] The analysis of the kindergarten class undertaken here gains its contour through engagement with works that together can be described as a *childhood-migration-schooling* nexus. Different questions important to *Children as Social Butterflies* have been addressed at different points in time in given subdisciplinary fields, and it is important to organize these thoughts with regard to the intellectual agenda of this book. Very broadly speaking, *scholars interested in childhood* have most strongly touched on questions of social positioning and generational order. *Educational anthropologists*, on the other hand, have brought questions of appropriation and the hierarchization of different stocks of knowledge to the fore, while *researchers on migration* have been intensively engaged in theorizing about questions of belonging and boundary work as much as they also have questioned nationally bounded research. Of course, such a clear distinction between different subdisciplines is analytical in nature. In practice, debates tend to overlap. The following review, therefore, does not simply lump literature together in a kind of thumbnail history but allows us to think about academic fragmentation, theoretical schisms, and thinking spaces for resonance and to see how various (interdisciplinary) subdisciplines could enter into dialog. The main focus will be on what one can learn from childhood anthropology, migration studies, and educational anthropology and how the different debates mutually generate and stimulate the nexus under examination.

The Anthropology of Childhood: Childhood Studies

In 1907, Robert R. Marett (succeeding Edward Taylor as university reader) reviewed Dudley A. Kidd's recent monography, *Savage Childhood*. Full of praise

for Kidd's engagement with the (savage) child, Marett anticipated huge benefits for anthropologists, if only they would care more about the children, noting, "At first one wonders why so fascinating a theme as savage babyhood viewed from the inside has not attracted the attention of a host of observers, more especially as the first-hand anthropologist is not infrequently a woman" (Marett 1907, 343). Not only does he state two of the basic attitudes many scholars after him shout out loud (namely, *Childhood matters!* and *Anthropologists do not care enough about children!*), but it also foreshadows in a nutshell the battles, on different levels, fought in the anthropology of childhood in the century ahead. Among others, these are: Who is supposed to care for *and* study children, how should the discipline conceptualize the child and its position in society, and what are the universalistic claims when considering children growing up? These questions are negotiated in almost every child-centered work up to the present day.

Not surprisingly, the conceived ontological symmetrization of yore called "primitive people" with children, as in *Savage Childhood*, has not gotten very far without being challenged. When Franz Boas motivated his students (especially Margaret Mead) to study children in other cultures, this must be seen in the light of fighting the evolutionism prevalent at the time. Thereafter, it was Mead's (1928, 1943) work which was widely discussed in the field of childhood anthropology: adopting Piaget's theory and others borrowed from psychology, the interest in the socialization of children was her basic key to understanding society at large. Among other things, she aimed to show how a different thematization of sexuality and the human body made the teenage years much more relaxed, thus openly criticizing socialization and child-rearing in the United States as causing stress and disruption in human life. Her research triggered fierce debates regarding authenticity, ethnographic truth, and ethics, eventually leading to one of the most conflictual disputes of the discipline (Montgomery 2009; Wells 2018).[2]

The interest in children has consequentially been "scattered" (Sobo 2015, 43), "long but uneven" (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin 2007, 241), and "fitful rather than systematic" (Toren 2004, 92). When Hardman (1973) questioned, "*Can there be an anthropology of children?*" and Hirschfeld (2002) echoed this a good thirty years later (somewhat polemically) while supposedly not knowing "*Why don't anthropologists like children?*" and scholars such as Bluebond-Langer and Korbin (2007) claimed at the outset of the twenty-first century that the anthropology of childhood was only about to begin, one gets a taste of the epistemological, but also the emotional, frictions at stake.[3]

The following section, which examines different figures of thought evolving from the realm of childhood anthropology, does not try yet again to systematize or even out the scatterings and fitfulness described above. Rather, the aim is to pursue three concrete questions which are important for *Children as Social Butterflies*: What can we learn about the anthropological engagement with children

regarding their position in societies? What happens if children are understood as social actors in their own right? And how does the anthropology of childhood help us to think about the other bodies of literature and the childhood-migration-schooling nexus under examination?

Seeing Children as Children: The Consequences of Childification

Childhood is a relational concept. Depending on the perspective, it could be a period of life or a segment of society (Qvortrup 2011). It can hardly be thought about and interpreted without the second side with which childhood is contrasted: adulthood. When a person is addressed as a child, that person is inevitably conceived of as a certain "human kind" in a generational order, as some kind of person other than an adult (Hirschauer 2023, 353). Although this statement is quite banal, it had far-reaching implications for the different approaches to childhood as well as the anthropological interest in children, long before the concept of "generational order" was introduced into the debate (Alanen 2001; Mayall 2001).

Children were often thought of as being "the only others at home" (Montgomery 2009, 20). Even though it is contested, we can still see two aspects of the symmetrization affecting the position of children as others in anthropological and, methodologically more broadly, ethnographic research nowadays. First, there is continuity in terms of the statement, "Ethnography would work best to study children." It has been frequently pointed out that participant observation, in particular, is suited to researching the other, the wild child, those mysterious beings full of secrets. The epistemological question raised is that of how we can understand meaning that would not a priori be obvious and feasible to the (adult) researcher. Zoomed out to the discipline at large, this attitude toward the putative other gave momentum to a whole series of critical self-reflections (Ortner 2016; Clifford 1999; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Zenker and Kumoll 2010a; Strathern 2004). The conception of children as others, however, still seems surprisingly intact. In line with that, second, the comparison of children and putative savages and others also appears in questions of representation and perspective. Recent childhood research is often concerned with how it could properly represent the child's voice, since the person writing, that is, the adult ethnographer, would belong irreconcilably to a different kind of human beings, placing the child in a more vulnerable, muted, even powerless position as opposed to adults in general and the adult researcher in particular (Khoja 2016; Spyrou 2011; Holloway, Holt, and Mills 2019; James 2007). The ambivalent ontological classification of the child and its implications for research might lead to a momentum of its own *writing culture critique* within the anthropology of childhood.

In addition to the symmetrization of children with savages and the positioning of children as ontologically different from adults, anthropology has created

a view of children that, first and foremost, produces children *primarily*, and *only*, as children. I suggest using the term *childification* in this context, as it allows us to better understand this particular reification process. The intellectual undertaking of this book is, in part, to destabilize this epistemological stance. Whereas the first assumption does look at children as ontologically different, this second, related assumption hence puts too much weight on childhood as a categorical location. Some elaboration is required here.

Ethnographic research has paid particular attention to studying how children eventually turn into adults and lose their childish markers. Mainly inspired by the works of van Gennep and, later, Turner, it focused on initiation rites, studying the transition, liminality, and passage to adulthood.[4] Besides transition and initiation, more recent studies, for example, on street children in Brazil (Hecht 1998), on child soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia (Hoffman 2011), and on the prostitution of children in Thailand (Montgomery 2001), look at children *specifically* from the viewpoint that they are denied what is conceived as childhood. Those studies, impressively showing how children (too early and in a bad way) become adults, provide various figures for thinking about childhood. They help illustrate how differently children are seen and treated in different situations and societies and how ideas of what a good childhood is travel through time and space, and a lot of fruitful insights are gained from those studies. The fundamental separation of child and adult, however, prevents the view of internal differences within the people positioned as children, and there is a danger of regarding children too much as the new generation of a given society. Children, as a category, "constitute too sweeping a category" (Stearns 2005, 847), blurring other person- and group-oriented lines of human differentiation. It can be argued that the anthropology of childhood at times reifies children as children too much and has a certain bias that prevents questions being asked outside the child/adult dichotomy.

The thinking around the consequences of childification is inspired by arguments in migration studies, as I will explain in greater depth below. "Groupism" (Brubaker 2004) has been challenged for other putative groups, but hardly at all for children. While other kinds of essentialized grouping (people of color, women) have been destabilized, it could be argued that the distinction between children and adults is becoming even stronger, driven intellectually by the establishment of childhood scholars and on a societal level by the strengthening of children's rights, by places conceived and designed exclusively for children (or adults; "Admission over 18s only!"), and by increasing state regulation to protect children (Zelizer 1985). This conflict of aims has not yet been adequately addressed.

Revising the literature on conceptualizing childhood, it is possible to see that little work has been done to date on conceptualizing the diversification of children's lives when it comes to complex configurations of social belonging. The question of how various person-oriented differentiations, with childhood being

but one of many categories, differ in kind and the way in which they operate is an empirical one which is explored in the following chapters of this book.

Children as Social Actors

The focus on children's agency gained momentum after Hardman asked whether there could be such a thing as an anthropology of childhood in her much-quoted 1973 article, and it certainly has lately become "something of a 'mantra', repeated without due examination" (Holloway, Holt, and Mills 2019, 459). Anthropologists as well as scholars from neighboring disciplines started studying children as social actors (James 2007; Prout and James 1997; Bollig and Kelle 2016). The result of this epistemological shift is a field of research around the notions of agency, vulnerability, and autonomy, with the assertion that children definitely would not be "mere appendages to adult society" (Hirschfeld 2002, 614).

Hardman described this change in perspective as a shift from the asynchronous to the synchronous, from the becoming to the being, resonating with what Qvortrup (2007, 395–396) in hindsight tried to capture with a previous "conceptual homelessness of childhood," where this new paradigm stepped in and tried "to provide children with a conceptual home or an epistemological location". The criticism that childhood anthropologists would have been interested in something which "isn't yet, except 'in terms of its development,'" viewing children "to a greater or lesser extent, as passive objects, as helpless spectators in a pressing environment which affects and produces their every behavior . . . as continually assimilating, learning and responding to the adult, having little autonomy, contributing nothing to social values or behaviour except the latent outpourings of earlier acquired experiences" (Hardman 1973, 87) was clearly put. The new paradigm—often named the *new sociology* of childhood and later childhood studies—not only placed children at the center of attention, but this attention was furthermore thought of "as a corrective to the previous neglect; it supported the notion that a child's perspectives and understandings should be taken seriously and rejected the idea that children were in any way incomplete or incompetent." (Montgomery 2009, 44). One could say that the impetus to rehabilitate children as social actors and the interest in freeing them from their formerly passive status in academia has at times overshot the mark. Critics argue that children's voices and agency were often transferred somewhat unreflectively as given truths into social analysis—pure and honest, only to be misled by bad adults and the social environment around them. Lancy (2012), for instance, had set his mind to "unmasking children's agency", while Spyrou (2011) warned against adopting children's voices unquestioningly but, rather, suggested paying more attention to the constraints and the situation of childlike actions. A certain smoothing can thus be seen in the meantime. Scholars continue to promote the ethnographic inclusion of children's perspectives and acknowledge the synchronicity without assigning "superior validity" (Hammersley 2017, 116) to

children's voices, and the "dearth of ethical reflections" (Meloni, Vanthuyne, and Rousseau 2015, 108) has had its first tentative blossoms. A good example of this shift is Khoja's (2016) recent article. In a self-reflection about a previous study of kindergartners in Saudi Arabia, she did not step back from conceiving children as social actors but questioned whether she too gullibly took the children's responses at face value. There would be a danger here, she thus argued, of not only glossing over ethical concerns and power relations between the researcher and the researched but also of misjudging social context and constraints in children's lives (and children's awareness thereof).

A further conciliation took place through the attempts to combine the emphasis on children's being with the dismissed adult-to-become-perspective. Around a decade ago, Uprichard (2008) suggested it was possible to simultaneously conceptualize children as being and becoming, in order to also acknowledge that children usher themselves into social webs they seek to become part of. Hanson (2017) further expanded Uprichard's proposal to include the temporality of the past, in which children are also said to have grown out of a given period of their lives, to not be babies anymore, for instance, or in the case of the present kindergarten study, to have successfully stepped out of the social role of the caterpillar child and into that of a social butterfly. These more recent works suggest that children are more established in ethnographic research and have, in a sense, lost the status of a muted group. That given, children are "freed" from the essential vulnerability of the disregarded, and to a certain extent scholars can look more *soberly, and more empirically,* at what is happening in a given field (which is also, but not only, inhabited by young people). The simultaneous conceptualization of children's autonomous status as social agents, but also seeing the embeddedness and constraint in a wider social context, becomes possible.

Children in the Childhood-Migration-Schooling Nexus

Drawing especially on the discussions of how to position children in different social contexts and traveling concepts of good childhood, these figures of thought help to contextualize and analyze the conditions of the everyday lives of the main interlocutors of *Children as Social Butterflies.* It is furthermore the topos of generationing and the configuration of being and becoming that clearly prefigure the analysis. The studies of childhood elsewhere were also helpful in pulling, so to speak, the moral teeth of the current Western European or U.S. discourses on the seemingly priceless value of children (Zelizer 1985). This is particularly important as research done in Switzerland on migration, children, and schooling often has an emancipatory bias that too frivolously attributes agency as well as vulnerability to children and takes conceptions of what childhood is supposed to look like too much for granted. Moreover, debates from a century of childhood anthropology challenge the assumption that childhood is all too normally seen

as institutionalized in schools and that education is first and foremost to be done in and by schools.

The review of anthropological engagement with children showed that children are often marked as constitutive for families or groups or even societies—the new generation of a certain social collective. This also involves negotiating to whom children actually belong and into which collectives they are ideally woven and in what way. This is also much debated from another angle in the anthropology of education, and it is also a question that arises in connection with migration. "Children are . . . usually more involved in the social life of their host societies than their parents through school and other child-specific institutions and contact zones (playing grounds, football fields, kindergarten, backyards etc.)," argue Knörr and Nunes, so that their "ways of socializing with other children and with the world around is also less constrained by prejudice and bias than those of adults" (2005, 15). This foreshadows how the assumptions around childhood and questions of migration that will be looked at here intermingle.

The Anthropology of Migration: Migration Studies

For a long time, migration was something that happened *to* the anthropologists, but not in front of them. The people studied largely remained local, "without history" (Wolf 1982) and linguistically stuck in present (Fabian 1993). This is at least remarkable since movement has always been considered one of *the* valuable resources of knowledge production and an engine of reflection. It is also remarkable with respect to the phenomena they studied. One of the most discussed items in anthropology is the Kula gift exchange, explored by Malinowski in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). Even though Malinowski himself studied the flow of ideas and people, he did not make that a big thing.[5] This void of seeing but not noticing migration must partly be explained by the inferior status ascribed to informants. A second point can be seen in the anthropologist's methodological localism, placing "his" island, "her" village, or "their" tribe with a given bounded social entity. Research was done *there*. Responsible for "the savage slot," to use Trouillot's (1991) famous wording, the anthropologist's ignorance of migratory phenomena has yet more to do with disciplinary boundaries and the question of what anthropology is and is not about. While nomads and their mobile way of life were an anthropological motive, labor migration was dismissed as a sign of modernity: "Anthropology was largely tribe-and-island-focused, concerned with out-of-the-way peoples in out-of-the-way places or with the silent relics of deep time" (Geertz 2004, 577).

With the Manchester School, especially through the work of Mitchell (1969) and Gluckman (1965; Kuper 1970), studies focusing on migration appeared in anthropology in the 1950s and 1960s. They brought poverty and societal change

in urban settings into the discipline's debate. In Gluckman's key figure of the *tribesman in the city*, negotiating different social roles and changing status, we can already see an early foundation of a common theme in migration studies to come, addressing simultaneous incorporation into divergent social fields across socio-spatial orders.

The discipline's interest in migration received an enormous boost in the 1980s, and this coincides with when more people started to think about "anthropology at home" (Jackson 1987; Caputo 2000), when urban anthropology became a disciplinary subfield (e.g., institutionalized within the American Anthropological Association), and when the division into "them" and "us" became even more absurd as more and more "others," sometimes referred to in the discipline at that time as "halfies," fruitfully stirred up debates (Abu-Lughod 1991). It was also the time when the approaches to putative tribes and villagers were heavily questioned in what has become anthropology's writing culture critique (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Phenomena like globalization and decolonization more intensively entered the academic arena, and the supposed anthropological division of the world has been thoroughly shaken up.

However, the topic of migration was not a like a new island to explore anymore. In particular, the sociologists of the Chicago School, who investigated the city's massive expansion from a socio-cultural point of view, were "there" already, dealing with social diversification and (ethnic) boundary making, such as William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1943). The research field of migration became, much earlier than is the case for the study of childhood, thoroughly interdisciplinary (Horevitz 2009). In the following, I will outline how migration studies informed the *childhood-migration-schooling* nexus the most. These are ideas around the phenomena of crossing/transgressing different kinds of boundaries while deploying a *transnationalism* optic, the question of what happens to people if they are regarded as migrants, and the take on social belonging and human differentiation.

Conceptual Consequences of Deploying a Transnational Optic

Elaborations on research optics, epistemology, and social analysis done by scholars of transnationalism proved useful for a better understanding of group configurations and social belonging. In order to define what is meant by transnationalism and how this is important for the present study, we must first consider borders, fixed entities, nation-states, and their societies, hence, those concepts used to define "a people" or "a society" when modern academic fields, such as the discipline of anthropology, developed. Only then can transnationalism be understood as one of several possible intellectual perspectives to destabilize and new epistemic horizons explored.

As is probably true for every idea that has a prefix such as *trans-* or *post-* or *de-*, it does not displace what comes *after* the prefix. By deploying a transnational

optic, nation-states (and with it their given migration regimes as well as their putative societies) are thus not considered less important but are viewed from a different angle (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). The shift in research optics does not deny the nations' effective power, but scholars of transnationalism more strongly engage in the understanding of borders and boundaries as *effects* or *dispositifs* for social phenomena and not as marking the end of a given field of interest or a given society (Nieswand 2018). The focus is on people, things, ideas, and other research objects who transgress, transcend, overcome, or make use of (national) borders in a particular way. Scholars of transnationalism have thus questioned the ethnic lens in migration studies, have thought of simultaneity and of finding an analytical language to go beyond methodological nationalism, to name just some of their analytical contributions which were fruitful for understanding the epistemic objects addressed in the childhood-migration-schooling nexus that is of interest here (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton 1994; Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002).

However, these scholars were not the first to problematize social science's perspective on culture(s) and national societies as putatively fixed entities; the focus on the relational, deploying a social constructivist understanding, has concerned many.

Migration as Relation

It is probably fair to speak of certain *resonances* in interwoven discussions within research on ethnicity, migration, and social configuration which increasingly exposed the *relational* to the analytical lens (Löw and Weidenhaus 2017; Thelen, Vetters, and Benda-Beckmann 2018). This way of conceptualizing the social realm has gained analytical clarity in anthropology at least since the 1960s. In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Barth and others proposed more than just a relational perspective on ethnicity (Barth's introduction equally deploys an ecological perspective and complementary group niches), but their boundary-*making* argument went, in new terminology, viral. Ethnicity (and with it eventually any kind of social identification) should not be understood in an essentialist manner, but it is "important to recognize that although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant" (1969, 14). While migration-related differences were being investigated, the social construction of difference gained momentum. But the consequences were not uniform. Gordon, for instance, first argued in *Assimilation in American Life* (1965) and later (1975) critically reflected on how assimilation theories were confronted by empirical settings that were no longer explainable by their theories. The famous idea of the dynamics of cities

acting as cultural *melting pots* was contrasted with calls for multiculturalism and identity politics (Taylor 1992).

With respect to the epistemic objects of this book, migration scholars have successfully fueled the question of society and its parts, of belonging and the performance of difference. Earlier than other subfields of social science in general and anthropology in particular, migration studies brought to the fore an analytical language of the constructive character of social groups, of cultural change and the understanding of societies across space. The shift in perspective, roughly speaking, from an understanding of different self-contained cultures and societies to an understanding of entanglements and mutual interdependencies, has probably led to one of the greatest ontological and epistemological shifts in the history of the discipline of anthropology, too. It became possible to analytically "unbound nations" and populations (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton 1994), to study things such as "banal nationalism" (Billig 1995) and "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983) as "one of the most important forms of 'groupist thinking'" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 218).

Transnational Childhood: (De-)Migrantization

By conceiving a unit of analysis based upon a putative groupness, there is a danger of reifying given markers (in its double sense: taking for granted the importance of both the marker and groupness) and analyzing the respective case under study with a "tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis" (Brubaker 2004, 8). It was precisely these impulses from migration research and social theorists like Brubaker which have empirically challenged the division of migrants and autochthones and brought new ways of belonging to the analytical lens, especially by looking at transnational entanglements of everyday lives. However, it cannot be a matter of no longer claiming migration as a lens and demonizing ethnic optics. For the intellectual agenda of the present case, it rather, proved fruitful to simultaneously *migrantize* and *de-migrantize* the perspective on the children's everyday life (Römhild 2017; Dahinden 2016). The same epistemological dazzling, I argued above, can also occur while working with children in general. Both the putative group of children and the putative group of migrants are thus repeatedly done and undone (Hirschauer 2014). Doing so, shifting epistemologies (e.g., the childification and de-childification of the interlocutors of this study) will help to empirically capture the diversification at stake. Migration scholars and their figures of thoughts thus help to analytically ask for the relationship between the categorical attributions of "children" and "migrants" and the effect this has on the configuration of social belonging.

Within these approaches to a better understanding of society and migration, the diversity debate is particularly interesting for the childhood-migration-schooling nexus and the research questions at stake.

Diversity and Human Differentiation

"By using the concept of diversity, first of all, we acknowledge the existence of many different kinds of differences that can have a bearing on immigrant societies" (Olwig 2013, 472). Migration, following (not only) Olwig in this, contributes to cultural diversity, but social configurations convey much more than only migration-related differentiation. However, migration made the issue of human differentiation more complex. Depending on the perspective, *diversity* refers to different things, and many scholars that research social and human differentiation reject the term because it seems too affirmative a term, with too much nuance of neoliberal individualization, while "social inequality . . . goes unchallenged" (Faist 2009, 173; Anthias 2013). Diversity is thereby seen as a concept that would too easily ascribe discriminatory powers of human differentiation, glorifying difference. The word awakens a certain "photogenic" (Nieswand 2020, 31) quality, especially in companies and social organizations, which is repeatedly associated with self-conscious and individualized subjects. While diversity as a concept appears in various scientific specialist fields and serves as a hands-on policy concept in companies or as an identification of global cities, it is, once again, migration scholars who have made the analytical language of diversity fruitful for this book. Diversity, as I use it, serves as an analytical concept, not as a policy. Bearing in mind Faist's and other's concerns regarding social difference and social discrimination, I argue that it is precisely a neutral term such as *diversity* that empirically allows the configuration of social differentiation and its possible relation to discrimination to be analyzed. Taking another argument from Brubaker here, "ascribed categorical differences are not *intrinsically* linked to inequality; *different* does not necessarily imply *unequal.* The relation between difference and inequality is contingent, not necessary; it is empirical, not conceptual" (2015, 11; italic in original). The adoption of this analytical power of the concept of diversity is an important theoretical axiom of this work, as it allows us to look more soberly at the negotiations of difference and equality, so to speak, and not to have to state a priori how different person- or group-oriented differentiations relate to each other. Approaching the epistemic object in this way helps to study the kindergarten and its social order and discuss its power, but also place it in relation to its frictions and the leeway it provided for my interlocutors. It is precisely the analysis of the relationship between differentiation and hierarchization that can be better brought into focus with a multi-referential lens.

With that in mind, I will now turn to the last body of literature, specifically, the anthropology of education.

The Anthropology of Schooling and Education: Educational Ethnography

The anthropology of schooling and education, one can argue, has a certain problem with its subject matter that simultaneously drives and impedes the disciplinary subfield. Many of the tensions of the subfield result in anthropology's arbitrary relationship with formal schooling. As a *kindergarten ethnographer* who has left the classroom along with the children, this study has also found itself in a way in the middle of this debate. Allerton once wrote that "one consequence of the insistence on a distinction between education and schooling is that researchers recognize that in different contexts the 'educated' person is defined by culturally specific sets of skills and information" (2016, 165), while Singleton, in another attempt to clarify the "critical confusion" between education and formal schooling, stated that "schools are complex social institutions, not general models of education and learning. . . . If anything, they are extreme—and unlikely—models of enculturation" (1999, 457). The assessments of many educational anthropologists follow a similar pattern: one may not grant too much power to the official educational canon or insist on what formal schooling does not do or does in a manner which is different from what is claimed (buzzword: hidden curriculum).

Intellectually, there is not much to be gained from this insistence that schools should be categorically differentiated from other, rather informal or alternative learning situations (Kraftl 2014). Nor is it obvious why schools should *not* be an important field of research for the constitution of all conceivable social relations or a field of research for the formation of (civic) subjects, of social norms and (national) communities, or literally any phenomena of interest to anthropologists. The hesitant, at times hostile, attitude is thus politically rather than intellectually driven and therefore merits only brief discussion here. Levinson, for example, in a short opinion paper in the *American Anthropologist*, vividly illustrated the shortcomings of anthropology in that regard. The discipline, he stated, would devote time and effort to studying social media as well as technology and other recent additions to the so-called modern world but would dismiss or at least ignore schools as relevant to their research. He therefore urged, "We should acknowledge the key symbolic role schools play in structuring a variety of social practices and expectations. We should take schools seriously as sources of new knowledge and value, new configurations of difference, which interrelate in complex ways with the other educational relations and practices of everyday life" (Levinson 1999, 599).

What is needed here is intellectual reassurance away from disciplinary positional disputes. The symmetrization of schools with other learning opportunities is what allows us to analyze what can be learned in schools, what can be learned when leaving schools, and what is learned by navigating through

different socio-spatial orders. It makes it possible to study under more clarified analytical conditions how different stocks of knowledge and expectations of individuals are socially negotiated as part of larger collectives. Schools, with their specific social order, can thus be embedded in a *complex of ordering powers*, and the elaboration of hierarchies and mutual references makes it possible to see "their own routines, hierarchies and orders, but [that they] are also based and dependent upon a society that, with changing priorities, supports their existence and basic norms." (Gilliam and Gulløv 2017, 236–237).

Hence, it is primarily the questions surrounding hierarchizations of social orders, as well as the influence of school on the way social belonging is negotiated in the life of the kindergarten class, that make educational anthropology important in pursuing the aims of this book. The focus is thus not on the dichotomy between formal/informal sites of learning, but the navigation between as well as the educational entanglement of different sites of childhood. It is the question of multi-referentiality when it comes to learning and education in everyday life, *including* kindergarten.

In the following pages, studies in educational anthropology will be reviewed with respect to the questions which are relevant to the childhood-migration-schooling nexus. These are the questions of dominant bodies of knowledge when it comes to the formation but also social change (and critique) of societal relations and the relationship between nation-states and schooling. But first, an elaboration on the relationship between anthropology and education is due.

Anthropology in/of/and Education Outside Schools

When anthropologists started sailing the world, schools often simply were not there, or yet to arrive, or bluntly dismissed as a colonial import. Anthropologists have tracked down and described learning processes and have gained valuable insights into childhood appropriation processes in various situations of their everyday life elsewhere and scrutinized "how children of different ages carry out varying routines that prepare them to behave as adults" (Lancy 2001, 30). Attention was paid to learning processes, for example, through work, through play, or through rituals. Studies of education outside school were and are often interested in the child's learning strategy of observation and mimicry, finding in it a way of learning that is more culture-seeking than child-rearing (Gaskins and Paradise 2010). Education and learning were and are thus often understood as socially desired processes undertaken *intrinsically* by social novices in the respective environment. This is important for the further course of the understanding of education in the discipline with respect to anthropologists studying schools. Reviewing the debates, we often see a division between, on the one hand, good, intentional learning coming out of the child in a culturally meaningful context and externally imposed learning in schools that exudes dominance and oppression on the other hand. So if schools have been researched, they are often treated

as a Western import and as institutions of dominance and colonialism (Grindal 1972), with the insistence that education would rather be "a practice of attention, not of transmission" (Ingold 2017, 2). Levinson, Foley, and Holland write in the introduction of their edited volume, *The Cultural Production of the Educated Person*, "These schools have served to inculcate the skills, subjectivities, and disciplines that undergird the modern nation-state. No matter how the knowledgeable person is locally defined, regardless of the skills and sensibilities that count as indication of 'wisdom' and intelligence in the home and immediate locale, schools interject an educational mission of extra-local proportions" (1996, 1). An anxiety can be recognized that it is too easy to adopt the affirmative hierarchization of knowledge held by educational institutions. If schools *educate* people (and being educated is taken to be a desirable good!), how do we conceive the people who did not go to school or who did not go to school for a long time? As uneducated, uncivilized (Ingold 2017)? Thinking of those paradoxes, I argue that it makes much more sense to look at the hierarchization of divergent knowledge stocks in a more neutral way than to disqualify or ignore educational processes happening in schools. So what did the scholars that "dared" to study schools do?

School Ethnographies

While schools in the so-called Global South were often studied as dominating regimes implemented from the outside or from the Global North, anthropologists studying schools in the Global North most often focused their attention on how the respective identified minorities or discriminated population groups, such as peasants (Reed-Danahay 1987), Blacks (Ogbu 1978), or ethnic minorities (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2014), were schooled in the given dominant-majority society. As McDermott and Raley review, at least in the U.S. context, the ethnographic focus was thereby sharpened differently during different phases of school research. Depending on the generation, different "monster[s]" were "haunting the system" (2011, 40). They also describe, as did others (Anderson-Levitt 2011), how since at least the 1980s, educational anthropologists studying schools have been heavily influenced by cultural studies. Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977), a truly insightful study that follows young "lads" in their final year of school and into the world of work as blue-collar workers, set new standards for the ethnographic description of school mechanisms but, above all, of resistance to dominant forms of knowledge. The anthropological selection therefore focused not only on minority children but, in general, on those who stood out in school, on those who failed, but also those who were fighting the system (Levinson 1999): "These studies have usefully challenged views of students as passive victims of hegemonic systems of oppression, and stress schools as sites of conflict over, and the production of, cultural meanings" (Reed-Danahay 2003, 32).

Over the past fifty years, those studies have produced very valuable and multifaceted documentation on the (re-)production of social inequality through

schooling institutions. However, even though this take on schooling mechanisms of discrimination and social inequality can certainly be identified as the best known achievement of educational anthropology, school ethnographies have also opened up different perspectives on the questions of what is going on in schools more broadly. Anthropological work on education has become more diversified, benefiting from national comparisons and exchanges (Schiffauer et al. 2004; Anderson-Levitt 2012; Gilliam and Makrom 2024). Schools hence are viewed quite differently depending on how each national context describes them, and schools are positioned and problematized quite differently depending on different regional socio-political configurations and given foci in research.

Diversifying the Epistemic Object in School Research

This diversification of what can be observed in schools illustrates once again the relevance of the institution as a research site. Some illustrations are due. The present study was inspired, for example, by *Accommodation without Assimilation* by Gibson (1988), who notes that Sikh immigrants in California achieved social advancement precisely by succeeding at school while simultaneously emphasizing cultural difference. Her insights help us to think in a different way about the intertwining of state power, enculturation, and schools. Thus, empirical clarification is required on how out-of-school belonging is compatible with school expectations, and Gibson's findings at least suggest that supposed differences along certain characteristics of social order between school and family do not (have to) stand in the way of school success and that certain configurations of divergent social orders can have a positive impact on learning success, for example. In *Unsettled Belonging*, Abu El-Haj deals with questions of belonging by accompanying Palestinian youths in the United States after the events of 9/11, with specific reference to citizenship education. She found that the sudden politicization and illegitimization of young Muslim identities in U.S. schools amplified her interlocutors' commitment in a transnational context, becoming more civically engaged in the Middle East: "Transnational perspectives decenter the nation as the primary site for developing social, cultural, and political knowledge, or for challenging inequality and injustice" (Abu El-Haj 2015, 221).

Projects that are not dedicated to the parts of society which are identified as discriminated against also contribute to a diversification of school ethnographic studies, but they also approach an understanding about educational processes from a completely different angle. This is achieved, for example, by studies of economic elites, as Rey and her team undertook in a project on the transnationalization of Swiss private education. They note, among other things, that the pedagogical formation of (transnational) elites takes place in "relative isolation from the local environment," and possible problems of compatibility between national school cultures and the children's out-of-school environment,

depending on their social situation, are not a cause for alarm (Bolay and Rey 2020, 109).

Others have brought the emancipating potential of schools to the front. As pointed out by Anderson-Levitt (2011) in her review of the various world anthropologies of education, it was mainly voices from the Global South that showed how schools sometimes exemplify more liberal social relations than families or other social institutions, or how schools have been adapted and modified according to local environments. In her studies in Iran in the 1970s, for instance, Wright observed how educational offensives have been reinterpreted and used in a revolutionary way by local women throughout the country (Houtman 2004). Research focusing on teachers is, furthermore, revealing a different type of destabilization of clear social positionings of schooling institutions. This was done, for instance, by Mantel (2020), who asked what happens when teachers with a so-called immigrant background are responsible for social differentiation in classrooms and how wider social contexts and personal experiences would affect teaching attitudes. Through such an approach, schools can be seen more flexibly as a possible driving force for social change that is also able to break free from undesirable power relations.

By abandoning the clear order of school education and extracurricular education, the relationship between stocks of knowledge, between expectations of behavior and performance and ability, can be rethought. In that context, we can read with Gilliam and Gulløv that "it is universal that people place themselves and others in social and moral hierarchies: that some people are considered to be cruder than others who are seen to be more refined, and that some people act in accordance with or in opposition to what is perceived to be respectable" (2017, 19). The study of moral hierarchies is particularly useful when it comes to the negotiation of divergent stocks of knowledge. In their case, schools are linked to other social institutions including minority children, but also, as in Bolay and Rey's (2020) case, to affluent families and their attitude to morals and how this in turn influences school practices (Bach 2015).

Schooling and the Hierarchization of Achievements

It comes as no surprise that "schools privilege certain forms of symbolic capital" (Levinson 1999, 595) and claim interpretive sovereignty over what should be an "educated person" (Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996). In many areas within the institutional life of schools, they judge, guide, and design the children's expected performance and behavior. This is often based on curricula, regulations, and fixed standards, and there is probably no other social order in which the decision-making criteria are so precisely and publicly defined (and can be read in detail in all possible variations). If one considers the school as an institution with a certain social order defining its own standards, this is not surprising per se, nor is it problematic. The plurality of divergent social orders, and the

knowledge of contingency, is now academic common sense. It is in the nature of things that social orders *order*, and it seems not only conceivable but highly possible that things could always be ordered differently and that there are also struggles within respective social orders about how the ordering parameters should be shaped. Such an understanding leads to the study of how the requirements, standards, and norms for persons in different social orders can be conceptualized. This is interesting from two different angles. On the one hand, it is generally instructive to ask for the constitution of a social order (and thus ask for the situational power of order), and on the other hand, the question of power *beyond* the given social order becomes an exciting phenomenon to study. Individuals may have different levels of success in different social orders, and success in one field may mean that further success is no longer necessary elsewhere and that a learning process along the quality criterions of a given social order can be transformed while navigating through different social orders (as it was also elaborated in the differentiation of forms of capital in Bourdieu's [1994, 1986] theory of symbolic power and social fields). Different incorporated bodies of knowledge can thus only be addressed *relationally* with questions of, for example, success and recognition, but also with regard to the constitution of (inter)subjectivities. These possibilities, however, should not and do not obscure the fact that the institution of school very often plays a major, relevant role for very many members of society when it comes to the question of opportunities for social consolidation or upward mobility, or for the distribution of resources. Schools as "sorting machines" (Domina, Penner, and Penner 2017) do have "power to name, to identify, to categorize, to state what is what and who is who" (Brubaker and Cooper 2004, 42), and it has to be empirically shown how the school's power is related to other ordering powers and how it is embedded in wider societal contexts.

One such example of what an empirical example could look like is the school's standardization and hierarchization of languages. While in other contexts language is handled much more fluently, the canon in school insists on uniformity (Knoll 2016; Bénéï 2011). Often, there is a clear right and wrong in schooling contexts and little room for negotiation in between. Blommaert (2015) has proposed an analytical separation of language and *Language* in studying the phenomenon of this standardization of communication by reifying the standard language implemented in schools, making it rigid, and thus analytically capitalizing these terms as proper nouns. In doing so, one can analyze how standardized Languages relate to other linguistic bodies of knowledge and find that Language is not so important in many communication spaces, while in others standardization reappears as a relevant quantity: "Access to certain important social benefits—official registration, social housing, welfare and education—is made conditional on immigrants taking courses in the 'standard' national Language variety and getting a certificate of language proficiency" (Blommaert 2015, 88). Language thus becomes a practice of differentiation, some of which becomes

relevant to hierarchization far beyond the school field, while other aspects of social order may be relevant only locally. Language, unlike other categories of social differentiation, is thus increasingly relevant to schools in their nation-state mission around the globe:[6] "Despite an overtly integrational approach, it is clear that those children deemed less capable of becoming good Indian citizens in this part of Maharashtra are those standing the furthest apart from (standardized) Marathi" (Bénéï 2008, 98).

Hence, school hierarchizations vary in their effectiveness outside the school's scope, just as out-of-school hierarchizations vary in their ability to exert an influence on the school's social order. Informed by the prior work of various educational anthropologists, *Children as Social Butterflies* therefore examines this relational interplay.

Schooling and the Nation-State

As already elaborated, educational anthropological studies provide imposing evidence of how schools simultaneously function as sites of collectivization and standardization in different scales and scopes, but also as sites where social order is (re)negotiated. With regard to the questions posed in this book, it becomes particularly relevant when the relationship between the nation-state, schooling, and national belonging is discussed, such as the comparative study *Civil Enculturation* by Schiffauer and colleagues (2004). They and their teams ethnographically studied high schools in four Western European countries. Focusing on pupils who or whose parents had migrated from Turkey into the given school system, they asked what it is "that schools pass on to the citizens-to-be, or indeed to those of their pupils who are not citizens or nationals in the legal sense" (Baumann 2004, 1). In so doing, they found that civil enculturation was ensured not so much through specific knowledge content but rather through ways of being: "It is . . . about ways and means, methods and discourses of legitimate political participation and civic or civil identification. These methods and discourses are no longer about 'who you are', for everyone has the right, at least in normative parlance, to cultural or ethnic differences, but about 'how one does', for in that respect there must be some similarity of 'style' regardless of the variety of 'roots'" (Baumann 2004, 3).

This focus on "how one does" allows us to look at different national styles without perpetuating essentialist notions of culture and to study simultaneously traveling ideas and norms of education in schools without always framing them as national concepts. With this decentering, it is again possible not to regard everything as "typical" of a specific nation, but is possible that we often find similar meta-discourses, whose specificities can often only be described by means of fine-grained analysis. For example, Schiffauer et al. (2004) observed that all schools had a narrative of diversity and that there were many crossovers but that each process of civil enculturation differed with reference to the

self-understanding of the nation-state and hence had consequences for the way the Turkish minority children could be practically positioned within given pedagogical orders. Also, in the anthology *Children of the Welfare State*, it becomes clear that children in Denmark are not necessarily cared for in a strikingly different way than those in other states, but that the *referencing* of why things should be done in a specific way refers to a certain Danish approach of providing "a basis for self-perception, social cohesion and hierarchy" (Gilliam and Gulløv 2017, 5), a way of dealing with a certain way of inclusion and equality that, among other things, bears "the strong endeavour to make children 'social'" (2017, 235). Considering these studies of national repertoires of collectivization processes that are done in and by schooling institutions, I agree with Bénéï that "we should duly acknowledge that there are indeed collective projects around which identifications may revolve and at times crystallize rather powerfully [and even if] people do not necessarily unite under the same banner with the same understandings of what they are uniting for—or, as the case may be, against . . . , there has to be some measure of common ground for the possibility of coming together even to be conceived at all. This is particularly obvious in the case of national(ist) projects of self-formation" (2011, 267–268).

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have engaged with different disciplinary bodies of literature that help to contour the childhood-migration-schooling nexus relevant to this book. For the sake of analytical clarity, three fields have been defined within which certain figures of thought have been established and which, in their relationship to each other, have provided important analytical figures of thought that will guide readers through the chapters of this book.

This look at theoretical propositions and empirical findings from different corners of the discipline was itself multi-referential: individual contexts of thought were each discussed on their own merits, but then also in reference to the nexus. In bringing together the thoughts of anthropologists and their close friends on the fields of childhood, migration, and education, it became clear that the temporary deferral of one field, or the migration of findings from one field to another, yields fruitful insights. Thus, to cite just one example, the consequence of calling for epistemological de-migratization has also set in motion the thinking regarding the fruitfulness of situationally de-childifying the *Social Butterflies* and not always treating the main informants first and foremost as children.

In the following chapters, the figures of thought discussed here will appear in varying degrees of centrality, like different epistemological foils that are laid on the ethnographic material again and again in different analytical configurations.

First Interlude: Victor and Adana

Black, Neglected, or Anemic?–Traumatized, Gifted, or Shy?

There was a lot of snowfall overnight one day in January. In the morning, the children made their way toward the kindergarten on quiet feet, through white streets. After the first hour inside, some children could hardly wait to be allowed outside again to play in the snow. In the cloakroom area, over-trousers were lent to those children who did not seem to be adequately equipped, while the loudest children's conversation revolved around the plastic sleds that were soon to be handed out, as Mrs. Eder had promised. The *butterflies* like Victor knew from the previous school year that it had been "so great, remember?", "*mega cool*", and Pedro boasted that he could slide down the small hill in front of the kindergarten the fastest. In joyful anticipation, we finally stormed out like there was no tomorrow. Many children immediately grabbed one of the sleds that were handed out—obviously *the* object of the morning. Mrs. Eder's admonishing words of caution were lost in the general screeching and hectic pace.

I paused.

My eyes fell on Adana, who was, as so often, only observing the hustle and bustle of the other children from the sideline. She was squatting on the ground with a ball of snow in her hands trying to make it bigger by adding more snow from the ground. But the pile of snow kept falling apart in her hands, and Adana got frustrated. When I suggested that it would be possible to make a really big ball, maybe even a snowman, if the ball were rolled along the ground, she started again, and the mass of snow began to grow. The consistency of the snow was just right, not too wet and not too heavy, but not too fluffy, either. When Elena saw what was in the making, she came running toward us with an excited "A snowman!", adding to her teacher: "Mrs. Eder, look, a snowman!" Adana's gaze brightened. She was visibly proud of this emerging structure, even more of having Elena's attention and admiration. Thus, together the three of us soon lifted a second ball of snow onto the remarkable belly to be. Suddenly, a snowball hit me

from behind. Victor, giggling, was obviously the pitcher. He claimed "*häts*!" (gotcha!) and ran away. I made a small snowball myself and threw it—playing angry—in his direction. Theatrically and with a lot of screaming, he fled, calling for help from his usual playmates, Kenny and Pedro. What followed was a veritable snowball fight, with a lot of laughter and noise. Natalja and Peter joined us and stood by my side but still obeyed when Victor shouted, "Now all against Mrs. Jaeger!" That seemed to have a special appeal, but I did not have time to think about it, having my hands full defending myself against five or six (or more?) children throwing snow at me from all sides. When a ball landed between my eyes and hit my glasses and I could hardly see anything, I shouted "Stop! I give up!" and the kids celebrated and high-fived each other as the winners. "Stop" is the signal word that the children learn in kindergarten as a boundary marker, since one of the three rules marked as most relevant in class is the so-called stop rule. When you say "Stop!" the addressed people must respect it and stop what they were doing. Of course, this is easier in theory, and in everyday life it is possible to negotiate what exactly was situationally meant by "stop!" and whether it was really meant seriously, just playfully staged, etc. Nevertheless, as a striking and rehearsed signal word, it works better than any other sign of interruption. Thus, while cold snow slipped down my back, I left the ball of snow trapped behind my glasses for a while, to show the children how "funny" Victor (him again!) had hit me. But then it occurred to me that the children were always strictly told not to aim at each other's heads, that this was forbidden, and they could get scolded at for doing so. To celebrate this "head hit" was inappropriate, and caught a little red-handed looking at Mrs. Eder, I became subdued. But she had not noticed. The teachers usually trusted that where the ethnographer was, they did not have to pay attention to what was going on. One adult seemed to be enough. We got away with it.

Being with Adana and Victor

This first interlude focuses on Adana and Victor. It discusses the nuances of assessment and the different ways of thinking with and about kindergarten children. It seeks to show ethnographically how divergent topoi of vulnerable childhood shape and condition pedagogical practice. Both children moved in their own particular way through the kindergarten, through the after-school care, and through my field notes. So, this interlude also shows, in a slightly more playful and descriptive way, how this ethnographic research was undertaken with these young children.

Victor and Adana are two children whom I accompanied for a year in kindergarten, and for a bit longer in the two day-care centers they visited in the afternoon. Adana turned seven during my first year around her, Victor six. Both Adana and Victor were members of the so-called butterfly cohort when

I started fieldwork at Wiesengrund Kindergarten, members of the cohort that was about to fly out to school the following year. Both were children who were worried about by various adults and who were observed from different professional perspectives.

Adana and Victor are two children with whom I came to build very different relationships. With Adana the relationship was careful but—I believe—based on mutual respect. As an ethnographer, and thus freed from the duties of the other adults in the day-care center and kindergarten, I frequently had the liberty of spending more time with Adana than the other adults (and was equally free to ignore her when focusing on, or playing with, other children). Adana was often hesitant, and the role of the ethnographer allowed me to join her at her pace, to give her more time to adapt to a situation, such as when building the snowman. In the day-care center I sometimes read to her while she, as a school child already, massaged younger children into their afternoon nap with a massage ball. She had very clear ideas about which passages of which books should be read out, and she would check that I had not missed a paragraph or changed names or words from the original script. I sometimes tried to fool her but never succeeded. Our relationship was cautious; we rarely touched each other, except when following the morning routine of saying "Good morning, Adana."—"Good morning, Mrs. Jaeger." and shaking hands when we met in kindergarten. She never changed to calling me Ursina, even when her friends in day-care did. Adana observed her environment very precisely. Maybe one day she will become an ethnographer.

During the self-initiated time in kindergarten she often did something on her own, a puzzle, or she made pictures with small mosaic stones. Sometimes she would ally with Elena and Salma, who especially turned to Adana when they argued with each other. Then Adana became a plaything between the two otherwise best friends. Adana was able to follow the school rules well. Her voice became clear and precise when reciting the days of the week or other learned verses or common ritualized procedures, and she got annoyed when other children in the kindergarten did not follow the rules of a specific situation, such as sitting still and waiting until a candle was carefully passed around in a circle from one kindergarten child to another. Her gaze darkened then and would turn accusingly to the teacher in charge as if to say, "Have you not seen that?!" But she reluctantly refrained from taking up much space in this respect; looks had to suffice.

Victor was in many ways the opposite of Adana. In the field notes, he appears feisty and loud, especially when he laughed. He always sought eye contact, liked to fool around, loved to challenge the pedagogical order in class. For example, when Pedro hinted at putting a grissini in the ear of the girl next to him in the sitting circle, for instance Adana, Victor raised his shoulders, made big eyes, and put both hands in front of his widely open mouth: the ultimate gesture of

pretending to laugh out loud, but referring to the educational situation he was in. He never played by himself; he sought out company from the moment he entered the building and kept saying in public that he was in love with his butterfly companion Elena. Sometimes he could be mean to other children. This was particularly the case when it gave him the opportunity to form alliances with Kenny and Pedro. The three attended the same day-care center after the kindergarten classes and were there almost every afternoon. In day-care, they had hours of time to retreat into fantasy worlds or, above all, to romp outside together and play football. The more pedagogically guided situations of the morning classes in kindergarten could then be interspersed with the experiences of the afternoons. Glances were enough to make them giggle with each other and at least to suggest that they were naughty boys.

In comparison to Adana, my relationship with Victor was more playful, wild, and physical, not only in snowball fights. The relationship had been strengthened over the course of two years of research and culminated for me metaphorically in a situation where Victor galloped on my back through the wading pool in the open air on a summer-afternoon, giggling, hopping, and hooing, pretending to tame a wild horse which he was riding through this stormy sea.

Assessments and Complications

When this study started, both children were already familiar with the kindergarten. Adana was attending Wiesengrund Kindergarten for a third year and had not moved on to school after two years like her *butterfly* companions from the previous year. The third kindergarten year was an educational measure, a postponement because it was agreed that Adana was not yet ready for school. She had to build up more self-confidence; more individual support would have to be provided. In addition to more supervision in class by the curative teacher, she went to speech therapy once a week and to psychomotor therapy once a week. She was picked up by the respective specialists and returned to class one hour later.

Victor was beginning the second year of kindergarten when this study started. The teachers had also noticed him the past year as a child of concern, and it was discussed that he might complete, like Adana, a third kindergarten year. While this study was about to begin, Victor was not a blank page for the teachers anymore. This is also reflected in a formalized assessment of his German language skills, done at the beginning of each kindergarten year. While the short assessment of the first year stated, “Victor likes to come into the lessons. He takes part and is eager to learn. He is very creative and tries very hard at tasks and has good ideas. His language skills are good and he learns words quickly and can remember them well. He is also very good at pronunciation and at repeating sentences,” the following assessment in the second year added, “Victor does

not have an easy time at home, usually his elder brother (about 15 years old) signs him out of kindergarten when he does not come. He is making progress in German and can remember new words, as well as stories and their sequences."

Last year's experiences in class, and the brief insights that the teachers had gained into everyday life outside school in the course of the first year, gave rise to unhappy expectations. The boy was assessed very positively shortly after he started kindergarten, and while his German language skills seemed to continue to improve, problems were suspected elsewhere. Victor missed a lot of lessons during his first year in class, and an explanatory conversation should have taken place with the parents with the help of a so-called cultural mediator, but this did not happen. Unspoken words led to dissatisfaction and were a source of irritation in the teachers' conversations. His parents' alcohol problems were discussed and phases of unemployment and poverty. The parents were sometimes seen in a park nearby, where "odd characters" would hang around in the evenings, and Victor's teeth were so bad that during this second year of kindergarten he was having adult teeth pulled and getting a dental implant. Some details of experiences with Victor and his family were exchanged between the staff at the day-care center and the kindergarten; they were worried. But these suspicions also led the teachers to be observant. Victor was noticed, encouraged, and closely supervised. As Victor had a Brazilian father and Mozambican mother, his kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Gasser, who had lived in Angola for a year, could communicate with him in his first language. But Victor never brought this up on his own. The interpretation of why things were so difficult with Victor was also based on cultural differences, and sometimes it was suspected to have something to do "with Africa." His dark skin was not discussed in public, but there was a perception in both kindergarten and day-care that the neighborhood and Switzerland in general were racist and that Victor needed to be strengthened to meet the rough world outside.

When anemia was diagnosed in the spring of his second kindergarten year, which explained why Victor missed classes so often and was so often sick (maybe even affecting his teeth), the pedagogical assessment changed. Everything was not so bad at home after all, it seemed. It was most likely that the child's body was weakening the boy, and his brother was the only one who dared to call. Once the assessment of the boy was that he was not neglected, but anemic, the possible threat topoi of the out-of-school changed significantly. Hence, in the course of Victor's second kindergarten year, he became increasingly de-problematized; the family threat narrative, so to speak, became smaller. He became a child who pleased the teachers; he developed an intense way of praising other children and probably noticed that he would get recognition for this from children and adults alike. He was shown to be clever, even if a bit cheeky. His first year at primary school went "wonderfully well," day-care

worker Arbnora commented. The difficulties in kindergarten and the memories of it somehow transformed him to a model boy.

Adana was also under close observation, and it was the teaching staff's other memories that made her assessment more sensitive. Adana's family fled from the Kurdish part of Syria in 2010. Her older sister Leyla was cared for by various educational and psychological services with diagnoses of selective mutism in combination with a war traumatization. At school, the parents were mainly known from various conversations with and about the older sister, and they were regarded as cooperative but very anxious and very skeptical about special measures. Leyla was now in third grade in the Wiesengrund School. For the teachers and the after-school caregivers, Leyla was considered a challenge. The reference to a war traumatization and what was imagined as a terrifying escape for the then-little girl helped the teachers to remain patient, to show understanding, to keep their nerves, even if Leyla challenged them on many occasions. Adana therefore did not just come to school/kindergarten/day-care as a new child: it was much more Leyla's little sister who went through those institutions. Comparison proved to be a blessing and a curse: assessments are equally complicated if people know about your family than if they do not know about it at all.

This became clear during a consultation at school when it was time to discuss Adana's start at primary school. In a team discussion where the director of the school, a psychologist, the head of the school psychology service, a school social worker, a staff member from day-care, the curative teacher, the speech therapist, and Laura Eder as a representative of the kindergarten were present, they discussed possible challenges for and with the girl. Stories were collected: it was reported from day-care that while she would do very well cognitively, she would often be unable to answer questions such as "Do you want more beans?" or "Adana, do you want to play, too?" She would often be unable to process or relate to such types of question, confirmed the curative teacher, and the adults in the meeting shared a variety of similar experiences while simultaneously praising her cognitive capabilities.

The different diagnoses and assessments, but also the behavior of the children and their different moods, definitely created ambiguity. The different interpretative grids of assessment got tangled up, defused, and aggravated each other. Divergent topoi of "childhood at risk" circulated in the children's lives, and depending on the hierarchization of the importance of the topoi, the question of what or who the children came to be seen as by different people, including their peers, underwent a veritable transformation.

2

Of Caterpillars and Butterflies

Mariana was almost furious! She and the other children in the kindergarten had been asked to put away the toys from free play. Mrs. Eder had just struck the wind chime. The children knew that this was a signal to pay attention and therefore heard their teacher's soft voice with the usual message "Wellll, children: Tidy up, push the chairs under the table, and come into the circle!" Together with Peter, Lorica, and Harun, Mariana had played with the toy market stall that morning. Their play was about being the best trader at the market stall, not about selling products, but about haggling over which products were generally the best, and who liked Kiri, and whether the vanilla or the creamy version of Kiri was a favorite, and who else also had the same favorite. This went on for quite a long time, and the request to tidy up was integrated into the game, not interrupting their negotiations. The children did not exactly hurry, and it had little to do with efficiency. Toy foods flew through the air: Here a broccoli, there a cardboard box with the emblem of cornflakes printed on it. Mariana eventually warned the others that they would have to make an effort now and clean up.

Mariana had only been attending Wiesengrund Kindergarten for a few weeks. The blonde girl with big brown eyes did not like it when other children assigned her to something. She had clear ideas about how games should work and was usually able to assert herself in this regard—with a loud voice and the ability to quickly seek alliances among the children in her new class. But in this situation Harun and Peter were hard nuts to crack. They had built up a friendship over the course of the second year of kindergarten and had already known each other for more than a year. Mariana's suggestions on how to quickly fix the whole mess went unheeded or, rather, were torpedoed with relish by the two boys. The more annoyed Mariana got, the more the boys focused on how to stir up her anger even more. It became a new mode of their play.

Repeatedly, they pulled out toys that Mariana had already put away into the boxes of the market stall play corner. Mariana was running out of patience, and as a final attempt to recapture power, she shouted, "I'm from Day-Care CB II, and I'm from Brazil, and Chiara is my friend!"

The escalating and increasingly loud argument got Mrs. Eder's attention. She came into the market stall play corner, admonished the children to finally tidy up, and helped them personally to do so—not without sprinkling educationally valuable information about the various products: "Oh, broccoli, I really like that, and it's also very healthy! Which other green vegetables do you know, Lorica? Peter, you are a butterfly, I know you can tidy up properly." The pacification strategy was successful until the moment when Mrs. Eder turned her attention back to other children and left the market stall. However, Peter obviously lost interest and just left the play corner without really having helped put the toys back in order. Mrs. Eder had abruptly interrupted their fun in annoying the caterpillar girl Mariana. While Mariana and Harun were still giving each other nasty looks but had stopped moving toys, Lorica quietly and inconspicuously managed to clean up the rest. The spontaneously formed play and argument community eventually dissolved, and the children each looked for their personal chair in the seating circle, where they were called to a pedagogically guided teaching sequence.

This short sequence, quite commonplace in the kindergarten on a daily basis, foreshadows what will unfold and be analyzed in the following pages. From the moment children enter the kindergarten, a plethora of new categories of social differentiation open up for them. Apart from the sheer quantity of new situational possibilities of identifications, organized rearrangement of the group of children according to different logics of differentiation seems a thing to do. Mariana's furious self-identification reflects what she just learned over the last couple weeks around how it is possible to powerfully position oneself in class. It was a difficult moment for her, as she was unable to compete against the friendship and the desire of the two boys to fool around. Chiara, a popular girl in daycare CB II, was unknown to Peter and Harun, and Lorica, who would have been able to prove how popular it would be to have a bond with Chiara was, it seems, not in a position to change the power game. It was the boys' friendship and also their status as children of the older cohort in kindergarten, the *butterflies*, that dominated. So, Mariana's active promotion of social belonging did not work that time but, even if that were little consolation for Mariana, situations like that help with understanding the negotiations that take place among the children on a daily basis.

Understanding Kindergarten Life in Terms of Social Belonging

Children become part of a kindergarten class with new modes of negotiating belonging and new kinds of memberships; personal and group-oriented relations

are to be established, processed, and maintained. In addition to a huge number of new ways of categorizing the children in a given class, many categories of belonging from outside kindergarten are renegotiated, transformed, and filled with new meaning. From one day to the next, you can belong to *all the* girls, the children who know Albanian or Portuguese (which up until that day might just have been a normal part of life), the children who like to paint or play in the car corner, those who can sing well, calculate well, write their own name already. One can become a caterpillar child, part of the children born in December, those who have dotted slippers, those who need language support or speech therapy, or those who bring a good and healthy snack to class. You could be one of the children who are not allowed to eat pork or who do not get Christmas presents. One becomes a child who is not liked by Pedro and Victor, who is teased because of the way they smell, or who is liked because she is particularly good at being a princess in role-play games. And the next day, or even some minutes later, some of those differentiations might change; Pedro and Victor might suddenly accept you in their play, and one can claim to know Portuguese now, too.

Interestingly, to come back to the market stall situation, Mariana tried to gain back power by referring to quite different types of social belonging. Using the analytical language of Gammeltoft (2018), it can be said that Mariana claimed to be attributed in terms of territory (day-care CB II), in terms of political and social belonging (Brazil), and with whom she has a bond (Chiara) and hoped that this triple identification would improve her position when negotiating how to tidy up the market stall. While children are constantly finding shared ground as well as differences among themselves in terms of all possible forms of belonging of different scales and scopes, it is important to mention that these children's negotiations in the kindergarten also take place within a *pedagogical institution*. The children's negotiations in class do not therefore take place in a void or an isolated social space. Kindergarten is an institution that usually knows clearly what is better in given situations (cleaning up quickly and conscientiously, for example, instead of arguing and throwing toys around; riding a bicycle or reading books instead of watching TV; including the girls in car games instead of making that a gender issue, etc.) and what learning objectives need to be achieved over the two years. A large part of the pedagogical task that teachers must fulfil is laid down in the official kindergarten curriculum and is also learned by teachers during their studies and passed on from teacher to teacher. In addition, there is a massive amount of teaching material adapted to the curriculum, craft ideas, song books, and catalogs with the latest recommended toys, all of which standardize the respective kindergartens to a certain extent and align them to a social order rendered pedagogical. In it, categories of belonging are created, attributed, hierarchized, and related to one another.

The next two chapters focus on everyday life in Wiesengrund Kindergarten and therefore on sometimes situational, sometimes more persistent forms of

negotiation of social belonging. These two connected chapters are about learning how to be and become a kindergarten child in the Mühlekon neighborhood at a specific point in time. And they are about negotiating positionalities in class. Wiesengrund Kindergarten will be described as a powerful and authoritative institution, as a "sorting machine" (Domina, Penner, and Penner 2017), as a carrier and determiner of social order (Brubaker and Cooper 2004, 42), but not without its own uncertainties and ambivalences. Thus, the chapters also pay close attention to the children's actions and responses, to their contestation and transformation of one pedagogically set and persistent frame of reference in class.

For analytical reasons, two lines of investigation are each initially distinguished. A first line of investigation (this chapter) aims at describing as precisely as possible how children familiarize with school, how social positions are distributed, and what it takes for a child to become a pupil using a variety of ethnographical field notes, transcripts, and artefacts from everyday life in kindergarten. A second line of inquiry explores how schools categorize and organize the children in the kindergarten class (chapter 3).

First Day of Schooling

"It's greeeen,, it's greeeen!" new butterfly Dragan shouted on the first day of the new school year when Mrs. Gasser changed the bottom on the entrance door from red to green, the sign that the kindergarten was open for the children to come in. His companions from last year also came rushing in, Salma immediately shaking hands with all the adults present. Pedro hopped in after her, Elena shortly after, and then Victor, Natalja, Dilek, and Sinopa, immediately entering into a lively conversation, smiling, loony, emotional, taking over the atmosphere in the room.

That was at 8 o'clock, a good hour before the new children were due to arrive. Thus, when Mathumai, Zaylie, Arian, Harun, and the other new kindergarten children entered the building that first day—soon to be addressed as the new caterpillars—the older cohort was already present, could already set the stage and occupy the space.

Swiss kindergarten classes are organized into two age cohorts. In Wiesengrund Kindergarten, the two cohorts are called butterflies and caterpillars. From the perspective of the kindergarten staff, every autumn after the summer holidays, a new cohort of caterpillar kindergartners is enrolled and is integrated into everyday life in class, while the older cohort from last year's class, the former butterflies, have just left for primary school. Hence, the children of the former younger cohort turn into the big ones themselves; they inherit the positions of the butterflies: a pedagogically guided metamorphosis.

In August of the year this study began, eight new children were assigned to Wiesengrund Kindergarten: Mathumai, Arian, Abshiru, Zaylie, Peter, Linos,

Tereza, and Harun. From the perspective of Mathumai and the other new children, there were no established and new cohorts but just a lot of unknown other children and some adults. On arrival, each new child is more or less individually woven into the social fabric of the kindergarten class and is initially accompanied by his or her father, mother, possibly siblings, or even a grandparent. Arriving in kindergarten for the very first time is not necessarily a huge thing. It is not uncommon for children to visit a place with their parents or relatives, for them to be asked their name, and for it to be unclear who already knows each other or, if so, how well and for how long. However, the adults address the children with great enthusiasm in their voices, and excitement is in the air, clearly also fueled by the children's families. Adults are restrained, making gestures of empowerment to the children, in the sense of "Now it's your turn!" The analysis shows that the place of kindergarten becomes a place *of children* in particular because the adults in the room assign themselves highly constrained roles, and parents relate to their children differently than in other places (Gulløv 2003). Parents soon hide in the back rows, laugh, smile proudly at their children, and document this start of their children's school life with their smartphones.

And it was those parents of the new cohort that after around half an hour of shared time in kindergarten were asked to leave to room, the building, and eventually the kindergarten area all together, leaving their offspring in class. That could be the huge turning point, leading both to tears and fear. It was the moment when Mathumai started to cry uncontrollably. When she started screaming and whining for hours and would hardly calm down at all. When the desperate calls to her departing and then absent mother cut across all other interactions in the kindergarten class. This is one of the most critical times each year for the teachers. They are simultaneously expected to comfort new children, encourage parents to leave the building despite their possibly crying offspring, and animate the older cohort—the new butterfly children—to take care of their new playmates and integrate them into their social order.

The kindergarten teachers really rely on the older cohort, not only in that they already know the rules and procedures of kindergarten life, but also that they can pass them on individually to their new classmates. In the first hour without new children, they are sworn in to be *butterflies* from that day onward. The butterflies, one year older (on average), are therefore categorized and idealized as omniscient competent kindergarten children, a kind of better, wiser copy of the new arrivals. To stick with the biological metaphor, the caterpillars still need to eat a lot and go through a process of metamorphosis before they also become butterflies, ready to fly to school. The butterfly children are encouraged to perform that thing called "being a kindergartner."

Some further elaboration of the butterfly category is in order.

Social Butterflies

Generational order is one of the strongest principles of organization in the kindergarten, in several ways. The newly arrived children are differentiated not only from the adults, and thus categorized as (kindergarten) *children* in the first place, as elaborated in several well-known studies (Alanen and Mayall 2001; Bühler-Niederberger 2005), but also from the butterflies. Cohort classification runs counter to the child category; in a sense, a process of de-childification (see chapter 1) is taking place in attributing the established cohort into a group of social butterflies. The categorization of the butterfly and the caterpillar is clearly more relevant than the precise age of the children. The oldest caterpillar children were sometimes older than the youngest butterfly children, but the two-step kindergarten model mitigated other age differentiations, which is at least remarkable. During all the months of fieldwork in the kindergarten, I never noticed that children joined or differentiated on the basis of their actual age but could observe daily that it made a difference whether a child was placed in the cohort of the caterpillars or the butterflies. It is their academic, their institutional age that counts in class.

The butterflies surely already knew the building and its various rooms and corners; they were acquainted with each other, with the class teacher, Judith Gasser, as well as with most of the rules that should be followed. They knew that they were not allowed to enter the building until the teachers changed the button on the front door from red to green. They knew that they should put their kindergarten bag in a raffia basket on entering the building and that there were fixed places in the cloakroom, marked with their animal symbol. They knew that they were supposed to shake hands with all teachers when entering the kindergarten, look into their eyes, and say "Good morning, Mrs. Gasser" or "Good morning, Mr. Polo." They knew you had better not mess with Mr. Polo, the at times grumpy special education (SEN) teacher. They knew about the rule that you should immediately drop everything when the teacher rings the wind chime—and that you should under no circumstances move the wind chimes yourself. They knew that if the wind chime rings, you should move to it (without running!), put both hands on your head, and be ready to hear an instruction. Overall, they were familiar with the everyday routines of the kindergarten, routines that were mostly strange to the new children who were about to become a part of this year's kindergarten class.

The analysis of these two categories of belonging clarifies how ascribed categories become effective but also how the division into two different types of children decisively shapes the social order in the kindergarten and how differentiation for organizational reasons can create powerful and meaningful distinctions. Furthermore, it becomes clear how categories of social belonging are not only attributed, but also guide action, raise expectations to a certain way of

being, and can be emotionally charged (Feldman-Savelsberg 2016). The fact that these categories are *only* applied in one single field make them especially fruitful for social analysis because not only it is possible to study different *modes* of social belonging more closely, but it also allows this differentiation to be used to see how categories of social belonging are related to differentiation and inequality in field-specific and—one might say—almost pure ways (Brubaker 2015). In contrast to other attributions (e.g., boys and girls), newly enrolled children do not know the categories from other contexts, and they therefore do not already carry expectations of a given performance for fulfilling this category.

Turning from a caterpillar to a butterfly meant that these second-graders in kindergarten, Kenny, Elena, Pedro, Natalja, Victor, and their companions, were increasingly addressed as children who should develop into school-ready butterflies during this upcoming school year and as those who would have to be a role model for the new caterpillars. Butterfly children are addressed as children who already know by heart what it is like to be a kindergarten child. Butterflies should come to the kindergarten without their parents, even come for two afternoon sessions each week, when learning lessons were prepared for butterflies only. Butterfly children are addressed as already knowing enough that a new child is assigned to each of them who is to be looked after like a godchild, who is to be taken by the hand when the class goes on excursions. It is a kind of attested institutional wisdom that is held to with much pedagogical vehemence. Being a butterfly comes with expectations as role models that can be held symbolically liable. Those children hence had to be consistently admonished by the teachers that they were the big ones now, butterflies, and that a butterfly really had to know that one should not be so loud, so cheeky, so selfish. They could be blamed for not meeting expectations.

Being a godmother or a godfather for one of the new caterpillar children, showing responsibility, being a role model—big words for children who on average were about to turn six in the course of that year. This pedagogical work by the teachers toward the older cohort, however, is relevant to understanding the start of school life for new children like Mathumai. The point here is not to reject these demands as too high and unachievable. Rather, it is about the consequences of this clear generational division into two different institutional cohorts for the social order in the classroom.

Social Butterflies Gaining Peer Power

On their first day of schooling, Mathumai and her new caterpillar companions such as Zaylie, Arian, Abshiru, Harun, and Tereza became part of a social order that was already in full swing. Some friendships were already

established, some children already knew their way around, some children knew exactly when to clap their hands during a song, had already trained to freeze all movement when the piano suddenly stops playing (and hence win competitions). To understand the situation from the perspective of the new children, who were addressed as caterpillars in kindergarten, it is important to see that they were not told *which* children were at the kindergarten for the first time, there were simply many children around already, and a lot of them seemed to know what was going on. Furthermore, some children—the butterflies—were repeatedly presented as exemplary by the teachers during these first weeks. For example, Mrs. Eder would say in an almost euphoric voice, "Oh, look children, how well Dragan is signaling! [*Clenching his left hand into a fist, but with his index finger stretched out, thereby touching his mouth, and symbolizing silence, and pointing upwards with his right hand, again with his index finger stretched out.*] Dragan is a butterfly; he already knows how we do that here in class. Dragan, what do you want to say?" Or "Mathumai, look, Elena is helping you with the puzzle; she is a butterfly, she knows how it works." "Now all the butterfly children can stand up and get some scissors. You already know how to do it." "Pedro, you're already a butterfly. Butterflies know how to announce themselves in the circle!" This insistence, day by day, hour by hour on two kinds of groups attending class is relevant. Not only do children who are now labelled as butterflies suddenly receive a great deal of attention and new roles, but the "new little ones" also have supposed colleagues, hardly older than themselves, who are clearly identified as a different generation, obviously having more responsibility and power. The cohort as a form of doing generation develops an enormous social impact (Kertzer 1983; Alanen 2001; West and Fenstermaker 1995).

This clear distribution of attention, power, and recognition is not without consequence. It releases at a stroke unbelievable energy on the part of those children who have only just been appointed to be butterflies. Battles for ranks and friendships take place, and with the newly acquired powers, one suddenly has something to say among the peers in kindergarten. Moreover, all the children who had so much to say the year before are now in the first grade of primary school, so the power vacuum they have left behind can be filled anew. The new butterflies of course remember their predecessors, how they were allowed to determine so much for a whole kindergarten year, set the tone in the class: And now it is their turn.

Extracts from the field notes from the first few weeks are full of negotiations among the children about their allocation as butterflies (b) and caterpillars (c), which are almost exclusively initiated by the new social butterflies. They show impressively how the children understand social belonging not in the way that teachers do, but from their own perspective, and act accordingly.

> Elena (b), Adana (b) and Zaylie (c) are playing with a wooden tile setting game. Elena claims that that's easy for butterfly children. Zaylie is not really allowed to participate, she only rarely (maybe twice) lays a wooden tile, she can do it, but Elena will not let her. She always takes the tile out of her hand and does it herself.
>
> The table group consisting of Kenny (b), Victor (b) and Abshiru (c) has taken pamirs [large colorful ear defenders that children may take when it is too noisy for them in the kindergarten or when they are to work quietly in guided pedagogical sequences]. It's not so loud right now, the pamirs serve more as a toy or something that the group shares amongst themselves. But they still talk a lot with each other and have to lift the one flap of the pamir again and again to understand each other. So, they have the pamir on their head, the left hand on the left ear and a pen in their right hand. Abshiru says: "If you want to be a robber, you have to be super-fast." But Kenny replies immediately: "Caterpillars are not faster than butterflies!"
>
> There is a coloring picture for each caterpillar and for each butterfly child, caterpillars for caterpillar children, and butterflies for butterflies. Kenny (b) comments: "It's so difficult," pointing to the fact that the butterflies have to paint much more because the butterfly is much bigger, with filigree wings. Mrs. Gasser then tells him that the butterflies are already in their second kindergarten year and therefore much better at it. She corrects with a: "maybe not better, but they can do it much longer," earning a proud nod from Kenny and Pedro (b), looking down at Harun (c) and his caterpillar picture next to them, laughing at him.
>
> Still during the break I watch Salma (b) holding Zaylie (c) firmly by the hand and running with her across the yard, she keeps looking at Elena (b) and when she discovers me and realizes that I am watching them, she comes running towards me with Zaylie in tow and says that Elena had said that she [Salma] was not allowed to be friends with Zaylie and that there was a rule that butterflies were not allowed to be friends with the caterpillars, but she wanted to play with Zaylie now and Elena would be angry about that.

These struggles for social positions, the refusal to become friends due to the putative inferior status of being a caterpillar child, the negotiations among the butterfly children over who should and may play with whom and where were everywhere during those first days and weeks of the school year. Interestingly, they were repeated in almost identical patterns the following year, when—making a brief time jump of exactly one year—Peter, Mathumai, Abshiru, Arian, Zaylie, Tereza, and their companions became the big ones themselves after the

summer holidays and when once again new children, on average a year younger than them, entered the kindergarten for the first time. Suddenly, the new butterfly Zaylie appeared as a commanding, leading child. And Abshiru vigorously complained about these little caterpillars that would mimic anything he was doing, and the new butterfly Peter did not want the caterpillar children Ömer and Arbnor to play with Harun and him in the car corner. The opening sequence of this chapter also goes back to this time one year after the start of the research. This start of the second year of schooling analytically dynamized assumptions about the nature and social positioning of individual children and shows the analytical potential of ethnography as long-term research. It allowed me to study once again, almost like under a magnifying glass, the effectiveness of a single division of children: caterpillars and butterflies.

The analysis of the teacher's division of children into those two categories of social belonging therefore provides fruitful insights into the institutional and practical conditions of the kindergarten and sheds light on how they use the older children as butterflies to introduce the new ones to the everyday life of the kindergarten without the need to reset everything and explain everything from scratch. It becomes clear how the attribution of children into two main categories of social belonging makes the pedagogical order in class become less questionable. It gives the kindergarten a category of social belonging that is peculiar to it and therefore also allows sociality within the social order to be negotiated on a field-specific basis. The two categories facilitate a way to both admit that children do not yet know how to do everything upon enrolment and to acknowledge that learning outcomes are to be achieved. It allows children to be praised differently and allows the introduction of a double assessment system. With recourse to Gammeltoft, already quoted at length in the introduction, it thus becomes clear how closely social belonging is linked to the establishment of a particular social collective, "attaining moral positions as members, that is, as individuals who can rightfully place claims on others, expecting their protection and support. Being a member can be painful and demanding, but it can also offer privileges and protections" (2018, 89). As a butterfly, the teacher may scold you because you were not paying close attention, but you may also be the first to jump over the rope and be praised for it; your moral position as a role model can be mentioned repeatedly. As a caterpillar, you might have to go to the gym holding hands with the unpopular assistant teacher, but it is okay if you do not know the answer to "Which day is today?" yet or if you cry a bit too much when your mummy leaves on the second day of schooling.

The children do not therefore simply accept these attributions as role models with respect to future kindergartners. They fill these categories themselves with clearly different social attributions. They repeatedly establish friendships through the category of butterfly, sometimes intentionally at the expense of the new children who are excluded from participation, as the excerpts from the field

notes above show. Among peers, the category can thus be detached from its organizational and pedagogical character and become a *social* peer distinction. Interestingly, this makes the category of the butterfly more habitable for the children, while the category of caterpillar can be a flaw in the children's group. By adopting the category of the butterflies for themselves, the children affirm the dichotomy that was actually introduced from a pedagogical perspective, rather than as a means of social distinction. Using the category for its own purposes still indirectly helps the kindergarten to further crystallize the social order in class by repeatedly granting the butterflies a kind of assistive role. As a consequence of both the teachers' and children's use of the two categories, the butterflies are not only addressed as more knowledgeable versions of the new cohort, but they are also more popular in the classroom and can often assert themselves better in peer negotiations. It becomes clear how a category of pedagogical differentiation can promote social inequality, but the relationship between differentiation and inequality only takes shape through the children's agency. Many caterpillars try to become part of the butterflies but are repeatedly relegated to their putative social place, resulting in the frustrating experience of exclusion. One can hardly avoid seeing the celebration of the newly acquired status of a butterfly child after the first completed school year as a kind of transgenerational reciprocal revenge, in which the former caterpillar children finally come to dominate other children as well.

Caterpillar: Becoming a Kindergartner

For the study of social belonging, it is important to recall that visiting kindergarten might be the first situation in which children are separated from their familiar environment for an extended period of time: every morning except the weekends. For the children of Wiesengrund Kindergarten, this does not mean that they have necessarily spent the first four years of their lives in a prototypically (according to Swiss standards) configured nuclear family. For example, several of the children have spent long periods in other countries, at times under the supervision of a grandparent or other relatives, people who sometimes are not allowed to visit their families in Switzerland.[1] Admission to school thus forces families to regulate a child's stay much more strictly. How and where the children had spent the first four years of their lives was not discussed as relevant to establish the pedagogical order. The only relevant distinction regarding the children's past was a differentiation between "nursery children," that is, those children who have certain experiences with professional (paid) caregivers who addressed the child in (Swiss-)German, and those who were entering a Swiss educational institution, or a space where (Swiss-)German is spoken throughout, for the first time when entering kindergarten. Many of the children in Wiesengrund Kindergarten had in fact attended a kind of playgroup or a

nursery before. It is assumed that those children were therefore used to everyday life outside their own family contexts—and possibly also to playing and interacting in Swiss dialect or German. The distinction between "nursery children" and "family children" was only used in the first days and weeks as a preliminary assessment and interpretation of the new children—as a prioritization of pedagogical attention maybe, but also as an excuse for those little caterpillars who are not so easily incorporated into the social order of the class. It was regarded by the teachers as an explanation of why some children needed more time to accomplish certain things, why some children cried in the beginning, and why it was hard for them to adapt to the everyday interactions in class. After some weeks, this distinction faded away and other interpretations for the children's behavior gained ground.

While the new children of the caterpillar cohort were addressed as not-yet x or y, as children who have not yet swung on the rings in the gym or perhaps never gone through the kindergarten birthday ritual and are not yet butterflies, and certainly not yet primary school children, the past of the caterpillars remained quite insignificant in everyday interactions in class. Very rarely however, the category of babies appeared as a counterpart to caterpillars. It was then about already being a "big girl" or a "big boy" and having outgrown babyhood and the associated behaviors.[2] Thus when Peter tells his caterpillar companion Zaylie, "You play like a baby," and when teachers, for instance, talk about being able to go to the toilet alone, a straight differentiation from baby to caterpillar can be made. Babies wear nappies and cannot go to kindergarten; babies are persons who *really* cry for no reason, who cannot even hold a pencil. Caterpillars are children who are at least capable of participating legitimately in kindergarten, even if they do not have to know everything yet. The recourse to the category of the baby affirms that the children who are newcomers already belong in the kindergarten. Caterpillars can show that they are certainly no longer like babies, and sometimes, they already act almost as if they would be butterflies, such as when teacher Laura Eder expressed in a loud cheerful voice, "Wow, children, Arian might still be a caterpillar, but have you noticed how quietly he can wait already?"

(Re-)establishing and Complicating the Social Order

Kindergarten in Zurich is a context where Swiss dialect is the lingua franca.[3] It is also a context where other languages (with very few exceptions) are banned. On the one hand, spoken language might in some areas of social interaction not even be that important in these first months of schooling. Although a lot of emphasis is placed on language development in both parents' evenings and the curriculum, most of the work required by the new pupils can be achieved without actively using speech acts. A lot is about clapping, hopping, singing, and

playing, and many things can be done quite well by imitating, until the instructions themselves are understood and embodied.

The kindergarten was full of toys, and many games could be played without elaborated vocabulary. The fact that children were most of the time free to choose what and with whom they play led to, among other things, a relief for children who are not yet well versed in the (Swiss-)German language. This freedom to choose games themselves and not to require too much input was also repeatedly emphasized by the teachers. "Life is hard enough" or "They don't have it easy anyway" were statements that came up repeatedly when reflecting on their style of teaching. It was therefore possible for a child to withdraw and play for a longer period without communication hurdles becoming explicit; some children also used the relief to communicate in another language, even if they were then usually admonished to speak German again. On the other hand, however, this alleged freedom also promoted, in a very subtle way, an unintended division of pupils along language barrier lines. Gulløv (2021, 2014) showed in similar ethnographic studies in Denmark that while children who were proficient or confident in the language of the institution more often chose to engage in role-playing or activities around the teachers (listening to stories, getting involved in a conversation), children without good skills in the language of the institution more often preferred to choose physical activities or activities that work in a linguistically mute manner, and more often chose to play by themselves. Mathumai, for instance, chose little else but painting. When she was asked what she wanted to do, a quiet "*mole*" (painting) was usually heard, and she was released from the situation. This can have consequences for both the child's learning process and the schools' assessment regarding the child and the building up of friendships, hobbies, and future favorite activities.

After a few weeks of the new school year, the new cohort of caterpillar children had become accustomed to many classroom procedures. They too got up and came to the wind chime when it sounded. Interestingly for studying social belonging, the rigidity in the categories of caterpillars and butterflies disappeared with this progress. This major axis of distinction became less significant. Other categories were (re-)activated, by both the children and the teachers. "Often it will be impractical for the ethnographer to follow the phenomenon not only into emergence but also through disappearance," Katz lamented (2001, 461). The possibility of seeing the effect of this one category of differentiation between butterflies and caterpillars losing influence over the month of schooling, and the possibility of studying the same attribute again the following year with respect to the performance of the two cohorts was a unique opportunity to study the working of a social category.

So, a few weeks into the school year, the organization of the class and the negotiation of friendships diversified. It soon became relevant which of the children went to a day-care center together in the afternoons, and gender

entered stages as a differentiating category much more strongly, not by the teachers, but in the peer groups. So, it was no longer the butterfly children who stuck their heads together in free play, but the boys who spent their afternoons in day-care CB II and the girls making paintings of Snow Queen Elsa, or it was Tereza, Harun, and Arian, who lived in the same street and whose parents also knew each other, who chose to sit together and share their Kiri snack. Having initially insisted that caterpillar children should not be played with, butterfly child Elena soon showed an interest in caterpillar child Peter after a few weeks in class, and together they were often involved in role-playing. As Elena and Peter both spent every afternoon from 12:00–6:00 in the *red Wiesi* day-care center, their friendship grew, and their fantasy worlds connected. Not only were they thus used to playing with each other in the afternoon, but their knowledge of (Swiss)-German was also more advanced than average, allowing role-playing to be more linguistically sophisticated with lively conversations.

The possibility of ordering the class along a specific axis of differentiation and the clarity with which this was achieved in the first weeks of insisting on two separated groups of butterflies and caterpillars was never achieved again, and thus the negotiations about who was allowed to play where also became more contingent, and hence in a certain way also more interesting. Excuses had to be invented situationally as to why Natalja was obviously addressed as a girl but nevertheless would not be excluded when Dragan claimed that "only boys are allowed to play here!" Time and again, children were excluded because there was allegedly no more space or because the space that was still free at a certain table or in a certain play corner was saved for someone else. "No, Abshiru, this is saved for Sinopa!" As the school year progressed, the teachers sometimes suggested situational categories to form groups or to organize an orderly process that were never adopted by the children, for example, by deploying categories such as "'all children whose name begins with a D" or "all children whose birthday is in January." On the other hand, the children also became more creative in how they could relate to each other: "Everyone who likes *Ladybug*" or when Elena came up to me one day all excited and said, "Mrs. Jaeger, Adana, Dragan, and me, we for one all know Kurdish!" What surprised me at this point was that I thought I knew that Elena spoke only Slovakian at home, and Dragan spoke Serbian. The longer I observed these negotiations of divergent, partly situational, partly prolonged forms of relational belonging within the group of children, the more it became clear that supposedly established attributions did not work. Instead, what Kromidas identified as *bridging*, *crossing*, and *deep crossing* in her ethnography of a school class in New York City came into play: strategies for invoking and claiming the common, which in part aimed at erasing supposed differences (bridging), in part placed children on the other side of an assumed difference despite named differences (crossing), and in part allowed "unconventional belongings" (2016, 23)

to be assumed for themselves. Following Kromidas, I would argue that "these ubiquitous and spontaneous practices within friendships were joyful, symbols of affection and admiration, explicit and exuberant displays of the becoming other that characterizes friendship" (2016, 70). We learn here an important point for practices of social differentiation, in that the supposedly (even arbitrary) division into divergent categories of people not only hierarchizes, but simultaneously provides the substance for commonality across (established) boundaries (Brubaker 2015; Hirschauer 2023).

The longer the school year lasted, the more the way the children's groups were organized diversified, and the working of person- and group-oriented markers of differentiation was also influenced more by forces not promoted within the pedagogically informed order in class. At the time of the research, there was, for instance, a great deal of Snow Queen Elsa merchandise designed specifically for girls in the supermarkets and the equivalent for boys, such as a whole Spiderman collection. From the kindergarten backpack to the T-shirt, the cap, and socks, most children were outfitted in part with these gendered products, visibly creating and highlighting a distinction between two categories of children: girls and boys. Furthermore, parents' preferences and attitudes also penetrated the kindergarten: Elena should not play with children from Africa, she once said; Salma on the other hand, should only play with girls, her father would have said. The teachers sometimes tried to counteract but tended to ignore these externally imposed criteria of distinction and addressed or problematized them only when they ran fundamentally counter to their own program (this will be elaborated in chapter 3).

Routine and Resistance

The mornings spent in kindergarten followed a certain schedule, which—from the perspective of the adults in charge—had a decisive impact on the social order in class. Depending on the pedagogical framing, children were to move around the room independently and were free to be in certain groups with other children, or the opposite: in situations that were more teacher-led, children had to go to the place that was assigned to them. For some children this was terrible, on the one hand, because they were separated from beloved playmates and, on the other hand, because they were forced to sit next to Harun, for example, or next to Pedro, who tried to put his finger in your ear again, or next to the SEN teacher, Mr. Polo, who was always so strict and would watch you closely. The emotional fabric of the class was thus thwarted by a pedagogical routinization. A closer look at routinization is due.

Children would enter the building at some point between 8:10 and 8:35, would change their street shoes for slippers, and leave any jackets, gloves, or toys from home in the cloakroom area, always on the same hook with their animal totem. They would usually start the mornings in class with certain games that

were easy to put away. This initial period, flagged as free play, therefore had clear (and quite narrow) criteria as to what could be freely chosen from and what could be defined as play. Once the group was complete, a planned activity, guided and prepared by the teacher(s), would start. In those subsequent guided lessons, which were often tied to the curricular guidelines, teachers prepared something the children should learn: a new song, a new story, or getting involved with so-called culture techniques like cutting, gluing, counting (even backwards), rolling up a thread, or similar things. Never during my stay in class would a child ask for one of those teaching units, nor were they framed as teaching units. Things were presented by teachers as pleasurable and apparently spontaneous. "Kids, uhh, I'd be interested to know what kind of beard Santa has. It's so fluffy. Look, we can use cotton wool and pull it apart with our fingers. And then we can pull Santa's biiiig white beard." Sometimes the children would complain about having to listen for such a long time to a boring story, as butterfly Pedro was not shy to mention, especially sitting next to—according to his opinion—annoying caterpillar Abshiru.[4] Sometimes he would therefore deliberately fart or repeatedly try to put his finger in the ear of the child who happened to be placed next to him. He especially liked to do that with children that tended to overreact in situations like that: Zaylie or Adana, but Dragan was also a good choice.

From the teachers' perspective, these mornings each had a clearly defined sequence, mainly: free play at reception time, learning input, snack time, break outside no matter the weather, play inside, circle sequence (eventually coming back to the morning's learning input) before lunch, getting ready to leave, singing good-bye songs in the cloakroom. From the children's point of view, this sequence was not necessarily recognizable in the same way. Breaks (e.g., when they were sent outside to play) were not necessarily felt as breaks for the children. Mathumai, for instance, often had difficulties because she did not feel like climbing on the various pieces of equipment outside or playing football, chase, or hide-and-seek with the other children. She thus often remained sitting on the edge of the sandbox by herself, waiting to be allowed to go back inside. Furthermore, the children's social interactions pervaded the sequencing of the teachers, transcending the task they were told to do. Again and again, they were mainly busy gazing at each other, negotiating relationships. They had to make sure that they did not miss any of their colleagues' jokes or involuntarily become the victim of one of those jokes. Whether this happened when punching the cardboard, when—as the chapter's opening sequence involving Mariana showed—they had to put away games, clean tables after the mid-morning snack, or during the so-called break outside was not important. Sometimes arguments went on for days or migrated from day-care to kindergarten and back, with the children involved even changing.

The different notions of what happens in the classroom, and the different approaches to temporality, provide valuable insights into what schools ultimately

achieve, and for whom. Willis has, in a different context, concisely worked out the value that "dossing, blagging and wagging," for example, can have as countercultural elements of school (1977, 26–29). By looking at the concrete things that children (or in his case adolescents) deal with throughout pedagogically framed situations, it is possible to analyze which skills children can and must acquire during the mornings in class. Children must follow several logics of evaluation; being popular among peers can sometimes be in strong opposition to the praise of the teachers (Bollig 2018). Or being friends with Zaylie might get you in trouble with Elena. When children strive for this split game for recognition (not all do, though), they have to remain active on several fronts. A good example is the midmorning snack. Children had to bring something small to eat from home, and it was supposed to be "healthy." The question of proper good food was dealt with regularly,[5] with children caught in between the recognition of the teachers when they could show a tomato and some bread, for instance, or earn more credits from other children if they could show grissini with a creamy dip called Kiri. However, those children whose parents had provided what the institution considered to be the proper food in their lunch box still had the possibility of scoring points of recognition. Small tomatoes could be pinched between the eyes, and pieces of carrot could be shoved up the nose. Hazelnuts could be flicked across the tables—if you squeezed your fingers properly, you could even shoot them at someone at the other end of the table. Thus, some children developed quite nifty modes of being recognized as good pupils by their teachers and at the same time scoring with (some of their) classmates by precisely subverting the educational guidelines or simply having a fun time together. We can see here what Toren identifies as the social constitution of meaning, where "meanings made by children may be direct inversions of adult meanings" (1993, 462).

Not Snitching

Collegiality among the children counted for something in the kindergarten. This was continuously demanded by the children as well as by the adults. When Victor (interlude 1) shouted, "Now everyone against Mrs. Jaeger!" no child had to think twice about what side to be on in the snowball fight. It was repeatedly emphasized by the teachers how important it was that the children support and help each other. This was repeated so often because it also so often went wrong. When winning a game, one was allowed to celebrate, but it regularly tipped over into trouble when individual children became excited at the expense of other children losing. Some kindergartners were incredibly good at gloating at the expense of others. They could put in veritable dance interludes. They would jump and shriek, point their fingers at others and laugh out loud, beaming all over, and teachers worked hard on the children learning to control their emotions (see chapter 3). Even worse than when children laughed at each other when they had

won, snitching was moralized. Dragan is a case in point and was on the receiving end of this again and again, as he had the urge to be liked by the teachers and tried to optimize this by telling them what other children had done without permission: "Mrs. Eder, Victor has a Batman with him and took it out of his backpack just now!" "Mrs. Gasser, just before, Harun threw a car around!" The matter was not so easy to resolve. Gossiping children did not receive praise from the teachers; instead, they were immediately told that it was not nice, that they were gossiping, that one should not do that. But the snitching nevertheless often caused a reaction—the teachers followed up on the tips, and Victor, for example, had to hand over his Batman and was told off a little later. A certain belated satisfaction could spread across Dragan's face. During the playtime outside, one of the children always had the task of being a dispute mediator. The child was given a yellow vest so that it was obvious that complaints were to be taken to this child. However, this task could not be fulfilled and left children overwhelmed. Those children who were complaining about the behavior of their companions ran straight to the teacher and were then referred back to the supervising child with the yellow vest. Thus, when the agitated complaining child stood in front of the yellow-vested mediator, the accusation suddenly no longer made sense. Why should Zaylie, for instance, care that Dilek said "assh-le" to Kenny? A shrug of the shoulders and a glance at the teachers was the only upshot. These situations almost always left the children somewhat stunned. The pedagogical gesture only made sense from the point of view that certain things that happened in the yard remained unsanctioned and that the teachers were freed from policing the pedagogical order during the time that was scheduled as "break." The analysis of this child mediator job clearly shows how different social orders coexist in class, and certain roles are not transgenerationally transferable. In that particular case, for instance, role holders must have the capacity to actually sanction. The social positioning of the dispute mediator did not change in such a way that the child was given a better position in a hierarchy. On the contrary, the child was usually no more able to take an unbiased stance in the games than the other children.

While several categories of social belonging specific to the kindergarten have been elaborated so far and it has been shown that the configuration of the social order can become quite complex, the final pages of this chapter dynamize this yet again by analyzing ethnicity-related differentiations brought into class by the children.

"Bisch du au Albaner?" (Are you Albanian, too?)

As will be discussed more in depth in chapter 5, all of the kindergartners' families were transnationally connected and often had a different social position in other countries. It will be shown how they variously dealt with social orders with

respect to migration regimes and that the invocation of national belonging is a routine occurrence. "Coming from somewhere else" was undoubtedly something that influenced the families' everyday lives, and talking about it was part of it: who also knew Albanian in the neighborhood was common knowledge, and people moved through the neighborhood in ways which were partly segregated along the lines of countries of origin/religious belonging/common language or which were negotiated according to the modus vivendi of diversity. In other words, the children were used to cultural, national, religious, and linguistic characteristics being part of everyday negotiations, constituting the social orders at stake. I would argue that maybe *nowhere* were they so flattened and seemingly made more unimportant as by the teachers in the kindergarten.

In class, the children were immediately immersed in a social space that was almost exclusively arranged in the Swiss dialect. The kindergarten teachers, Judith Gasser and Laura Eder, as well as SEN teacher Andreas Polo all grew up within a radius of 30 kilometers from Mühlekon, and they all spoke to the children in local dialect: Züritüütsch (Zurich-German). However, it was not only language that unified and putatively neutralized this space. Knowing that the class consisted of children from different religious denominations, the teachers tried to treat religious diversity with respect but without giving it too much attention. For example, when children stayed away from kindergarten because of Eid Mubarak, this was mentioned only in passing. Christian holidays (which continue to be most official holidays in the canton of Zurich, not to mention the Christian-style division of the week with Sunday as the holy day of rest) were mentioned, but they were not really celebrated in the kindergarten either. Children were addressed as butterflies and caterpillars, not as Albanian or Portuguese, as children that were born in spring, not as Muslims or Hindu. So, children entered a space in kindergarten that was deliberately neutralized on several levels. It was therefore the children who brought their extracurricular experiences of the diversified Mühlekon into the kindergarten.

The question of where the children came from was virulent within the crowd of children. Butterfly Kenny, for instance, was curious about his new companions. Abshiru was asked if he was also Albanian, and he answered in the affirmative but then could not respond to Kenny's request to say a few sentences in Albanian. This prompted Kenny to accuse Abshiru of ignorance: how dare he pretend to be Albanian! When Mrs. Gasser led Arian by the hand into the large kindergarten room on his second day of schooling, he was immediately asked by Kenny where he had come from. Arian replied, "Kosovo, and 'Schwiiz, Schweiz, Schwiiz,'" which made Kenny beam, and he uttered elatedly, "So you are Albanian, too?" Arian's answer is also interesting, of course. On this second day of my fieldwork, I found it remarkable that he immediately emphasized both countries but was unsure whether to pronounce Switzerland in dialect (Schwiiz) or German (Schweiz). The time spent with his family reinforces the assumption

that the family frequently spoke about not just being "Albanian," and Arian obviously brought this attitude with him into the kindergarten, often wearing a shirt of the Swiss national football team. Kenny, on the other hand (he himself speaking Swiss German with his mother, who migrated to Switzerland herself as a teenager), positioned himself very clearly as Albanian,[6] and he brought the children's respective national belonging to the table from day one, even if he was never eager to speak Albanian in class. He would have been told by his parents which Albanian-speaking children had recently joined the class with him, since he also approached the new caterpillar child Tereza as soon as she arrived in class: "So you're Albanian, too?" Tereza, also holding Mrs. Gasser's hand, remained silent, which prompted Mrs. Gasser to say, "Maybe she doesn't know yet; she is still a caterpillar." So, while the teacher sought to turn the children's negotiation around via the—once again—pedagogically familiar principle of age cohorts and the not-yet-knowing caterpillar child, this seemed distinctly implausible to Kenny. Shortly afterward, he asked Tereza again if she spoke Albanian, and she nodded somewhat confusedly. Some of the children already knew each other because they knew the other Kosovars, or the other Portuguese, or the other Russians in the neighborhood. However, since the children met here in a space organized in (Swiss)-German, some of these extracurricular relationships were not easy to continue seamlessly. The SEN teacher, Mr. Polo, was particularly keen to prevent other languages being used from day one, as well as the formation of groups in Turkish, Albanian, or Portuguese. There were no clear majorities in the class, as only a few children spoke Albanian, or Serbian-Bosnian-Croatian and Portuguese, one or two English, Tamil, Russian, etc., so the friendships and relationships in the kindergarten were formed in (Swiss)-German. It remained the lingua franca almost throughout, even among the individual children who, in fact, knew each other also from outside kindergarten, meeting each other, for instance, in their Portuguese-speaking homes. This did not mean, however, that the children did not repeatedly talk about the countries where their parents were born, and they integrated this into their games in class. Again and again, I saw chants being started for specific nations. For example, a few children stood with Natalja and Dragan and shouted "Ser-bi-a, Ser-bi-a," while Pedro was able to gather a gang behind him chanting "Por-tu-gal, Por-tu-gal." It was the children gathered around a revolving climbing frame who fueled the mood so that other children on the ground would turn the frame faster. It was much more a question of whose side you were cheering for, that is, whether you liked Natalja or Pedro better or whether you then sided with Sinopa, who finally decided to join Natalja's side. That these country references can be integrated seemingly apolitically into the general games of who should do what with whom and how is demonstrated by the resolution of this little Serbia-Portugal interlude: while the country names were being pronounced more and more indistinctly due to the shouting and the intermittent

laughter, the Portugal faction suddenly switched from shouting "Portugal" to shouting "Pikachu." This Pokemon reference was not made without also mimicking the electrifying effect of the character they knew from YouTube videos and video games. On the third syllable, the children always threw imaginary lightning bolts and shook their bodies as if they had been electrocuted: "Pi-ka-chuuuuuuuu!"

Pork and Skin Colors

As Hirschfeld notes, "There are fundamental differences between the way children understand race and the way adults do. [And] we need to understand the relationship between children and adult conceptions of race" (2002, 621). What he has elaborated convincingly in the analysis of the passing on of so-called cooties also applies to various negotiations of social belonging by the children in Wiesengrund Kindergarten. Many of the children's negotiations of skin color or "ethnicity-like forms of religion" (Brubaker 2015, 11) were not (yet) integrated into geopolitical or power-oriented discussions and determinations of the relevance of certain differences. It is the emancipatory moment in which Kromidas (2016) speaks of the children's transformative power of racial baggage, of the moments in which adults could and in fact should learn from children. This conclusion is important. The danger, however, lies in a light-hearted analytical assumption (or hope?) that children are simply some kind of better people. Instead of normative advocacy, the analysis hints at the "fundamental differences" described by Hirschfeld, explaining how children negotiate sameness and difference and how they teach us about the working, assignment, feeling, and enactment of social belonging in—for adult's already established perceptions to certain categories—unsuspected ways.

As already mentioned, religious affiliations were hardly ever openly discussed by the pedagogical adults in the kindergarten. The only delicate issue was food restrictions based on religious affiliation: the pork sausages from a given super-market were a favorite of many children. Victor and Pedro devoured them with relish—they were long, so you could also use them as swords before stuffing them into the mouth. Kenny was jealous, probably more of the play opportunity than the sausage, but it made him remark aloud one day, "When I get to heaven, I'm going to eat pork too!" This gave him some agency again, and he began to change the modality of the game, eventually pulling it away from the exclusionary sausages by encouraging the other two boys to talk about penises, which made everyone giggle, and Kenny was back into the middle of the action.

The children rarely mentioned different skin colors in class. I myself, faced with the dangers of reification and at the same time with the fear of not seeing, perhaps naively, whether racism did play a role, had a hard time with the skin

color question in class (Diehm, Kuhn, and Machold 2010). While I have witnessed all kinds of reasons why children were excluded from respective play opportunities ("Go away, you stink!" "You are annoying!" "Only butterflies are allowed to participate here!" "No Zaylie, not you, only Salma." "Here is occupied for Sinopa." "Abshiru, get lost, you are a pain.") I have never witnessed that race or skin color was openly negotiated. However, and this is no less interesting, Elena must have brought Zalyie's darker skin up several times to exclude her (as her mother Rose later told me, see interlude 3). The fact that I observed this Zaylie-Elena constellation a lot and heard all sorts of "mean" things coming out of Elena's mouth, but not references to skin color, indicate at least that Elena knew about the reprehensibility of such differentiation in kindergarten and knew to apply it only without adults.

Concluding Remarks

In this first line of inquiry to understand the children's everyday life in the kindergarten, I have tried to describe and analyze how children are woven into the social order in class. This has shown that a field-specific ordering principle according to generational parameters, teachers, and butterflies and caterpillars initially dominates. However, compared to other organizations with internally differentiated kinds of membership, these attributions and performances of social belonging evaporate over time, they thin out, and children seek relationships and belonging in a much more diversified way. There are more stable commonalities than the organizational division into two cohorts that also help children shape relationships in the kindergarten; the butterfly-caterpillar affiliation thus becomes only situationally relevant and loses more and more of its semantics.

It is necessary to fit into a social order of kindergarten as an organization guided by a certain pedagogically informed order and to align one's role to an assigned position in order to meet expectations. However, as the roles and expectations are not that clear-cut and children are also identified by their peers in ways which are different from the way they are identified by their teachers, the children have significant scope for action. They can charge categories of social belonging with different meaning, which could lead to other moral and social duties and new processes of inclusion and exclusion (Kromidas 2016).

The various references to different social orders make the everyday life of children in kindergarten complex, and different modes of social belonging work and work together in a dynamic way. A not insignificant part of the impact power of different categories of social belonging, however, stems from a given implemented order that is rendered pedagogical. Its dominance has consequences. These will be explored in the second line of inquiry in the next chapter.

Second Interlude: Mathumai

The Story of a Miracle

On her first two days of schooling in Wiesengrund Kindergarten, Mathumai cried relentlessly. She screamed and whined for hours and would hardly calm down. It therefore did not take long for Mathumai to get on the nerves of the other children. "Oh no, *her* again!" Kenny shouted across the room on the second day, when Mathumai was brought into the kindergarten holding hands with Mrs. Eder but crying yet again. An institution such as a kindergarten is not well prepared for a child crying for hours. While some emotional outbursts are quite usual, after all, it is a place for four- to seven-year-olds, Mathumai's crying exceeded the limits of what was regarded as bearable. It could not be ignored, and she also could not be stopped from crying with the tricks that kindergarten teachers tend to use. There is no smooth integration into the kindergarten's everyday life for a crying and whining child. Mathumai refused to become part of the bigger group of children; instead, she was a disruption. Thus, the adults around (including myself) took turns in attempts to comfort her. To provide some relief for the others, she was taken to the cloakroom area, where her crying at least could not be heard that loudly by the others. What a disastrous start to eleven years of compulsory schooling!

After Mathumai's second day in class, a parent's evening took place. The new cohort, Mathumai and her fellow companions such as Zaylie, Arian, Harun, Tereza, and Abshiru, had so far completed two mornings of lessons as so-called caterpillar children, and the parents were invited to come in for more information regarding the procedures of kindergarten life and to get to know each other. Mathumai's parents were both present, and during introductions, the father took the floor:

> Hoi mitenand [Zurich-German: Hello everybody]. My name is very long name, Kenkatharan Shanmugalingam, but say: Lingam. And name of the

> child is very short: Mathumai [several people laugh]. My parents did not know that we come to Switzerland, therefore so long names [laughter, again]. First child Vasanthan, second child Hashika, third Mathumai, fourth child Prakash, very short name, my child. Mathumai. But she always speaks Tamil at home, but all the siblings together sometimes speak German [Mrs. Gasser: Hashika also goes to school here, right?] Yes, exactly. In German. Before Mathumai looked forward to kindergarten, but now she cries a little, she likes to be together with mummy home. Um, I work for Migros, 100%, and my wife worked two-three-hour part-work something for catering, but now with baby—the children like to be together with mummy. But she also [points to his wife] very hurt, seeing child crying and so on. But I think nice here.[1]

Not without any irony in his voice and with a telling wink of the eye, Mathumai's father introduced his child as a beloved member of his family. Instead of the usual brief description of a given characteristic that would define their child (other parents might chose "mega-smart" [Abshiru], "she is a fast learner" [Zaylie], "brave" [Peter], or "he knows what he wants" [Harun]), he referred to her crying and her desire to be with her mother. Mr. Lingam presented the family as hard-working, as being aware of cultural differences, and as a family with emotional intimacy and care, thus excusing and relativizing at the same time Mathumai's behavior in class.

Mathumai's journey during her two years in kindergarten is remarkable. While her crying, as the opening description showed, was loud, she soon stopped all audible expression. She also repeatedly refused to join in with kindergarten activities: she often did not clap along, she often did not sing along, and she sat for hours on the edge of the sandbox in silence while the other children were chasing each other around the playground. One kept wondering what she was thinking.

Mathumai herself has very little to say in this little story about her. For an ethnography that takes the voices of children into account, this may seem strange at first. It is, however, a case in which it becomes clear that, first, children's voices cannot be reduced to and understood as an audible voice only. And second, the remarkableness caused by silent participation is an exciting phenomenon in understanding both institutional processes and the question of children's agency. Instead of being integrated into the other chapters, however, this interlude tells the story of a miracle. A miracle whose origin, as we come to see, has many names and faces.

Making Sense of a "Strange Girl"

Mathumai had not visited any kind of Swiss care institution before her highly distressed response to enrolment in kindergarten at the age of four. Her daily

linguistic communication until that day was almost exclusively conducted in Tamil, and she had hardly any knowledge of (Swiss-)German. When her crying during the morning classes subsided, Mathumai became a quiet child, a child who was not participating much but who also did not bother much. Almost as if Mrs. Gasser had seen it coming, replying to the father's introductory comments during the parent's evening with a wink of the eye herself: "But today she has already cried less. I think every day it gets a little less, and then suddenly she says, 'No no, Mama, stay at home!'" Remarkably, Mathumai's soon passive but peaceful behavior made several children sit up and take notice of her. Mathumai had to be brought along, she had to be cared for. She was passed around by the older children like a doll, was sat on their laps. She was stroked and cuddled, she was given new hairstyles and greeted with a wave when she entered the room in the morning. When it came to getting from the kindergarten to other destinations (for example, the gym or the forest) in rows of two, there were children who really blossomed when they were put together with Mathumai. She was placed in the role of the baby when children did role-playing, with several children insisting on being her father or mother. Victor and Elena, in particular, kept an eye on her, and they made their task of protectors of "the little baby" clear to other children time and again. "Mathumai is totally sweet, isn't she?" Dragan stated in chat between butterfly boys in the third week after the start of school, and the consent of the others, including Kenny (note: the boy from "Oh no, her again!"), followed with extensive affirmative nodding: "Hmh-mmm!"

Thus, even before she celebrated her fifth birthday in October, Mathumai became a child who received a lot of attention in class just by being there. Time and again, she was asked and encouraged by the teachers to take part in the daily activities: "Hei, Mathumai, come on and have a look! Isn't that great how Zaylie and Tereza are skipping? Don't you wanna give it a try?" Or "Mathumai, this slide is totally cool, come and try!" However, Mathumai often refused but let quite a lot be done with her. You could put her under your arm and whirl her through the air or tickle her, and sometimes she would cheerfully, but quietly, giggle.

Because Mathumai stopped crying and the other children integrated her into their play, the weeks went by without any educational intervention. The kindergarten teachers were used to children not speaking German well at the beginning and gave the children, as they say, time to arrive. However, given her little knowledge of German and her passive way of socializing, the kindergarten staff strongly recommended to the parents during their first one-to-one parent/teacher meeting that Mathumai be sent to one of the day-care centers in the afternoon as often as possible. Whereas in the case of other children, day-care was advised as a response to neglect or too little time away from parents, these day-care visits should *weaken* the social bond between Mathumai and her mother: "The girl must learn to take the initiative, to leave mummy's protection!" SEN teacher Mr. Polo told me. The parents followed the advice.

Shortly after the autumn holidays, Mathumai was sent to a day-care center twice a week. She did not like it at all. The crying began again, and the staff from day-care who picked her and the other children up from the playground in front of the kindergarten dragged a grumpy, whimpering child behind them by their hand for an exhausting 500 meters.

It was in day-care when I first heard that Mathumai was something like a *goddess*, a *miracle*. Over the tables at lunch, staff member Arbnora told me that Mathumai was obviously something special in her religion, and that she was probably treated with kid gloves. In Wiesengrund Kindergarten, Mr. Polo soon provided further information. He was present at the previous parent/teacher meeting with the Lingam family, and there they had also spoken of the miracle that was Mathumai. But he had some more details. Something strange must have happened at birth, a miracle. The ephemeral insights into a miracle story quite rapidly suggested a different pedagogical assessment of the child. The former shy child, who was simply not yet ready, became a somewhat spoiled child, who was obviously not used to being only one out of twenty pupils. Her behavior was now thought to be due to a special position that did not fit in the Swiss educational context.[2] The idea that Mathumai was a child deity changed the teachers' attitude, making them less patient with the girl. They did not like other children carrying her around too much anymore and playing with her as if she were a doll. Instead, more emphasis was placed on, for example, her cleaning the dishes or participating with everyone else. Thus, the miracle reference was leading to a practice that would compensate the out-of-school transnational and religious experience of the child.

Mathumai learned. She became bolder and more rebellious, she fought back, and almost every day she said that she would like to paint during the time when the children could choose their own activity. She became closer friends with Elena, and although Elena, older and with much better command of German, continued to set the tone, Mathumai had her say in their interactions and had a wonderful way of saying "OMG" (pronounced like "oumaigooo") and putting her face into curious, surprised-looking expressions. She increasingly moved away from the sides of the sandbox and integrated herself into the group of children when they were playing games in the playground. The pedagogical correction seemed to be successful. Here and there, however, the reference to the miracle reappeared; it helped the teachers to interpret Mathumai's continued attitude of refusal which flared up sometimes and what might be understood as social pathologization refrained from pedagogical or developmental-psychological clarifications.

As the conspicuousness of Mathumai slowly diminished, the narrative of the miracle moved into the background. Mathumai slipped out of the pedagogical focus to a certain extent. Only once did I realize that the miracle was still being addressed several months later: caregiver Silvia from the day-care center had

been upset that the Swiss system was extremely rigid with respect to recognizing the religious holidays of religions other than Christianity. She particularly noticed this with the Tamil children. "They have their temples somewhere in the middle of nowhere and have to adapt to the structure of Switzerland and sometimes even celebrate festivals on other days than religiously designated." The conversation probably also arose because Mathumai was sitting on a bench right next to us and still had her snack to eat. Silvia, turning look at Mathumai, tried to include her in our conversation by asking, "Do you have a good time in the temple? What do they do with you there? Are you carried on palanquins?" Sylvia received a confused look, and Mathumai finally left without answering. When I asked Sylvia if she had ever accompanied any of the children to the temple before, she said that although she received invitations, she would for reasons of equal treatment not visit any of the children outside day-care. And she added, "But of course I'm damn interested to know how this miracle child is celebrated in the temple."

A Second Narrative: Following the Ephemeral Insights

During a parent-visit day in March, six months after Mathumai's enrollment, Mr. Lingam invited me, too, to a Tamil cultural festival. It took place outside the town in a multipurpose hall in a small village. The hall was already bustling with activity; several hundred people were present, and I stood out like a sore thumb. I was asked directly who I was with and before I could answer, I was spotted by Hashika. The family and several other people I had not seen before were informed that Mathumai's teacher had actually arrived. Mathumai herself was sitting in the main hall, on a plastic chair, and while other children were visibly wearing Tamil clothes with high-quality, colorful fabrics, she buried her hands, as so often, in her everyday jumper which was a little too big for her. It was mainly Hashika who accompanied me through the day, and when she had to get ready for a performance on stage, she referred me to other people who helped me understand. Both parents were actively involved with the organization of the day, so I spent time with the children and various people who joined me. Mathumai's brother also had a performance; he sang in front of a full house, and I was thrilled. Mathumai took care of her baby brother when her mum was busy. For several hours Mathumai mainly remained sitting on her plastic chair. Her parents were busy, but various acquaintances of the family and her siblings and I kept her company. Mathumai's father had a role of responsibility and made excellent use of his communication skills. Mathumai did not seem to mind; she seemed to be used to her family getting attention, but to return to the picture of the caregiver Sylvia: no being carried on palanquins.

A few weeks later I visited Mathumai at home. We talked about the parents' professional career, the children's experiences in school, and their current

living situation, eating sweet crisps. Just as I was about to bring it up, Mr. Lingam began. "Mathumai, she is a miracle." And to my "how comes?" he said that she had almost not survived birth and had been in intensive care for several months. Mrs. Lingam sat next to me on the sofa, crying. Out of embarrassment I asked whether it had been here in Zurich, which apparently gave Mr. Lingam an idea. He sent his son to another room and he came back with a photo album. I was shown pictures of Mathumai's first birthday. It was a big celebration, especially, Vasanthan almost enthusiastically told me, because the birth was so difficult and it had not been possible for Mathumai to have been welcomed properly. Among the guests were two doctors from the children's hospital. They had all been delighted to accept the invitation. "I want to become a doctor too," Hashika then said, "and maybe later I can work there in the hospital." Mr. Lingam told me that he had been advised to sue the hospital to see if they were responsible for the complications. The family let it go. He said that he had been granted asylum here in Switzerland and that a lawsuit would not change the situation back then. But maybe if his children were given the opportunity to apply for an internship or similar at some later date, the hospital would remember that he had not filed a legal complaint.

3

Kindergarten Care

Around two years after my last visit to Wiesengrund Kindergarten, I accidentally met the two teachers, Laura Eder and Judith Gasser, with one of their friends from the school staff, Tanja, in a café downtown. I was still busy analyzing the ethnographic data; Laura's and Judith's everyday lives, on the other hand, went on. The third new cohort had already started school some weeks ago. We started talking about Zaylie, Harun, Mathumai, Arian, Tereza, and their companions. The teacher's memories of this former class and its individual children were, it seemed, partly overwritten with stories about other children, now enrolled in Wiesengrund Kindergarten. We took the fact that I "was still stuck in the past" and thinking so much about those past years while they had hardly any time to remember as an opportunity to talk about their work. "You can't look too deeply into the individual families," Judith said, "otherwise you cannot really do your job anymore." For teachers, the individual stories and experiences of children seem to be overlaid over time by a mishmash of divergent insights into the daily lives of many cohorts, imbued with the situations that presented the greatest challenges to them: "Tanja, remember the Golobew siblings?" Judith asked her friend. "I heard that they arrested both parents!" But as if to remind themselves again of better things, they also reported success stories immediately afterwards. "The other day Ezra came to see me. She has just passed the test and has been admitted to the grammar school, and she actually came to tell me. I was so happy to hear that!" Tanja said smiling, adding with a slight tone of irony, "God, we struggled so much with that stubborn girl!"

In a stimulating, intensely intellectual, and somewhat polemical exchange with Geertz on the consequences of anti-anti-ethnocentrism and the uses of diversity (Geertz 1986; Rorty 1986), Rorty reflected on the possibilities of living together in liberal and diversified societies. When considering those working in society's various institutions, in hospitals, schools, and courts, he concluded that

"we do not really want doctors to differentiate between the values of the lives they are saving . . . or teachers to worry about which students will make the best use of the education they are offering. A society built around procedural justice needs agents who do not look too closely at such matters" (1986, 528). A supposed indifference and pragmatics of not looking too closely can be a double-edged sword with respect to the care work provided in kindergarten. Since the daily practices in the classroom are understood as a supplement, extension, and eventually, adjustment to the child's family life, the question of *what kind of children* one is working with *is* essential for the work the teachers in kindergarten are supposed to provide. However, it appears that the picture cannot be *too* precise. It is this tension that will carry through this chapter as I seek to understand kindergarten care as a way of rendering differentiation pedagogical.

The Chapter's Inquiries

While the last chapter focused on the children and what they do in class, this chapter places the work of teachers at the center of the analysis. It scrutinizes how their work and professional understanding are entangled with what is referred to here as *rendering differentiation pedagogical*. To understand children navigating belonging in Wiesengrund Kindergarten, this chapter explores the way in which schools reach out to these children and what they consider their requirements to be. Thus, it seeks to analyze more precisely how the children of kindergartens institutionally become "children of different categories" (Bundgaard and Gulløv 2006). Given both the location in the middle of the Mühlekon neighborhood and current discussions about the equality of opportunities, particularly for children of migrants, an important issue is the children's assumed cultural backgrounds and how they are constitutively taken into pedagogical consideration, serving as an allegedly antagonistic counterfoil to the kindergarten and its (Swiss) pedagogically inclined social order. In it, different needs are formulated that address the individual child on the one hand, but also an imagined future Swiss society on the other. I identify two mutually dependent and mutually exclusive processes that are at work simultaneously: the process of demarcation from the children's families and that of involvement with them. Their simultaneous effectiveness is described, and I propose to understand this phenomenon as a local mode of rendering differentiation pedagogical.

Childhood: Who Cares?

Not so long ago, care—carried out by the children's mother—was the expected attribution of what should happen to young children in Switzerland. Care should therefore take place in private, no money should be involved, and in this sense no professionalization of the people who provide it (Falk 2019; Willekens and

Scheiwe 2020; Witzig 2002). In that lay understanding, care is morally connotated with love and affection. The fact that *education* is increasingly appearing in social negotiations about the right care for young children is linked to a shift in the social place ascribed to early childhood (Bollig 2015; Burger, Neumann, and Brandenberg 2017). Thelen (2015) suggests not conceptualizing care as genuinely positive emotional work in general, but rather, approaching care as an arbitrary practice of social exchange. In doing so, care work can be understood being as undertaken for and with people who in one way or another have been socially or physically marked as *needy*, as well as with their respective others who have been identified as responsible or qualified to satisfy the given needs. Such an understanding informing the analysis aims at going "beyond solely positive associations, sentimentality, or good intentions, in order to analyse its complexities, including negative effects and experiences of care, which often entail power asymmetries and undesired intimacy" (Thelen and Coe 2019, 284). Care practices in kindergarten and the interpretation of *what* young children need, and how intensively the people around the children should work on those needs, can thus be analyzed as an issue of ongoing, and often intensified, negotiation.

However, something else is crucial for the findings of the chapter and with regard to care practices: it is Swiss society that is likewise conceived as needy. The needs of an imagined social entity much bigger than the actual kindergarten class always resonate when care work in kindergarten is due. Thus, while it is not so long ago that it was thought that a good maternal sense was enough to take care of a child, a lot of highly educated people engage with young children today and are ready to work on the future society of Switzerland. Today's prospective teachers hence not only have to have a high school diploma, but also at least three years of study at a university of teacher education. The field of early childhood has undergone a significant and rapid academization, remarkably without changing its visual appearance. Kindergartens, especially the interior decoration, are mostly set up as funny colorful little houses, with an inventory similar to those of thirty, or even more, years ago. And while kindergarten children should come to class in the mornings with no inhibitions and experience these hours in class mainly as a kind of joyful play with their companions, a significant professional net is stretched around them, with a sophisticated language of early support and the promise of educational success to be made available to all children alike. This net has become more finely woven, more frequently discussed and evaluated, and clearly better financed. However, this expertise is apparently not used in front of the children, and psychological and cognitive performance assessments are completed when the children are not in the room; the sheets disappear into folders in places inaccessible to the children, and often also to parents. With the children, all those professionals paint, play, and sing: they try to make sure that they have a good time in the kindergarten.

Professionalizing for the Sake of Switzerland's Future

Kindergarten in Switzerland has thus become more professional. Professionalization means first and foremost a shift of responsibilities, an academization of those working in the field, greater societal attention, and a stronger focus on education in children's early lives. The work done in kindergarten is now called *teaching*, and the people responsible for the kindergarten classes are now called *teachers* (and not anymore "kindergartner," or "kindergarten auntie"). Children address their kindergarten teachers formally now and by their last name: "Good morning, Mrs. Eder!" Hands are shaken while the gazes are supposed to meet.

High expectations of a social mission characterize kindergarten life from the point of view of the staff members. I repeatedly heard and read that kindergarten attendance was particularly important in neighborhoods such as Mühlekon and that the work of the teachers could therefore not be valued highly enough. Children should prepare themselves for school in kindergarten, they should develop linguistic-articulative skills, they should be able to socialize and empathize. They should start to think mathematically, train their phenomenological awareness, learn German and Swiss dialect, perceive themselves as part of a Swiss society; they should develop a positive body image and exercise frequently, learn to express their own opinion and accept others' opinions, too, and—as one can also read in detail in the current curriculum—the list goes on. Furthermore, the diagnosis of (re-)production of the various social problems identified in neighborhoods such as Mühlekon lurks as a threatening future on the horizon, if those children "at risk" are not given the right resources at an early age. This comes with implications for the day-to-day work, with implications for the relationship between families and kindergartens and with implications for the negotiation of children's pathways of belonging.

In order to ensure that the needs of Switzerland as a social imaginary and the needs of each individual child are identified and met, various different professionals work in the kindergarten. In Wiesengrund Kindergarten, that meant that in addition to the teachers, Laura Eder and Judith Gasser, SEN teacher Andreas Polo was often in the room, there were additional German lessons, psychomotor training for some children, another assistant, speech therapy, a school social worker, and occasionally, other people, each with their own specialized professional formation and relationship with the children. The specialization of work on specific learning diagnoses aligned with the identified needs of children is also related to how diversity is made socially relevant. It is worth taking a look at the way in which classes are configured.

Caring for Diversification

Chapter 1 reviewed the literature that paves the analytical way for understanding "schools as sites of conflict over, and the production of, cultural meanings"

(Reed-Danahay 2003, 32). The analysis of the process of composing a new class provides insights on the basis of which person- and group-related differentiation categories children are grouped into in larger kindergarten classes. It becomes clear how migration-related differentiations are in a quite banal way very conspicuous but lose their relevance in the course of the year.

In Mühlekon, the neighborhood's school board decides how the children are allocated to the different kindergartens: first, different catchment areas of the schools are set. A first official letter is sent to the children's parents a good six months before kindergarten enrolment. Parents are thereby asked to provide more information.[1] Looking at that sheet reveals how personal encounters and administrative procedures intermingle. When Mathumai, for instance, officially stepped into kindergarten, she was no longer a blank page, and we can see "how bureaucratic practices become entangled with . . . constructions of cultural difference" (Ellmer 2020, 39).

The lists that are then printed from the assigned children are given various distinctions. As for Mathumai in Wiesengrund Kindergarten, she was listed as a child who was living with both her parents. It listed her as one out of thirteen children not having a Swiss passport (and the only one with a Sri Lankan passport), as one of four children born in December, as the third-youngest child in class, and as a child who lived in the same street as three of her companions. Mathumai's parents did not specify any religion but left the form with the ascription "other creed/religion" provided by the authorities and ticked a box saying "does not speak German." One can imagine that it is not an easy task for the parents to overrule the information provided by the authorities, to cross out "other creed" for instance, to replace it with "Hinduism." Revising the administrative process of enrolment, enacted through bureaucratic forms such as this registration form, shows that the imposition of certain categories of belonging is particularly strong and made particularly explicit when "formalized, codified, objectified systems of categorization developed by powerful, authoritative institutions" are at work (Brubaker and Cooper 2004, 42). These differentiations of name, residential address, religion, language, gender, and age provide an immediate overview of the of configuration *and* production of classroom diversity at first sight.[2] The analysis shows which understanding of the supposedly learning-hindering or socially threatening attribution of difference precedes class composition. The configuration's interplay is supposed to be managed properly in order to prevent problems. Such problems could be, as I was told, too few young girls, too many children who speak too little German, or too many Muslim children in one class. So, using the first principle that every child should be assigned to one of the kindergartens closest to their residential address, the distribution is then refined further along the collected criterions of state-defined categories of belonging.

Some categories seemed to attract each other, while others seemed to repulse. Living in the same housing blocks was considered a good thing, while for example, speaking the same language (other than [Swiss-]German), coming from the same family, or being identified with the same nationality or religious denomination (other than Switzerland and Christian/without creed) should be avoided. It seemed that the decisions taken on how to distribute Mühlekon's children into the different classes would nowadays be one of those situations where "it may . . . be nearly impossible to escape from ethnic identifications" (Eriksen 2017, 157). This technical, bureaucratic start refers to a state-organized enrolment. This should be taken not lightly, but as the start of a well-conceived academic career.

Nevertheless, the outcome of the state-manufactured configuration of diversity is considered very contingent, even by the teachers: It is always "a lottery," Judith Gasser once said. "Sometimes you have a good group and sometimes the whole class is a huge mess." When I asked why she thought this happened, she said that it depended very much on how much the butterfly children engage with the educational program and inspire the younger ones. This is also evident when looking ahead to the next transition and reassignment of kindergarten pupils in primary classes. While linguistic (linked to ethno-national) allocation was a very relevant criterion in the process of enrolment in kindergarten, it loses much of its effectiveness subsequently. In everyday educational practice—as will be elaborated below—other markers of differentiation were made much more important, and when the butterflies eventually fly out into primary school after two years of kindergarten, other criterions count:

LAURA: [. . .] then these little numbers, each child had a number, and then these numbers are actually divided according to—we had to divide them into performance: 1, 2, 3, and care effort: 1,2,3 and then you actually looked that it is like balanced from that in the primary school classes. And only then did you look to see which names belonged to it and then you looked to see if there were children who should *not* be together. And if they were in the same class, they should have been separated.

Hence, although various ascriptive categories of belonging become relevant for the composition of a class, classroom diversity is subsequently thought about in a significantly different way. Not only are the statistically collected data and insights into the everyday life of children before they start school too imprecise, but those characteristics also say little about the way in which a child eventually appears in kindergarten. Thus, quite different references to the out-of-school are relevant for the effectiveness and negotiation of children's belonging for the establishment of a social order in the classroom, which will now be described and analyzed in more detail below.

Practices of Involvement and Demarcation

In the scene that opened this chapter, Judith said, "You can't look too deeply into the individual families." As she argued, too much involvement in the children's everyday life outside the kindergarten would not be conducive to the work. Yet the notion of children's everyday lives outside the classroom was precisely what often conditioned and informed classroom practice and what helped to constitute the social order in the kindergarten in the first place. What may seem paradoxical at first helps us to understand the complexity of care practices in kindergarten. As kindergarten is explicitly understood as complementary and at times supportive/compensatory to family life, the tension between setting clear boundaries with the out-of-school and the simultaneous constitutive thinking about the stories of the children's families went hand in hand. Before describing what is meant by involvement and demarcation, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the ambivalence that can arise in educational relationships at Mühlekon.

Ambivalences

Issues brought up by migration-related phenomena complicated the professionals' own understanding of what they thought they should build on or even what needed to be corrected. There was a large area of ambiguity: the many languages spoken by the children and their families, and the little command of all those languages by the teachers, challenged the relationship between kindergarten teachers and families. It tended to undermine communication, made it harder to build up rapport. In addition, many things were not self-evident; parents did not always know how things work in kindergarten anyway, could not build upon their own experiences of being schooled in Switzerland, and as it were, teachers' knowledge of educational matters was mostly limited to the Swiss curriculum. Children often could not relate to the seemingly everyday references in class either—fairy tale characters, songs, or proverbs that teachers used and which were considered typically Swiss. Also, the translation of what children were supposed to do in kindergarten was not that simple. Some parents who, for instance, expected kindergarten to be a schooling institution (which it actually is by definition), found themselves dismayed because their children did not learn to read and write. The neighborhood's social diversification also made it more difficult for teachers to draw conclusions regarding the educational background of the children (see also chapter 5).

The ambiguity then takes one side when there are suddenly supposedly clear diagnoses: it took over half a year to discover that Dilek was quite short-sighted. "That's quite wild," Judith told me when I noticed Dilek's glasses, "and we always thought her lack of participation was because she didn't know German well, and that physically she's not the most agile. She could never catch a ball." But the

matter was more complicated. The teachers already had many ideas about what could be going on with Dilek. Some assessments were more substantiated; others were vague suspicions. They included developmental psychological clarifications (and parental refusal to attend several of those appointments), issues of assumed trauma from domestic violence, malnutrition, and language barriers. Would the school have noticed that Dilek had poor eyesight if she had spoken better German, if her parents had not been marked by problems, if they did not have the police reporting interventions due to domestic violence, or if Dilek had not started kindergarten still wearing nappies? And should something like –4 diopters not actually be noticed by the parents, too? If one takes a step back from the emotionality that such a case entails, Dilek's myopia can help with the analysis of the configuration of the relationship between child, parents, and kindergarten with respect to what care the child should be given while attending kindergarten and who should provide this and how for the individual child and the next generation:

LAURA: I concentrate on the child and the things that come from home, they are somehow there, but it is not fair to the child if you somehow transfer things that you experience with the parents, that somehow have a negative influence, and that is still difficult because I think that happens quickly if you then somehow—if you then notice that parents do not cooperate, or somehow do not want to, or just do not show up and afterwards that you, I mean, the child can't be held responsible! You actually have to do even more for the child!

Lost in Status Translation

What is known in migration studies as the "status paradox of migration," capturing the "transnational dynamic of losing social status and gaining it at the same time, which occurs along with mutually conditioned forms of *status inconsistency*" (Nieswand 2011, 3), is at play in Mühlekon, too. The knowledge of potentially far-reaching inconsistencies in the assessment of the parental home is partly responsible in Mühlekon for a large scope of interpretation of how the child might be doing at home. It is easy to describe in dazzling colors that many family configurations are much more complex than a first glance might suggest. A Tamil kitchen helper (for example, Mathumai's father) might have studied communication in India; a cleaner at the airport (Tereza's mother) might actually be a trained nurse born into a family full of teachers; a single mum who has, among other things, freed herself from a violent marriage (Harun's mother) and who is working at a gas station's take-away might have been a successful businesswoman in Ankara. In Mühlekon, affinity to education and school is rarely expressed through clearly recognizable markers which are easy for the teachers to decipher. For example, almost all the children brought the same kind of

clothes and bags to class from the usual discount stores, with gendered motifs of Elsa the Snow Queen and Spiderman. Educational aspirations were not expressed through bourgeois clothing. Furthermore, it was obviously more difficult to tell whether a child who was not participating much was shy or introverted, whether a child just did not know the answer to a specific question, whether there was any kind of learning disability, or whether the child knew more than the simple answer to a given question but just in Tamil or Albanian and not in German. Qualifications and educational aspirations do not necessarily correlate with income, and they certainly do not correlate with a good command of (Swiss-)German either. Awareness of this helps, but assessment remains a delicate task with constant opportunities to misjudge a given situation as well. But both parents and children can provide hints in the way they talk about extracurricular activities, as for example, Arian's mother did very skillfully at a parents' evening, much to the teachers' approval:

MRS. REXHEPI: Well, my name is Valmira, Arian is my first child, he also has a little sister, she is in November uh—two. We come from Kosovo. I speak—I studied English and then German, not very good but (*laughs*) B2. And uh—what I can say for Arian is that uh—he wants to do things exactly. Or sometimes when I try to teach him—if he can't learn for the first time, he won't try a second time. I don't think that's so good but maybe in time he'll learn. Quiet he is, but he likes to play, and so on.

Such references to the knowledge of the relevance of education allow teachers to relax, so to speak. In such cases, they assume that the child will also be supported at home with regard to education, and should Arian not know something, he will perhaps have it explained to him at home in Albanian. The fact that he cried the whole first week was not considered a problem. "He'll be fine," Judith said the day after the parents' evening. "He's just shy and misses his sister."

Involvement: Between Help and Control

Apart from migration-related status incongruities and communication issues, while the Swiss school system continues to struggle with translation, teachers were also expected to anticipate and notice family problems. Involvement became a declared act of preventive care. Many families in Mühlekon struggled with different configurations of poverty, loneliness, alcohol, drugs, unemployment, and violence, let alone the Swiss migration regime with all its requirements and control bodies. Those issues did not simply stop at the kindergarten fence. Again, this is not specific to Mühlekon; the problem situations and diagnoses are present in every neighborhood, and teachers everywhere are encouraged to keep an eye on the children in this regard (e.g., is the bruise really from a fall? Isn't that girl's pose too sexualized?). It is, rather, a question of intensity and the interweaving of different diagnoses and the ever-updated threat topoi,

not the type of diagnoses, that distinguish the call to get involved in Wiesengrund Kindergarten from other kindergartens with a better socio-economic situation. As is more deeply analyzed in chapter 5, Mühlekon's thin walls and the increased control by various actors of the welfare state made it harder to keep things under the surface, and the cramped living conditions and policing dynamized and sometimes created problems in the first place. Over the research period, the police were involved with the families of at least six of the thirty or so children I met in the kindergarten, which meant that youth welfare was also involved in one way or another, also calling the teachers and asking for their assessment of children's well-being and performance.

Some insights into the children's out-of-school lives—such as calls from the police or social welfare—intruded into the kindergarten in no uncertain terms. They also came in the form of bad teeth, broken shoes, and dirty clothes, but also in the form of medals won in football competitions, elaborately homemade cakes, and new siblings. Or the staff was informed that a girl no longer lived with her mother, that new telephone numbers and contact details from the foster family should be added to the class list. Or that a father on probation would not be allowed to approach his son, with the request to call the police if this happened. But most of the children's everyday life outside the school did not enter the building to any great extent, and often teachers knew relatively little about the children's families. They also did not know that much because parents did not want to share too much with the kindergarten. Tereza's mother Blerta for instance, as discussed in the appendix, was able to hide her anxieties from the school for several years, until the police were called in. Tereza's sometimes conspicuous behavior was attributed to allergies, to stomach pains, to the parents being out at work a lot of the time.

The ambiguity of the ephemeral insights involving family matters hence was a daily challenge for the teachers. This ambiguity also influenced the children's everyday life, as they seemed to bear the brunt of it, moving through different social orders as carriers of ambiguous information. Conclusions were drawn and care practices instigated based on their behavior, their appearance, their markers of self-attribution and attribution imputed by others. However, the degree of involvement seemed to be enough to draw clear boundaries and not want to fully interfere in the interests of the families for pedagogical reasons.

Demarcation: Keeping (Anticipated) Family Issues Outside

The kindergarten was repeatedly marked by the teachers as a clearly distinct zone in the children's lives, a place where a lot of out-of-school belonging was meant to be neutralized, flattened out. Simply put, the formula can be boiled down to the kindergarten imagined to be a place where there were—frontstage—only butterflies and caterpillars, a children's place (Olwig and Gulløv 2003), and no poor, no Turks, no welfare recipients, etc. Children were

also meant to enter a space that was meant to *not* contain television, smartphones, cigarettes, sex, or physical violence. When children were grouped for certain activities, this was done by the color of their shoes, by the month of their birth, by their choice of a favorite game.[3] When social problems were addressed, they were often packaged in stories: The snail was afraid, the polar bear had a fight, something hurt the badger. Almost all of this took place unquestioningly in German. They were—frontstage—not sorted by skin color, nor by religion, by residence status, by first language, or according to their parents' income. The space was designed to be distinct from the child's out-of-school environment. And thereby, the intention was also to exclude the (anticipated, assumed) threats to a good childhood.

This distinction at times became very explicit. Written, printed out on a sheet, laminated, and attached to the colorful kindergarten fence, you could read: "Dear parents, we can manage it from here. Please say goodbye to your child before you reach the kindergarten entrance. This helps your child to become independent and self-confident." This not only prevents parents from accompanying their offspring into the cloakroom area and helps the children to become more self-confident and independent, but it can also be read as a sign of demarcation, anticipating disagreement in the ideas of child rearing, implying that parents probably could undermine their children's independence and self-confidence. But it can also just be read as a sign to keep the family situations at a distance as much as possible.

The balancing of what is described here as two simultaneous processes of demarcation and involvement in family issues that were marked as problematical permeated the pedagogical practice, as can be elaborated using the example of an October morning: on the first day of kindergarten after the autumn holidays, Laura Eder and Judith Gasser were in class together. They had agreed that today's topic would be for the children to report on their holidays and, among other things, use longer sentences following a certain sequence. The task was to say, What did I do with whom and where? Mrs. Gasser gave an example: "On my holidays, I—went surfing—with my husband—in France," followed by Mrs. Eder, recounting, "On my holidays, I—was on a road trip—in Italy—together with my boyfriend." Then it was the children's turn. It was visibly difficult for them to stick to this rigid logic of sentence structure, partly because this interaction was introduced by the teachers in standard German, but also because the sentence structure is different in dialect.[4] Dragan stepped forward and said, after some hesitation over the right structure of the sentence, but encouraged by the teachers to just give it a try: "I—was watching TV—with mummy." Then Pedro, too, signaled that he wanted to say something and said, "I—was watching TV too—at home." Natalja came in third, with a similar sentence, and soon other children were pointing their fingers up—the sentence seemed to work. Finally, Mrs. Eder asked the children: "Did anyone do anything

else—what *else* did you do during the holidays?" Several hands went down; they apparently also planned to say they watched television. But Victor's hand stayed up. He said, "I—was watching TV, and I—was looking at a book" and after a pause—"at home." This seemed to gladden the pedagogical heart, eliciting a spontaneous response from Mrs. Gasser: "Oh so nice, what book then? That's great that you looked at a book!" What is particularly interesting here is that after this surprisingly delighted exclamation from the teacher, the children actually put TV aside, and several talked about books, and then also about riding a bike or playing with a dog or cat, which was rewarded by the teachers with recognition, followed by queries: "Ah, your grandpa has a dog. What's his name?" Or "So beautiful Dilek. Did your mother and you read the book in German or in Turkish?"—"Turkish."—"Oh, that is great that your mummy reads to you in Turkish!"

When, after this linguistic input, the children were led into a creative sequence and asked to make a drawing about their holiday experiences, Laura Eder suggested that the children could just draw something that they like to think back on. For example, how they played with the dog, or how they were outside in the playground, or how they looked at a book with mummy or daddy. The television was symbolically turned off, one might say, while other holiday activities were remembered and captured in class. The holiday experience was reinterpreted as a pedagogically framed good life, demarcated from anticipated obstacles.

Simultaneously Appreciating and Neutralizing Migration-Related Differentiations

While children's citizenship contributed to the respective allocation in the different kindergartens, it was not an integral part of the teachers' activities in class. What remained were the different languages. On the surface, they were treated as a natural part of a diverse Switzerland and individual learning tools of the children, and parents were encouraged to do as much language support as possible in their own tongue. Only occasionally were the children's languages addressed in the kindergarten. Children sometimes were asked to count to ten in their first language, or "Happy Birthday" was sung in many different languages. Most of the time the children found the gesture funny (with the teachers trying to pronounce words in Albanian, Tamil, or Urdu). Some children would sing along loudly and clearly when it was their turn to sing in their first language, and this was easier when more children spoke the same language, such as Albanian or Turkish, or more children knew the words, as in English or French (French at times was sung, although none of the current class spoke French at home).

With very few exceptions, such as songs or small games, (Swiss-)German was insisted on as the lingua franca. Even in learning sequences, it was rarely asked

what certain words were in other languages, regardless of whether the teachers knew how to say them or not. Sofia Gómez for example, the classroom assistant, never talked in Portuguese, her own first language, with children. And especially the SEN teacher, Andreas Polo, had an ear for the illicit intrusion of foreign languages. He was quick to intervene when Harun and Dilek exchanged words in Turkish or Tereza and Arian said something in Albanian. "German!" was his signal word, which mostly led to conversations between the children stopping. Everyone met on supposedly neutral Swiss ground; a boundary was drawn to the daily language diversity of children in extracurricular activities. Exceptions to this were intriguing. Apart from the aforementioned little counting games and birthdays, the opportunity to speak English sometimes arose. Zaylie, who was otherwise quite quiet, really blossomed when she realized that she could score with her English skills. Even Mr. Polo addressed Zaylie in English once in a while when he thought she did not understand him, a gesture that was not repeated in other languages. Turkish-speaking children who had a good command of German, for example, were never asked to translate for new children who spoke less German. English, I therefore argue in line with scholars who examine multilingualism in the classroom with a view to power (Cummins 2000; Schnitzer 2017), was viewed as an educational language and thus helped to enforce the pedagogical social order. It was not associated with all the anticipated problems should children bring their languages into the classroom and it was also not associated with ethnicity. English skills were certainly, it seemed, good for the future prosperity of Swiss society, and languages were therefore clearly hierarchized in the classroom.

Situationally, the many languages were acknowledged in the kindergarten, and occasionally this linguistic diversity was celebrated. And it was the same with religious references. A "latent [Christian] religiosity," as Torpey conceptualized it, unquestioningly structured everyday life at school, "through the organization of public space and time, but also in terms of the sensibilities underlying" the state (2010, 280) where, too, the simultaneous process of involvement and demarcation from the family context was evident. Religious denominations were known without them being a public issue and, as far as I was aware, without knowing to what extent families practiced their religion. However, difficulties arose with the celebration of religious holidays and with shared meals when the associated eating prohibitions in some religions came to the fore. Christian celebrations have been slimmed down considerably. At Christmas there were candles and songs about Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer. Jesus did not appear. At Easter there were eggs and bunnies, no crosses. In a sense, the commercialized elements and decorations have made the step into the multireligious class, and these have been incorporated as seasonal motifs in craft ideas and songs. When the kindergarten introduced a weekly communal meal, some children brought sausage and other pork products with them. The teachers then

had the problem that they had to address individual children in front of the whole class, for example to say, "Kenny, Arian, Harun, Salma, Tereza, and uh, Miluza and Adnan, you are not allowed to eat from that green plate there and not from this one, from this red one." However, they were uncomfortable with statements like that and they caused irritation within the group of children. The halal issue was then solved quite pragmatically by incorporating it into a pedagogically useful thing: in a letter to the parents informing them that there would now always be a buffet with the children on Mondays, where children should learn to share their meal. And it was pointed out that this should be a healthy vegetarian snack. The potential disturbance, pork, was thus eliminated when food was unceremoniously stripped not only of sugar, but also of meat. It would be better for the children's concentration if they ate something light, and this was therefore incorporated into the solution of how to deal with this new generation of Swiss pupils. Gilliam, in a similar case, shows how "the differentiation between religion and the secular are frequently blurred, inconsistent, and a matter of negotiation" (2019, 24). The involvement and the anticipated ideas of the (religious) family flow into the kindergarten, and at the same time the social order in the kindergarten keep parts of the extracurricular at bay.

A Swiss Space without Ethnicity?

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed that care practices in kindergarten are particularly interesting because there is much more at stake than needy children. In her stunning ethnography on schooling and the question of manufacturing new citizens, Bénéï writes, "Both as agents of the state and ordinary citizens, primary schoolteachers occupy a particular position in the participating in and making of ordinary, banal nationhood. In their professional capacity as representatives of the states, teachers do play a prominent role as social actors. . . . Their social, economic, and professional capital endows them with a moral authority that may become instrumental in shaping pupils' and parents' attitudes on various matters, including national" (2008, 34). Referring to Billig's work regarding banal nationalism (1995), the school and its agents, in my case teachers like Laura Eder and Judith Gasser, are identified as central organizers of social order, representing and mediating what the next generation of Swiss school children should grow up to be. Switzerland's representations such as the Swiss flag, stereotypical symbols like edelweiss or mountains, normally so present in everyday life (almost every toothpaste tube and chocolate bar has a Swiss cross inscribed on it), hardly ever appeared in the classroom. But compared to other cultural references, Swiss references are woven differently into the pedagogical order. The two simultaneous processes of involvement and demarcation are therefore also at play when it comes to negotiating *Swissness* in the kindergarten. One of the things I found interesting about it was that Switzerland was *explicitly* addressed only as a negative example—a country full of

bureaucracy ("Since we are in Switzerland: lots of forms and regulations!" as the school director said at one parents' evening)—and Switzerland was invoked by the teachers when it came to racism, lack of body awareness, narrow-mindedness and bourgeois attitudes, and things being too expensive. However, when it came to distinguishing here from there, and thus generating a sense of self in comparison to the foreign, reference was made to much larger concepts, such as human rights, emancipation, democracy, equality, responsible educated citizens, "moral goods" (Taylor 1989) that those responsible in the kindergarten would like to see all over the world, and where they would like to shape a perspective Swiss society. These are qualities and ideals that the teachers at Wiesengrund Kindergarten rhetorically stood up for, giving those who tend to reject the standard conceptions of the typically Swiss the opportunity to stand up for the society formed in the school after all.

This analysis connects to many findings from migration research (elaborated in chapter 1) and makes them fruitful for work in the field of early childhood. We see that there are different pathways of incorporation into the kindergarten classroom (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006), and the negotiation of this is accompanied by practices of migrantization and demigrantization of children and their social belongings (Römhild 2014; Dahinden 2016).

It is a "social we" that excludes, but not because of supposedly wrong skin color or first language, but because of an (anticipated) noncompliance with what is considered educationally valuable and socially desirable. This is what the last pages of the chapter will address by conceptualizing how everyday life in this Swiss kindergarten is rendered pedagogical.

Rendering Pedagogical

The ethnographic data and long descriptions of everyday life in kindergarten presented argue for an analysis that makes sense of the processes of demarcation and involvement in the extracurricular. In what follows, then, I will conceptualize a figure that helps to get closer to the implicit "moral compass" (Mills 2022, 10) of care practices in class: render pedagogical. By rendering pedagogical, such as was the case with the elimination of television or the change to vegetarian food, I refer to the double understanding of the term pedagogization as proposed by Boser, de Vincenti and colleagues (Boser et al. 2018; de Vincenti and Grube 2020). Reflecting on the pedagogization of the so-called good life in a historical perspective, they understand this venture first as a "recoding of social developments perceived as deficient into problems to be dealt with pedagogically, as well as their transfer to educational institutions." But pedagogization should, second, also be understood to the "dissolution of the boundaries of pedagogical options for action in the sense of a

transfer of something genuinely pedagogical to new areas of life not yet covered by pedagogy" (Boser et al. 2018, 306 [own translation]). We see not only how the pedagogical reading prevails here in the kindergarten but also how it creeps into the extracurricular. At the same time, it is fruitful to understand the care practice in class with its simultaneous demarcation and involvement in families as a *change of register*, that is, from supposedly culturally and socially charged problem descriptions to professional decision-making. "The identification of a problem is intimately linked to the availability of a solution" (2007, 7), writes Li in *Will to Improve*, an ethnography on governmentality and the politics of development in Indonesia. Thereby, she describes how everyday life around development experts is *rendered technical*.[5] Much like in Li's case, the ambivalence of involvement and demarcation with respect to the insights into the children's families call for a solution of socially and culturally perceived conflicts on pedagogically informed terrain. The ability to act despite all ambivalences is essential for kindergarten practice and, as with the development experts in Li's study, Laura Eder and Judith Gasser used a "set of programs [that] identified an arena of intervention, bounded it, dissected it, and devised corrective measures to produce desirable results" (2007, 123). They rendered situations pedagogical wherever and whenever they found a problem. This solution did not mean that the tension between involvement and demarcation, between drawing clear boundaries from the families and simultaneously always including the children's background, would be diminished. But with the emphasis on the respective situations with a view to what is seen as pedagogically correct, the respective care practice became legitimized and feasible, turned into something productive that putatively gets by without cultural commentary.

In the following pages, then, the aim is to bring clarity to this shift in rendering pedagogical. This is done by discussing the relationship of care practice to (anticipated) social tensions and then by discussing how the teacher's care practices understand normality and deviance and by analyzing how care practices are intended to shape children's lives outside the kindergarten.

Early Childhood Education as a Prepolitical Solution to Social Tensions?

Scholars of childhood studies and their close relatives have noted widely how schools and kindergartens alike "organize children's daily life, [how] their curricula determine the knowledge that is necessary and valuable, and [how] their rules of conduct outline suitable behaviour for children of various ages" (Thelen and Haukanes 2010, 16). Even though those institutions "are not state machineries crushing poor passive subjects to reassemble and manufacture them into dutiful citizens at will" (Bénéï 2008, 208), their interpretive authority over children's pathways of belonging are certainly very formative. These practices bear both "transformative potential" (Bénéï 2008, 208) as well as a stronger

definition of what constitutes the respective educated society and what the imagined society—that is, its children—would need to learn. As elaborated before, one of the biggest challenges identified by the school system in Mühlekon was understanding what children needed. There was little discussion among the pedagogical staff of the relationship between school-relevant knowledge and social ideas of a proper society; however, the fact that school-relevant knowledge *would be* important for social cohesion was discussed in great detail. This is more consequential than it initially appears.

Caring in the name of education meant that almost every activity in kindergarten could lead to treating the child as a learning subject and citizen-to-be, proposing a standardization of what was to be learned and how situations were to be interpreted and evaluated. The children's social belonging marked as being attached to elsewhere than Switzerland (only) became explicit when it appeared that it might stand in the way of rendering differentiation pedagogical. The legitimization of rendering pedagogical circumvented the cultural argument: parents were not blamed for ethnicity; they were blamed for "not responding to their children," for "always having their headphones in," "allowing the boy can do as he pleases at home."

The kindergarten teachers were therefore not only transmitters of standardized, fixed curricular knowledge (which is always an emergent product of social negotiation, of course), but they also watched over the social material delivered along the way. It is therefore possible to speak not of cultural essentialism but of *educational* essentialism. In this context, the imagined Swiss ethnicity cannot be grasped in any other way than as an educated thing *ex negativo*, which culturally gains its constitution mainly through what it is not (Dahinden 2015).

These are multilayered, protracted negotiation processes that decide the many shades of what is pedagogically desirable and undesirable. It is worth taking a closer look at these negotiations.

Before the kindergarten started in mid-August, all teachers met for an internal staff session. Mrs. Mattli, the school director, built the morning's work around dealing with grief and difficult diagnoses. "How can we as a school deal with situations where we believe that there is something wrong with a child, but the parents are afraid of the outcome, of the possible diagnosis, of the possibility that their child be labelled as other than normal?" This was the frame of reference provided by Mrs. Mattli for the day's training. After a meaningful pause, she started again: "We are often the first people to mention to parents that their child is not normal." She explains that many of the pediatric examinations are not obligatory, and there may not be anyone in the parents' environment who would encourage examinations or even just notice certain behaviors in a child. So, children would enter kindergarten at the age of four, and their parents would get "the shock of their lives" when the school says that something was not right

with their child. "That is why it is so important to understand the perspective of the parents, who may be completely overwhelmed or switch off at the second sentence because they only notice that something would be wrong with their child and are no longer receptive." Mrs. Mattli, who has a master's in cultural studies, and later retrained as a primary school teacher, soon brought up the possibility of working with cultural mediators.

A lively discussion ensued among the participants, and Mrs. Mattli had difficulty following through with her plan. Questions from the teaching team circulated around the usefulness of the cultural mediators: "How can I make sure that then—we had this case with a boy from Angola the other day, you know who I'm talking about," one teacher began, and a murmur went through the group. "The cultural mediator we finally got somehow seemed to come from a different ethnic group or something; the parents totally rejected his participation." Judith, who was sitting next to me, commented that the tedious thing was not only that, but that the finances were always such hard work: "Then you have to work for five hours until you find the right person, and then the billing doesn't work or the person or the parents don't show up, and then it makes everything even more complicated." Here, too, it becomes clear that a cultural approach might not solve a pedagogical problem and that the ambiguities regarding cultural differences with regard to what is pedagogically correct are further intertwined with time constraints and economic limitations. Culture may complicate, but the difficulties for the school do not seem to be solved in the cultural field.

Later the same day, the teachers had the task of grouping into small teams to exchange ideas about various cases in their classes that they regarded as problematic. During this work, Judith and the other participants kept interrupting each other—they had so much to tell: About parents who always felt that their child had special needs. Of cases where a small Turkish woman had to face a whole "arsenal of professionals and school staff" when she showed up because of her son's problems in class, and they agreed that it really should not be like that when you have to discuss something with parents. Of parents who did not really understand their children, who did in their eyes do not devote enough time to them. Of NGOs that would offer parenting courses for migrant parents. Of children that were hard to crack: "spoiled and pampered, they have no rules at home, how are you going to teach all that in kindergarten?" About children—like Dilek—who had been sitting in class for months, and no one had noticed that they desperately needed glasses.

It turns out that the kindergarten has set itself too ambitious a goal. Rendering differentiation pedagogical would actually require that all people involved in the everyday life of the new generation work together toward this goal. And it is this realization that, among other things, also leads to the kindergarten teachers trying to educate outside their defined space.

Attempts of Rendering Out-of-School Life Pedagogical

Earlier, in the discussion of what the children experienced during the holidays, it became apparent how the extracurricular is reordered for the purposes of pedagogization, and how what is recognized as unpedagogical is kept at a certain distance and not given too much attention in class. Every now and then, subtle hints were given on how the extracurricular could be more pedagogical. This happens, for example, when children are encouraged to tell their parents about their experiences in kindergarten. "Zaylie, oh so nice, you can tell everyone at home how you chopped so many vegetables today." "Adana, so good, you have finished the whole puzzle ready. Hey, I think you need to tell your mother that you need much more difficult ones, the ones here in kindergarten are too easy." However, pedagogy, and thus rendering interventions in family life pedagogical, take place primarily in exchanges with the parents. Some parents only see the kindergarten teachers a few times a year, twice for a mandatory personal talk and once at the parents' evening. All other interactions are voluntary or happen only in written form. Children then bring home information from the kindergarten, and parents are sometimes asked to sign that they have read it. If problems are suspected in the family, the school social worker is called in. The teachers distance themselves and refer the situation to those responsible. They "do education" (Mr. Polo). This is emphasized again and again in the interactions. Interesting in this regard are a few insights into meetings between the school and the parents. When Tereza's mother Blerta, for instance, showed up for the parent's meeting in the autumn of the second year, she told Laura Eder that Tereza really liked coming to kindergarten, that she had even woken her up at seven in the morning on Saturday and said, "Mum, I have to go to school!" Blerta had a lot to tell, mentioning how Tereza loved speaking English, and that she would make up lots of stories in Albanian and was quite enthusiastic about learning. Laura Eder encouraged her to continue with this particular pedagogical path.

LAURA: Ah, funny, okay. Yes, so in language, she is very strong, exactly. Um, she has also made a lot of progress, knows more words . . .

BLERTA: Yes.

L: . . . or, now compared to the first year.

B: Yes.

L: She likes to tell stories, yeah. That's very nice. In the mathematical area, so with numbers, she can already count as far as it is the goal in kindergarten. Um . . . she can compare: What is more, what is less? Um, also grasps quantities. If there is a small number of objects, she sees it without counting . . .

B: Mhm.

L: . . . counting with her finger. We're still practicing—I think she's counting, so up to twenty just items like that, but when I ask her, what's five? What is smaller than five?

B: Mhm.

L: What comes before five? Or if she . . . she doesn't really know what's just before. I also don't know if it's the language. But I think that . . . she is still a bit uncertain.

B: Mhm.

L: And there . . . you can tell if she is just counting by heart now.

B: Yes, yes, or . . .

L: . . . or if she really understood it.

B: Yes, yes.

L: Yes. We are also practicing this with her. And counting backwards is actually also a goal in kindergarten.

B: Mhm.

L: So the on . . . counting forward is that they can count to twenty and from ten backwards. Maybe you can also somehow in everyday life, when you are counting objects or somehow . . .

Kindergarten work is presented through hard facts. Can the child hop, how is the vocabulary, does the child know the number that is one less than four? Interestingly, these characteristics are not so important for everyday kindergarten life. Many of the assessments are only made shortly before meeting the parent. Laura asked Judith only half an hour before the appointment how she would evaluate Tereza's vocabulary, given that Judith was responsible for assessing German skills. The point is not to accuse teachers of pretending to do something they do not do, but to show how much their work is legitimized through the pedagogical. In the example here, Tereza's mother also plays the pedagogical card; nothing else from home is mentioned. Both leave the situation with a feeling of a having had a successful teacher-parent conversation. So, some parents enter a pedagogical partnership arrangement with the teachers, signaling that they are also interested in precisely this kind of pedagogization of their children. This is possible, for example, by asking for additional German lessons or by introducing the child who is also eager to learn at home, as Blerta did.

The analysis of the attempts to intervene pedagogically also in the children's out-of-school life ultimately provides more insight into the teachers' understanding of their role than into the fact that it is actual practices of pedagogization that are taking place here. Parents react to these attempts in different ways; however, through this speech act, they are also given the opportunity to present

themselves as cooperative and involved in the flourishing of their children in terms of the school.

Pauses in the Pedagogical

When the teachers did not feel they needed to legitimize their professionalism, other readings of the child's behavior kept cropping up, for example when Laura told assistant teacher Sofia with total amusement how yet again she had seen Harun just putting the puzzle that had not been tidied up at the very back of the shelf and how well he could pretend to have tidied everything up. Or when Judith told us in the playground that she does not feel like scolding the children for not sticking to the rule about snowball fights: "Life in kindergarten is hard enough anyways."

Pulling off this role all the time was not always easy for the kindergarten teachers either. Judith once told me that it helps her to think that she says certain things as a *teacher* and that it does not have to be related to her private opinion. When she left the kindergarten in the evening, she liked to light a cigarette right in front of the kindergarten area. She also, one can say, left the pedagogically good life at the kindergarten fence, indicating that the supposed comfort zone also imposes constraints on teachers.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter explored what the kindergarten does with the children's assumed cultural baggage and how differentiation is rendered pedagogical in class, and it was discussed how professional appearance currently meant offering pedagogical solutions to (anticipated) problems. This has consequences for both the way children are addressed in kindergarten and what role is available to teachers. Thus, it is both the ephemeral insights into the families that contribute to the pedagogical order and the teacher's ambivalences toward a hierarchization and acknowledgment of difference that guide their everyday actions in class. I identified two processes that took effect simultaneously here, that of involvement with and that of demarcation from the children's families and their stories, their social belonging, their lives and problems. They led to care diagnosis and care practices that went far beyond dealing with children's everyday issues in the kindergarten but included broader societal dynamics and perspectives. In the process, various social lines of difference were supposedly neutralized and turned around in terms of what is apparently pedagogically good. Interestingly, the insights into the extracurricular are both kept at a distance and drawn upon as an intrinsically relevant component for the definition of what children need and how care work should be constituted. While teachers sometimes deliberately leave cultural references out of the equation, parents do not necessarily see it that way. Such a form of rendering differentiation pedagogical requires that

everything that is considered pedagogically valuable can be declared supposedly Swiss—multilingualism, multiculturalism, and tolerance included. This creates a moral valuation that remains valid far beyond kindergarten.

These analyses of the kindergarten life will prepare the floor for the next part, where we will not only follow the children, but also the interpretative sovereignty of the kindergarten. So we follow not only the children, but also the effectiveness, so to speak, of the pedagogical order.

4

Leaving Kindergarten

First Story: Farewell at 12 O'Clock

Every kindergarten day shortly before 12 o'clock, all the children gather in the cloakroom area. The slippers are stowed away on a rack under a wooden bench. Children take their jackets and backpacks from their personalized coat hooks. The last moments before lunch time are then spent singing: "Läbed wohl, läbed wohl, chömed guet hei" ("Farewell, farewell, safe journey home"). There is stamping and clapping, and hand gestures, singing kindergarten life into being one last time before leaving the building (Bénéï 2008). Most farewell songs in kindergarten obviously come from a time when children went home after kindergarten. This is no longer the case. Sixteen out of twenty children attended one of the day-care centers administratively attached to the Wiesengrund school in the course of the first year of fieldwork: Wiesengrund day-care "red" and "blue"—called red Wiesi and blue Wiesi, and Cecilienbühlstrasse day-care I, II, and III, identified only by their abbreviations CB I–III. The departure from the kindergarten was a new beginning, as it were, but also released the children with this final, presuppositional, differentiation of leaving for day-care or leaving for home.

However, the distinction between "day-care children" and "not day-care children" changed daily, since children did not usually go to day-care every day, and individual changes to day-care visits caused the kindergarten staff to constantly update how they handed over children as they left: while Dilek, for example, currently went to blue Wiesi on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, Harun was no longer in the CB II, but Tereza now went to the CB II on Tuesdays, too, while Kenny no longer went on Mondays but did on Fridays. Abshiru, on the other hand, changed from red Wiesi to CB I. A list hung right next to the door, with several changes added by hand over the course of the school year.

The transition followed an organizational logic of handing over properly. How to make sure no child is forgotten, how to prevent miscommunication and a child

ending up at home with a closed door when he or she should have been in day-care?[1] However, the farewell ritual described above is always performed in among all this activity. Besides the singing, each child passes the teachers on the way out: "Goodbye, Mrs. Gasser."—"Goodbye, Mr. Polo." Formality is thought to be ensured when saying goodbye: "Look me in the eye."—"Pedro: What's my name again?"—"Mrs. Gómez."—"Exactly. So it is: Goodbye, Mrs. Gómez!"—"Goodbye, Mrs. Gómez." But sometimes the formality was broken up and the first signs of a relaxation of the strictly regulated process were appearing, such as when the much taller teacher, while shaking hands with the child as s/he left, swung the child's hand in such a way that the child's body wound its way out of the salutation with a pirouette. This was how children physically left the kindergarten, informed about with whom they would eventually spend the afternoon, reminded to be polite to the older generations, and with the sounds and rhythm of happy songs in their ears.

When the children left the building at noon, there were people waiting outside, sitting on the swings, standing in small groups, chatting: parents, siblings, and staff from the day-care centers with lists in their hands of which children they should pick up that day. There were hugs, reunions, and kisses with family members, but also rather impersonal instructions from caregivers, who for instance, being a new trainee, did not really know the children yet and needed to make sure that they brought the right four children back to their building. Furthermore, caregivers from Wiesengrund blue and red, as well as from the three CB day-cares shared the task, so there was one group for each of the *Wiesi* day-care centers and one for the CB day-care centers, which was then divided up again later. "Hello Kenny, are you co—uh no, today you are not with us. Have a nice afternoon then. See you tomorrow."

Furthermore, not all those waiting in front of the building liked each other. Zaylie's mother, Rose, for example, was careful not to stand too close to Dragan's or Elena's mother; she thought they were racist. Harun's mother had an issue with the caregivers Sylvia and Lisa from CB II after she had withdrawn her boy from day-care again, and both parties avoided meeting each other. Dilek's and Pedro's parents were also in an ongoing argument, mainly because Dilek's mother was accusing Pedro of teasing her daughter and she blamed his parents for the fact that he would not stop doing so. Those particular tensions, some of which I did not experience in the kindergarten, were particularly noticed by the parents. Previously supposedly pedagogically neutralized markers of differentiation reorganized themselves while the children were leaving kindergarten, and "'difference' [might] suddenly [be] thrown into relief" (Gardner 2012, 897). In the transition to the extracurricular, the configuration of social belonging disrupts and rearranges.

While this chapter is about leaving kindergarten, it certainly is about leaving the building and hence changing the location, going somewhere else, leaving the teachers, games, and (most) companions from kindergarten. But, of course,

the matter is more complex. It becomes apparent that the power of the social order rendered pedagogical—so central in class—loses its binding force as children leave the building. But interestingly, it was not doing so steadily, and not suddenly either. Before the chapter's inquiries are set out in more detail, two other views of leaving kindergarten will now be added to the first vignette of pirouettes, songs, and day-care lists. They should provide a clearer idea of what leaving kindergarten might imply for the rest of the chapter.

Leaving Kindergarten, Second Story: Hugging

When I approached the red Wiesi day-care for the very first time, Elena, the girl I knew as a cheeky and a bit bossy butterfly child in kindergarten, came running toward me and, to my surprise, frenetically hugged me. "She is my teacher!" she explained to the children around her. "That is not true, she is not your teacher," caterpillar child Peter responded immediately. But Elena ignored his objection. With an expression of (exaggerated) delight, Elena took my hand and pulled me right away to her caregiver, Anna. Elena hugged her too and told her that I was "also with [her] in the kindergarten!" Obviously, Peter's objection had had an impact. Perhaps I was not her teacher but a familiar face from kindergarten after all. We introduced ourselves by our first names, with Elena still standing at our side. "Ursina!?" she exclaimed. "Your name is Ursina!?" As the first names of the adults were not used in kindergarten, at least not in front of the children, it seemed funny that this "Mrs. Jaeger" from kindergarten suddenly became "Ursina" in day-care. Just some minutes before I followed some of the kindergartners—namely Elena, Peter, and Adana—to their day-care for the very first time, I was sitting with the whole kindergarten class in the cloakroom area of Wiesengrund Kindergarten. Elena, as had all the other children, went through the routine outlined above, approached all the adults, shook hands, and looked me in the eye while saying, "Goodbye, Mrs. Jaeger." The formal greeting and the informal hug were thus only separated by a short moment and some 500 meters of walking.

Elena did not let go of me for the rest of this afternoon. While I had not become a central person for her in the kindergarten over the four months of participant observations, she insisted on integrating me into her everyday life in day-care. She seemed to use me as a kind of bargaining chip for her social positions throughout the afternoon, such as when I was in her team while playing football later in the afternoon.

Leaving the kindergarten made it analytically possible to shed light on the conditions of encounters in relation to respective social orders. The hugging and also the closeness throughout the day were interesting moments when considering the workings of different social orders while leaving kindergarten and how to transfer a relationship (however it is shaped) from one site to another.

Leaving Kindergarten, Third Story: Homework in Cape Coast

As will be discussed throughout this chapter, leaving the social order of kindergarten is to be understood both synchronically and diachronically. And it is a leaving that sometimes does not move far, and sometimes travels a really long way, without completely losing the reference to the social order of the kindergarten. Such disengagement with further connection to the kindergarten could be studied even in Ghana.

As an act of compensation for an authorized absence from kindergarten, teacher Laura Eder had given Zaylie a colorful cardboard folder with various tasks to go through while she was away: worksheets on which she was supposed to color something according to different numbers printed on individual sections of the sheets, for instance, and plastic plates with different shapes and colors that had to be placed in different patterns based on templates. This folder was often present during the days in Ghana (see also interlude 3). It was put on the living room table, as well as the side table next to the kitchen, and now and then one could see it outside on the veranda. The person most interested in it, it seemed to me, was Zaylie's uncle Kofi. Twice I saw him trying his hand at the plates and laying different patterns and once carefully studying the sheets. Only once did I see Zaylie actually open the folder and take out the plates. It happened as part of an intense argument with her cousin Zoe, who had once again done something cheeky and made Zaylie feel insecure and annoyed. Zaylie then demonstratively withdrew and insisted that as a kindergarten child she would now do her homework. The folder made it possible to physically call up the world of Swiss kindergarten on the outskirts of Cape Coast. Although she eventually struggled to find a suitable area in the house to do her work (the tables were small, cluttered with all sorts of food, bottles, and utensils), she stressed the importance of this task. Eventually, she sat down on the floor in the living room and *demonstrated* homework rather than actually *doing* homework. It was more important that Zoe should see that she was doing something significant here and that this would definitely be none of Zoe's business. Zaylie was able to give this act even more weight by singing one of the many songs in (Swiss)-German, a language that at least here in Cape Coast excluded almost everyone. In many other situations during Zaylie's stay in Ghana, the Swiss kindergarten did not play a role. But she was able to use the folder to recall the kindergarten she had left a week ago. It made it possible for her to position herself differently from her cousin, who tended to set the tone elsewhere. The emphasis on the fact that Zaylie had temporarily left the kindergarten and would soon be back there again, unlike her cousin, gave her room for maneuver. The folder stood out; it somehow had to be treated differently from the other items in the house, even those brought from Switzerland for other reasons.

So, what do those three different instances of leaving kindergarten tell us about the intellectual endeavor of this book?

The Chapter's Inquiries

Kindergarten life was scrutinized in the previous two chapters. The kindergarten was described as a place that acts on multi-referentiality in a specific way, how the teachers rendered differentiation pedagogical, and how that related to the options for children's social belonging. This chapter builds upon those insights while following the children as they *leave* the kindergarten at 12 o'clock. In so doing, the aim is to understand how the kindergarten and the established social order metaphorically stuck to the children as they were leaving the building. It explores two main questions: What happens to the established configuration of social belonging when children leave the binding force of the pedagogical references and navigate (sometimes together) through different social orders across time and space? And how does the social order of the classroom shape the constitution and understanding of the children's everyday life elsewhere?

The following pages are organized as follows: first, the day-care centers are examined with a discussion of what distinguishes the social order in day-care from that of kindergarten. A good deal of space is given to this analysis, because the figures of thought relevant to the chapter will be established along these lines. The conditions of social belonging and the question of divergent but simultaneously mutually related social orders can be grasped particularly well through this comparison. This allows me to introduce the figure of the *authentically normal* of day-care in the neighborhood and will elaborate on how the social order in day-care is displayed with respect to the insights into both kindergarten and the children's families. The reference to other sites of childhood, touched upon throughout the whole book (but especially in the interludes), allows more detailed analysis of the multi-referentiality while the social butterflies navigate belonging.

From the *Educated Comfort* in Kindergarten to the *Authentically Normal* in Day-Care

Understanding children navigating social belonging across socio-spatial orders is the intellectual agenda of this book. Doing so, it proved fruitful to work out the multi-referentiality when children, and groups of children, and children with me as ethnographer, navigated together through the social orders established in kindergarten and day-care. This was related to the fact that different constellations of children, as well as the various actors involved, drew quite different connections, references, and separations between these two places, as if under a magnifying glass one could study what happens to the configurations of social belonging established in class when children were somewhere else, bringing the strengths of long-term ethnography to full fruition.

The employees in the day-care centers had a quite different self-image of what would happen around them (with reference to the kindergarten, but also to the children's everyday life in the families). Unlike parents, they viewed their sphere of influence as something decidedly different from school. I shall propose an understanding of the established order with reference to the supposedly *authentically normal*. But before going into more detail, the organization of day-care must be explained, as this different way of administratively and organizationally negotiating categories of belonging is crucial to children's navigation of configurations of belonging in their everyday school life.

The Organization of Day-Care

The opening hours of the day-care centers (7:00–8:00, 12:00–18:00, respectively 8:00–18:00 during school holidays) made it possible to provide institutional care for children basically every working day throughout the whole day. Some children, for example, Pedro and Elena, but also Abshiru and Peter, had a daily routine of (often) having breakfast at day-care, going to kindergarten, and spending the midday and afternoon again at day-care. Day-care and kindergarten were administratively connected. The authorities from Wiesengrund School wrote on their homepage regarding day-care, "The children can spend their time *away from school* in a supervised setting. *We* offer them the opportunity to expand their social and language skills. Where necessary and desired, *we* support them with their homework" (emphasis added). This is not a matter of quibbling over words, but the small explanation alone suggests that the relationship between mandatory school and optional day-care was ambiguous and thus also riddled, as we will see later, with some attempts at demarcation.

Compared to the kindergartens, the day-care centers were mixed in age, and the composition of the twenty to twenty-five children changed daily. There were parental decisions for joint visits for siblings or for children who had friends there. Adana's sister was in day-care with her, and in Pedro's case, three of his cousins were in the same day-care, too, and certain clusterings of nationalities and first languages could be observed. The composition of day-care groups was therefore more open to certain person- and group-oriented markers of differentiation such as ethnicity or family, and the attempt to neutralize them was clearly less than in kindergarten.

It was only the meals that fixed all the respective bodies of children and caregivers equally in space and time; otherwise, the everyday in day-care was more of a ripple. However, things were a bit different for the smallest ones, my interlocutors. In every day-care, a separable room that was otherwise used for playing became what was called the *Liegi* after lunch.[2] Mattresses were taken out of cupboards, the room was darkened, and older children (unless they took on the role of readers or helpers) were temporarily denied access. Although supposedly obligatory for all kindergarten children, *Liegi* was nevertheless quite

flexible, with changing rules. Sometimes all children had to lie down (instead of quietly looking at a storybook, for example), sometimes older children could help by massaging the younger ones, and sometimes soft music was played.

In day-care, trips sometimes happened very spontaneously, depending on the weather. Situational pragmatics was preferred to stringent guidelines and detailed planning (such as informing parents with advice for adequate clothing). The qualifications of the caregivers varied, too: some had a college degree in care; others were employed as assistants without specific (care) qualifications. Some were hired to help in the kitchen but at times ended up fetching children from the kindergartens or accompanying the group to a swimming pool or other outdoor activities where more supervision was required (by law). These positions were often held by people who had immigrated to Switzerland and whose training from their home countries, if they were qualified in the field of childhood or care, was not—or at least was less—recognized.

Kindergarten Children in Day-Care

Many of the primary school children left day-care again for school at around 13:20, and sometimes only the kindergarten children stayed behind for quite some time. So, while my young interlocutors were almost always part of a huge group for long stretches of their institutionalized days, these hours in the early afternoon were suddenly unusually quiet. In the CB II, Kenny, Pedro, and Victor were often alone for hours in the yard outside or in the playroom with table football, Legos, and other games. Elena and Peter also spent many such early afternoons together. They would, for instance, crawl under the windowsill together, imagining it to be a hidden cave, create elaborate castles with tables, fabrics, and boxes, be "the fire fighters of Gora," and so on until later in the afternoon, when the older children returned to the day-care and the rooms no longer only belonged to them. While Peter was a new caterpillar child in kindergarten and Elena often insisted on being one of the big ones, the butterflies, this distinction did not exist in day-care. Together, they were the youngest children, and the many hours bonded them in an intimate, intense way, with many fights, hitting and poking, apologizing again, hugging and cuddling, and various escapes into a shared fantasy world. Interestingly, while Elena and Adana were in the same groups made relevant in kindergarten (butterflies, girls) and also interacted quite often in class, they rarely played together in day-care. Without the bonding force of the classroom groupness with certain tasks and expectations of butterfly behavior, too little united them in day-care. Adana was left out, spending those hours drawing or playing games that needed concentration and dexterity. Bonding relationships in the day-care center also had an increasing influence on the social peer positioning in the kindergarten (as already indicated in chapter 2). While Sinopa, for instance, was

the most popular child in class at the time of enrolment, he—not visiting a day-care—lost social ground among his peers.

The time when the kindergarten children were the only ones in day-care gave the caregivers time to clear lunch and organize schedules, but also to go for a cigarette, drink a coffee, and talk to each other. Later, the primary school children came back to day-care, had a snack, did their homework, and child after child was finally picked up, or the phone rang: "This is Mrs. Garcia, I'm home now, can you please send Diana?" When the older children were present, the kindergarteners had little to say. They frequently just sat on the sidelines and watched how the older ones talked during lunch, how they played, how they helped out with the daily routine.

The day-care centers closed at 6 o'clock in the early evening. However, sometimes a child was not picked up. So, there were both emergency plans and warnings to the parents, and the caregivers had various stories to tell about the dramas that would sometimes take place after 6 o'clock.

Caregivers as Educational Brokers and Children's Guardians

The combination of day-care and kindergarten is also analytically interesting with regard to questions of generational orders. The children's relationship with the caregivers could be much closer than with their teachers. This was also because some children visited the same day-care every day for several years. The familiarity of older children imprinted on the mood in general, as well as on the younger children in particular. Since the parents did not all come at the same time to pick up their offspring as at kindergarten, and since the group was not always big, caregivers also had more time for individual encounters with both children and parents. The assignment of roles and the intensity of relationships was much more fluid than in the kindergarten. Many times, I noticed mothers or fathers coming inside for a chat, or for example, filling out forms with the caregivers. The caregivers sometimes confided in and were used by the parents as educational brokers. This in-between position was also attributed to the caregivers from the school and a caregiver of the given day-care often being invited to meetings at the school when a child's situation was discussed. They therefore took on the role of the corrective, the voice that was supposed to provide more information about the condition and situation in the families—similar to that of the school social worker—and did so: "So what I find interesting is that Dilek, when she is alone in the day-care at the end of the day, sometimes together with Kim, that she then really opens up. She seems happy and communicates a lot," said her caregiver Franziska when she was called into the school to talk about Dilek's transition to primary school. "If the mother feels safe and heard, she is easy to work with." This was information that the school noted with interest and almost with some disbelief.

In the many conversations about the children in the day-care center, caregivers positioned themselves rhetorically much more strongly on the side of the children. They would be fine anyway if they were not so harassed by the educational demands of the school and the difficult circumstances at home: "No wonder they don't function well" (care-giver Sylvia). While the institutional logic in kindergarten hardly referred to day-care but was very much engaged with practices of involvement and demarcation regarding the children's families, the social logic of day-care was *only* understandable as being different from *both* family and school and, thereby, from the perspective of the caregivers, serving the children supposedly *in their own rights*.

At first, I could not reconcile this stated position with the general tone I experienced in day-care. Every now and then, the caregivers treated the children much more harshly than in kindergarten. There was hardly any singing, the day-care buildings were much less colorful, and the children were more clearly called to order. "Brian, stop, you can stop that right now!" Or "Elena, are you crazy? Put that back immediately! Who do you think you are!?" Or "Pedro, sometimes you're such a pain in the ass!" The following excerpts from the field notes further illustrate the abrupt detachment from what has been described as the educational comfort zone in kindergarten. This selection has to do with the fact that I had *not* heard any of that in kindergarten in the first few months: also, it is *certainly not representative* for everyday life in day-care but shows something that will be relevant for further analysis:

EXCERPT 1:

Caregiver Lisa complains of a sharp pain in her temples. Ever since she went back on the pill, she explains, she's had this stupid headache. We are sitting at lunch, and the explanation is addressed towards me, the other adult at the table, but in the presence of several children who are sitting between us. Lisa is hence addressing a private issue concerning her method of contraception over the children's heads.[3]

EXCERPT 2:

We are getting ready for a trip to a playground in another district. There will be no public toilets there, Sylvia warns the children. To Ismail (9) she says loudly through the wardrobe full of children: "Ismail, please go to the toilet now and try to poop. Otherwise you'll have to go again later, and that won't be possible."

EXCERPT 3:

Stella (10) complains to her friend Sarah (11) over lunch that her father only gave her a measly necklace for Christmas and with a somewhat disparaging look she holds the necklace out for Sarah to examine. Caregiver

Lisa intervenes loudly: "Stella, you know exactly why your dad can't give you a bigger present! Because he is in jail. Stop whining and be respectful!"

EXCERPT 4:

Caregiver Yusuf was absent for three weeks because he was doing an internship in addiction counseling. Just back that day, and on his way to the playground with Adana and Zaylie at his side, he tells us that it was quite exciting. "That it is also good to do something different for once, and not always just with children." (rolling his eyes during the last part of the sentence).

The processes of involvement and demarcation described in chapter 3 also happened here, but identified problems were not given a pedagogical makeover. They were often addressed loudly, with eye-rolling, appreciatively, and—to use again the famous Goffmanian figure of social analysis—front stage. Talk about violence and injustice, but also about adults' bad moods or clear words without nice paraphrases were common. The kind of *comfort zone* from the supposed harsh world outside observed in the kindergarten was not in place here. At times, the caregivers were even consciously arguing against the pedagogical but instead referred to what I came to call the *authentically normal*. Some elaboration is in order.

Being Different, Being Authentically Normal

Once, when the two main caregivers, Lisa and Sylvia, and I were drinking coffee in the main room of the day-care center CB II, Pedro came in outraged. He wanted to tell us something. His two steady playmates, Victor and Kenny, seemed to have done something he did not like, he told us with his voice quavering. But Sylvia sent him straight back out without even listening to his complaint. "Sort it out yourself. You're not normally one to keep your mouth shut. We are having a break here and would like to talk among adults." The conversation we, the adults, were having, was about violence in a particular family and two boys who were in their fourth year with CB II. Sylvia had taken the two brothers very much to her heart, she said. Once she even had them for a sleepover at her place when the parents did not come to pick them up. They would usually be really annoying and challenge her, but particularly in the late afternoons, when most of the other children had left, they would have very good conversations. "Day-care is the place where they can just be children and where both the parents and the school pressure are far away." The proclamation of a *real* place for children, *particularly* here in Mühlekon, *particularly* in this catchment area of Wiesengrund School, resulted in a strong demarcation from the school and *also* from the families, though in a different way. Referring back to Pedro, who had just been sent away, she said that

the children needed the self-confidence to be able to solve these types of conflicts themselves. "Where, if not here, can they learn that?" It was the ambivalence between brusqueness and emotionality that interested me here with regard to the children.

The larger argument points to the "double relation of symbiosis and opposition" between divergent social orders in which childhoods unfold (Wacquant 2004, 17). It becomes apparent, however, that the respective references, oppositions, and symbioses do not necessarily have to be mutual, but that the imaginings of the other orders marked as relevant sometimes turned out to be quite different. This will now be explicated in more detail along the self-image of the day-care workers.

Schools, on the one hand, were described and imagined by the caregivers as places where children would be measured only on the basis of their academic progress and how they would fit into the specific pedagogic order. This would be a long way from the everyday lives of children in Mühlekon. While the school would educate the children academically, in day-care, the children would "learn for life" (Lisa, CB II); day-care would prepare them "for the world out there" (Franziska, blue Wiesi), not give them illusions. On the other hand, this criticism of the school and the kindergarten, which was sometimes expressed almost with contempt, was also fueled by the vulnerability of the caregivers, who ultimately felt less powerful than the teachers. It was linked to their experience of their work as not being taken seriously enough (Idel and Graßhoff 2023). Caregivers defended themselves with reference to the genuineness of life and the authenticity of their relationship with the children without any pedagogical subtext. The everyday boundary-making between the kindergarten and the school, one can thus say, consists in the dissolving of a pedagogical appearance through reference to *authenticity and normalness*, an argument that only makes sense with respect to other social orders, with a particular mode of referencing to the family lives in Mühlekon. Authenticity, which—as I observed again and again—was demanded here, can only be claimed when there is inauthenticity in the background. Authenticity can only be claimed when it is counterbalanced by the hypocritical. Such inauthenticity was suspected both in kindergarten and in families.

It was a declaration that reflected the hard-working but honest everyday life in the neighborhood, which did not adhere to such "bourgeois ideals" as healthy living and fine speech as it was thought to be taught in kindergarten. A lot of class consciousness, even a certain class pride, came into the children's every day through day-care. The caregivers often saw and portrayed themselves as authentic locals, realistic role models for the children. Migration-related lines of differentiation were normalized by this, with different languages from the neighborhood entering day-care more often. Leandro was employed at CB II while this ethnographic study took place there: a tall Black man with a Nicaraguan passport and, as he himself noted, now "responsible for the Caribbean flair" in

the day-care. It was openly discussed among the caregivers that he could be a good contact person for the children, precisely because of how he looked; and he also spoke Spanish, as did some of the children. The children in Mühlekon lacked good, authentic role models, and the day-care center took it upon themselves, so they said, to provide them. Care was therefore taken in the hiring policy to ensure that Mühlekon's visible and audible diversity was also reflected in the staff.

Reinterpretations of the Children's Needs: Front-Staging

By not drawing the line so rigorously with the parents as the kindergarten staff did, many more glimpses into family life made their way into day-care. In many cases, however, caregivers did nevertheless not know how the children were doing at home. What they knew about some families and what they knew about the pedagogical processing in the kindergarten was enough, it seemed, to take a clear stance. Thus, there was no attempt to resolve specific problems pedagogically. Instead, they were addressed, and frequently, no secret was made of the fact that the caregivers found something funny or not good. This thematization, which was ultimately also a focus of individual cases in which day-care workers were heavily involved, led some caregivers to the attitude that the day-care center was the only possibility for children to build up a sense of security, to protect themselves and to defend themselves—against both the moral hierarchies at school and a family fate.

The reference to the *authentically normal* took the form of a possible solution to being in the world. How to guarantee that children could be children despite the imagined resistances and struggles? Referring to the authentically normal, there was supposedly no ambiguity in day-care; the right action was to be true to oneself and to stand honestly in life despite mistakes and difficulties. Establishing social order this way had very practical implications. For instance, cigarettes, (talking about) violence, television, and mobile phones were not banned. Instead, caregivers insisted that children had to learn how to deal with those issues *properly*. The devices of the various staff members were therefore present, sometimes right next to them on the table, and their use was thematized: "I'm switching my mobile phone to loud now. I might get an important call, just to let you know." Or television use was discussed, and the supposedly *real way* was suggested, such as when Franziska said: "You shouldn't watch television while you're eating!" and then asked in the round, "Who watches while you eat?" Interestingly, all but one girl at Franziska's table immediately reported they did, and the addition from one boy, "But even my mommy does," caused Franziska to role her eyes and some laughter from the other children. Cigarettes were hidden in pockets, and caregivers left the room to smoke, not wanting to be seen. But every now and then a child or a group of children still would come round the corner. Once, when I joined Rita and Leandro when they went to have "a

breather," Rita held the cigarette behind her back when she saw a group of children approaching them. Ismail, who noticed this immediately, commented on it, whereupon Rita said, "I'm not proud of the fact that I smoke, you know. It's not healthy and it's better if you stay away from it. I try to stop anyways." Talking about headaches or pointing out that caregivers do not feel like spending time with the children every day also refers to this reference to the authentic. Family disputes, violence, and migration-related differences, for example, were much more actively addressed in the group. It is here that kindergarten children learned that, for instance, violence happened at other children's homes, too, and where the caregivers thought to provide them a space to help each other.

Interesting to note were the relationships that can be understood as women's alliances. The female caregivers came with several cases where they helped mothers to leave their violent husbands, and they listened to them when they reported all kinds of difficulties. Mothers came to the day-care centers with court decisions or other official documents, and they were given low-threshold counselling. Time and again, therefore, the employees took an active stance in family conflicts, but that also got them into trouble. Caregiver Arbnora, herself Kosovo-Albanian, explained that she had had misgivings about interfering in Tereza's family (and others). They knew each other in the community, she said, and that would also bring these issues into her own home.

The harsher and simultaneously more intimate social order of day-care, however, was not to everyone's liking. Caterpillar child Arian, for example, was not particularly good with either the more physical or the harsher tone of the caregivers and often cried when he had to go to day-care (instead of home). With Harun, too, it was this kind of behavior that prompted Sezen, Harun's mother, to take him out of day-care again. She suspected that they would want to take the role of the mother away from her, thinking they could do it better. She did not allow other adults to scold her boy like that. Sezen was crystal clear in her opinion. Regarding the responsible caregiver of CB II, Sylvia Dominioni, she stated in a long conversation we had, "She is actually, she is not good for there, for childcare at all, she is a disaster woman! (*Katastrophen Frau*)" The retelling of the conflict and why she thought Sylvia, and the day-care in general, to be a disaster took a good fifteen minutes without me ever asking a single intervening question.

> And then I said: what's wrong? [imitating Sylvia Dominioni's voice] "I told him that if you hadn't been there, he would have put on his shoes himself." I said: Mrs. Dominioni, he already put them on himself, but he put them on wrong. I told him to take them off and then I came, he wasn't ready yet and then I helped him. What do you think, you don't should care how I take care of my child. [imitating, again] "You do what your son says!" I do, I have only one son, I said. What do you think, you're like

> a- like a- like a German military. He's not in military, I said, he's a child, I said. And you can't just tell him: You have to do that, that's it. No. That's not right.

In Sezen's opinion, the day-care interfered too much in the personal affairs of the families and treated the children badly. Her harsh criticism of the staff was particularly interesting because Sezen's tone towards Harun was not particularly soft either. Several times during this same conversation, she harangued her son, who was sitting next to us, "Shut up now!" It can be understood that it was not so much about the tone, but about who was allowed to talk to her son like that. It had something to do with the feeling of not being recognized as a good mother, of being morally devalued. She obviously expected members of institutions to which she paid money to find a different way of dealing with and caring for her son and, this was equally important, not to tell her how to behave properly. She struggled with the day-care's assessments of what her son supposedly needed to learn on an emotional and on a social level what he needed for life. The day-care's criticism of Harun hit her much harder than the kindergarten teachers' assessments, precisely because demands were also made on her. This here in day-care, in her view, was personal.

Hard Individualism in Day-Care

It is interesting to reflect here on Adrie Kusserow's prominent ethnographic study *American Individualism* on divergent styles of child-rearing. One of her major findings was that parents and teachers alike refer to different types of individualisms and thereby the question of how a child should properly grow into an independent being under the respective conditions. "Individualism adapts itself to local worlds," she concluded (Kusserow 2004, 169). While she identified a "soft individualism" in the upbringing of middle- and upper-class neighborhoods, "with its more psychologized conception of self, emphasized the delicacy of the child's self, the extreme care, resources, wide canvas, and gentle touch needed to help the unique self of the child flower and open up into her full potential," this is contrasted by a counterpart in the less affluent neighborhood of her study. There, Kusserow identified children to be imprinted with what she terms a "hard individualism, . . ."emphasiz[ing] a tough, resilient self that was hard enough either to protect itself from violence, poverty, and misfortune" (2004, v). The fact that the children were then repeatedly dealt with in a harsh tone, much like Sezen's "shut up," is regarded as an opportunity for children to learn to defend themselves, given that they must find their way in a less privileged environment (35–42). A problem can then arise when "soft individualism" is emphasized at school while "hard individualism" becomes the guiding principle at home. Kusserow borrows from Bourdieu, especially when it comes to

analyzing and problematizing home-school incongruencies. She adopts his concept of habitus and thereby also his analytical language to conceptualize the "ways in which social structures are deeply internalized and embodied by individuals of a certain social class" (Kusserow 2004, viii). For the present study, building upon her insights is fruitful in understanding the configuration between school, families, and day-care, because in this triangular relationship, it is possible to think differently about the possibility of (in)congruence and the mutual conditionality of different social orders. Reading the empirical case suggests that it is not always (in)congruence, but expectations of other adults who, to a certain extent, share the task of raising the children but who disagree about the responsibilities (and also whom to blame in case of failure).

Now, on the one hand, it is interesting that Mühlekon's children are confronted early on with different accesses to the configuration of their social belonging and corresponding expectations of their behavior (and also expectations of what the adults around them should best do with them). In day-care the different styles of child-rearing are problematized, and day-care seeks to counterbalance family and kindergarten. However, as will be elaborated in the next chapter, the supposed working-class composition of the neighborhood is not so clear-cut. The day-care centers might therefore overshoot the mark, so to say, especially when parents want more soft tones and even more pedagogy for their children in this care facility. Of all the parents I had more to do with, they did not see such a big separation in the tasks of day-care and kindergarten and expected day-care to have educational goals. Some were even critical of the fact that so many migrants who did not speak German as a first language were working in day-care. "How are children supposed to learn German if they hear it from Albanians and Turks?" (Feven, mother of Abshiru). After all, this institution was (also) recommended to them because their children would be cared for and would, to quote the principal's entry on the web page again, "expand their social and language skills." The recommendation of the kindergarten teacher to send children to day-care for reasons of more exposure to German was convincing parents to do so, even if they had the time to take care of the children themselves.

Children in-between Social Orders

The in-depth examination of the mutual reference of day-care, family, and school, as well as the multi-referential establishment of the social order in day-care described with it, has shown that the different places of childhood can only be understood in relation to each other. This long discussion has been necessary to allow us to return to an examination of children's pathways of belonging with a more informed eye, thinking about how divergent modes of social belonging work and work together, and how the configuration, intensity, and efficacy of

belonging can change as children move through different places in their everyday lives. This can be analyzed very clearly along the category of social butterflies constituted in kindergarten.

Losing the Butterfly Status

The categories of caterpillars and butterflies lost their huge relevance as differentiation categories once outside kindergarten. The social butterflies who had been the big ones in kindergarten and who used the category of the butterfly themselves as a reason for exclusion, became symbolically smaller again in day-care. You simply could not score points in day-care with the butterfly status. But it was more than a mere "lost weapon." With the elimination of the separation of two distinct kindergarten cohorts, the big butterflies could slip again into clearly more vulnerable positions, could wish to be stroked by bigger children and adults, cried more openly, let themselves be helped. Due to the dominance of the older children in day-care, I watched children I knew as "the cheeky ones" from kindergarten, like Kenny, Elena, or even Pedro, becoming sometimes quite shy; they marveled, learned, studied the demeanor of the older children in day-care and picked up tips on how they—back in kindergarten among their peers—could further improve their social position in class. Making connections to social theory on generationing (Mayall 2001; Kertzer 1983; Alanen 2001; Huijsmans et al. 2014), it can be noted that the strict cohort classification as distinguishable social groups in kindergarten has a great effect on the positioning of children in the classroom, but the cohort of butterflies got quickly relegated—relationally to the other children—to a status of toddlers in day-care. Divergent invocations of the generational are thus brought into position. While two cohorts are configured in kindergarten, and thus large social differences are introduced despite minimal age differences, the generational order in day-care points to another understanding of the generational. Not only are differentiated life phases made more thematic, but children are also addressed more strongly as part of their families and thus as being in a certain generational succession (Kertzer 1983). It becomes apparent how fruitful the analytical distinction "between concepts of age and generational dynamics," as Huismans et al. (2014) propose, is for understanding children's belonging.

Zaylie, Elena, Kenny, Victor, and their companions from kindergarten experienced the transitions from kindergarten to day-care sometimes several times a day, with varying degrees of intensity. Mathumai initially cried in day-care and kindergarten. It seemed that not being at home made a huge difference to her, and day-care suddenly loomed after kindergarten, at first leading to frustration. On the other hand, Zaylie was much more confident in day-care. She had several friends there with whom she played with dolls and horses (often in English), and they could also put on face paint and could dance, which she loved to do.

There were fewer moments when she felt under scrutiny, and she could relax more. Fewer situations embarrassed her. In my understanding, the more suggestive, friendlier, but also more unclear communication in the kindergarten sometimes troubled her, whereas she enjoyed the physicality of day-care and could understand much better what was required of her. Pedro, who got a lot of attention from the teachers in kindergarten and who was also looking for it, completely disappeared into the crowd of children in day-care. While his behavior was not problematized at all in day-care, the parents were regarded as unreliable. The whole weekend, Pedro (who was called by his second name Gustavo in the day-care center, which all the children practiced seemingly without irritation) would play shooting games on the Nintendo with his father. Kenny, Victor, and Gustavo had pet names for each other in day-care. They called each other Lewi, Tori, and Gusti as a matter of course, without the names ever being imported (that I noticed) into the kindergarten. Some children, such as Elena, whose first hug introduced the chapter, also made a clear distinction between kindergarten and day-care. It seemed as if she just left the pedagogical order at the kindergarten fence and that she would meet the people she knew within the social order of class under new conditions. The separate(d) socio-spatial orders with their different take on generationing were, in a sense, at times much stronger than the social belongings ascribed to the people. It is worth thinking about this a little more carefully.

The Entanglement of Social Order and Social Belonging

I have now explained the incorporation into the social order of day-care with respect to the social order the children left just a few moments before, that is, kindergarten. Caregivers refer essentially to other (anticipated) social orders such as schools and families. Crucial for these adult conclusions about other social orders in the children's lives is what children bring with them every day, what they reveal, how they look, or what they hide in certain situations. With respect to the children's pathways of belonging, we must now tackle the question of how social belonging relates to respective social orders.

The less clearly organized invocation and pedagogically oriented attachment of different categories of social belonging in day-care put some children on the spot. In kindergarten, care was taken to ensure that no one was apparently left out; children were socially interwoven in various ways and continually arranged differently. Leaving kindergarten for day-care, the freedom in this respect made it more possible to conspire against someone, and children who were not so popular in the peer group could suffer due to the less close observation by adults. Kenny: "Adnan is gay. No, Adnan is totally gay. Hey Adnan, are you gay? Do you love Timo? Hei you folk, [Victor and Gustavo giggling] Adnan is in love with Timo. Iiiggggh!" Day-care provided (as did, of course, the time spent on the playground,

waiting in line at the slide at the swimming pool, and other occasions without adult intervention) the opportunity to try out what was forbidden in kindergarten, to test new limits of differentiation. Back in kindergarten, these experiences could be recalled, without expressing them verbally. A short signal was enough, and Kenny, Victor, and Pedro (Gustavo) could giggle without obviously disturbing the pedagogical order.

The permeability of the generational order in day-care suited some children. If the child wanted it, the interaction could also be more like fooling around, teasing, physical touching (tickling, massaging to sleep, roughhousing on the soccer field). Relationships were less predetermined. In day-care, peer recognition was more central, and children who rarely cared for the attention of the teachers anyway, had no trouble with it. It was particularly noticeable that some children who knew what to get credit for within the social order rendered pedagogical, such as Arian, Dragan, Salma, or Abshiru, sometimes seemed a bit lost with the move to day-care. Leaving kindergarten, there were far fewer things which were publicly acknowledged by the adults. Every now and then in day-care, Dragan came to me and wanted to tell me something—how he had done something well, or that other children had cursed, and hoped for the reprimanding, pedagogical intervention from the adult person that he knew from kindergarten. Even though he never came to me with such stories in kindergarten, the example clearly illustrates that he was referring to a social order we both knew from elsewhere. And Salma, for example, who excelled in kindergarten as an almost omniscient butterfly child, had little opportunity to demonstrate superiority in day-care. Interestingly, children like Salma and Dragan were the children who associated me very strongly with kindergarten and, even after several visits to the day-care centers, insisted on formally shaking hands and calling me Mrs. Jaeger. It shows that social orders work multi-referentially, and depending on the weighting of the references, children can seek to improve or change their social position within the given order, and refer to an order that suits them better. The different socio-spatial orders were then sometimes clearly assigned to persons, and the clear separation of places helped some children to live out different configurations of their social belonging.

Interestingly, the children's simultaneous navigation through different socio-spatial orders seemed to run more smoothly than the navigation together with adults. Incongruities in the social relationship between children (such as the many interactions between Adana and Elena in kindergarten and the fact they ignored each other in day-care) seemed to require less emotional work than the changing attachments to adults. Different ways of dealing with intimacy and shame also hardly seemed to be an issue among the children. It was the adults that were much more strongly linked to the respective social orders, which they—after all—established around the children. The ethnographic data thus lead to the analytic reading that children recognize adults much more strongly as

bearers of specific roles with clear positions within orders than they do with other children. This was noteworthy; unintentionally, adults thus became partly guardians of certain path dependencies of child behavior.

In the remaining pages, these analytical figures and the questions of what happens to children when they navigate divergent social orders together are brought elsewhere: we go to the swimming pool for this.

Summer, Sun, Bikini Time

In day-care the children's embarrassment, relating largely to bodily matters, was different from their attitude in class. Physicality was less tamed, less tabooed. When first the kindergarten, and then also the day-care, was left in the direction of the swimming pool, the *Badi*, a lot more came in motion in this respect:

Whereas during the winter months, the local shopping mall was often the place to be, it was the Mühlekon *Badi* where children met in the summer afternoons with their parents and siblings, but also with their groups from day-care. Whenever I was at the Mühlekon *Badi* with the children, there was always a big hello to whoever else was there. This complicated the organization and supervision of the children, as their various groupings continuously rearranged themselves in the playgrounds and in the swimming pools. So, these excursions were not really relaxed, particularly for the caregivers from day-care, and the children were repeatedly called to order, much more than usual. Here, the caregivers had to organize the children's daily routine more closely. This was done, among other things, by handing out a small amount of food at a given time, thus ensuring that all the children from a given group were reconvened. That also gave the caregivers the opportunity to "get rid" of other children, who kept mingling with the day-care groups. Another strategy to keep track of the children was suggesting they all went together to the diving platform. The kindergarten children did not actually jump, but you could sit on a little wall and watch the older children jump from the five-meter tower. However, it was the slide that was a particular relief from the perspective of the caregivers, seeing the children queuing at the spiral staircase on their way up, and finally watching them coming out of the slide at the bottom, one by one. A signal ensured that only one person was allowed to slide at a time and slowed down the activity. This gave the caregivers a moment to themselves: they could sit at the edge of the pool and sunbathe a little. A final successful practice for bringing the group together was applying sunscreen again. Those activities—especially eating or protecting oneself from the sun—legitimized leaving uncoordinated fun, jumping and splashing, playing ball with the older kids from the neighborhood that happened to be at the Mühlekon *Badi* without adult supervision.

Due to the supervisors' duty of care and their way of repeatedly isolating their own group, the children who were in the pool with their parents were repeatedly excluded, asked to "go and see your mummy, because now, all the red Wiesi children will get some snacks." So, it could be that Zaylie, who at lunchtime was still disappointed that she had to go to day-care while her friend Tereza was being hugged by her mother, two hours later was playing in the pool with the crowd of children, while Tereza had to leave the group and sit, bored and frustrated, next to her sleeping mother. However, a child like Tereza was able to get back at Zaylie a little later when she was given two francs by her mum to buy an ice-cream and went past the day-care children, who only got crackers. The advantages and disadvantages of group membership were constantly renegotiated.

When bathing, the mood could always change very quickly, partly because fun and anxiety were never far apart in the pools. Parents and caregivers at times were equally stressed, and children were often too cold or too bored, or they were afraid, or they swallowed water or were pushed in from the edge by someone, or were not allowed to go on the slide, or were not with the children they knew, and much more. The excitement, the fear, and the joy and probably also the immediate experience of bodies, which were brought much more to the fore by the experiences in the swimming pool, brought out a different sociality in each individual. In the *Badi* other limits of physicality were crossed: sunblock had to be applied to backs, caregivers' bodies were on display, as were faces without make-up. Some elaboration on physicality is thus in order.

It is perhaps one of the places where the three-dimensionality of social interactions is most evident (Katz 1999), and where children's bodies and adult's bodies and their configuration become an essential part of the activities. Nowhere else have I had such intense experiences with the children, not only when it comes to bodily interaction—playing ball together, diving, water battles, applying sun lotion, sliding, and jumping—but also in terms of bonding with the children. After I hopped with Victor on my back through the wading pool (see interlude 1), and he consistently addressed me as his little horse and, laughing wildly, encouraged me to move with a "hüü-hüü," we had an exciting conversation about friendships on the other side of the pool, where we lay on the warm concrete. Tereza also dared to take the big slide for the first time when I was there once with her and her mother Blerta. So, with her wedged between my legs, we slid down.[4] Excited and emotional, it did not take long for her to start a conversation about her daddy, who just passed away, telling me that he would be up in the clouds now and what her cousin told her about the funeral service, which she did not attend (see appendix). But also with adults, this different reference to the body had effects on the social order. Among other things, individual vulnerability became more visible, provoking other conversations. It was in the *Badi* where the senior

caregiver Franziska from blue Wiesi talked about how often she would worry about her employees and the precarious nature of their jobs (after she got a huge shock when she noticed how her employee Amal panicked in a delicate situation in the swimming pool instead of bringing the little girl in question to safety) and how she sometimes was not sure they had hired the right people.

The comparison to the parents and caregivers in bikinis shows in a nutshell how private the bodies in the kindergarten were. There was a PE lesson every week, and the whole class changed together in a cloakroom area. However, the short, scanty clothing of the children was never discussed; it was immediately stopped if someone spent too long over putting a T-shirt on or stood around in their underwear. And you never saw a teacher's bare leg. Children who frolicked together almost naked in the swimming pool laughed at each other for similar nudity in kindergarten. While children were encouraged publicly to go poop in day-care without that even causing any funny looks, the same children were supposed to do their business discreetly in the kindergarten, and they would put their hands over their mouths, looking at each other with wide eyes, as if something very embarrassing had just happened. A capacity toward a compatibility of different boundaries of shame and bodily relations is required from children, especially from those who move through these different socio-spatial orders together.

Concluding Remarks

Several things stood out when I left the kindergarten with the children for day-care. Children were addressed more directly, more harshly, more immediately. Everyday life in day-care was established with multiple references to both a social order in school—which would misinterpret the social reality of children in Mühlekon—and multiple references to poor, conflicted families. Caregivers understood themselves as the antithesis to both and aimed for an order that was described as *authentically normal*. However, this view was not shared by all; many parents sought far more educational than social input from the time spent in day-care and felt morally degraded.

As with regard to children navigating social belonging, some categories of cultural differentiation very quickly regained importance within this order; the hierarchizing logic of butterflies and caterpillars disappeared almost immediately, and with it, the older kindergarten children lost their most important card in the game for power within the peer group. This proved to be not only a disadvantage, but also a liberation from their role model function in kindergarten.

Of particular interest for research on belonging and children's everyday life in multi-referentiality is the question of divergent modes of generationing (Mayall 2001). Comparing different sites of childhood reveals that different understandings of generational classification prevail, which in turn are crucial for

ordering categories of belonging. The decisive factor here is sometimes the extent to which the children are woven into social orders in the succession of their parents: while in kindergarten they are divided into two cohorts with much effort, and thus other generational principles of order (life phase, succession, space of experience) lose significance, this is negotiated differently in day-care, as could be shown (Kertzer 1983). This will be analytically examined again in the next chapter with a view to the children's everyday life in the neighborhood and beyond.

Third Interlude: Zaylie

Mimicry and Camouflage

Plie—(2)—release—(2)—set—(2)—off the barre—(2)—stretch—(2)—stretch and half point—(2)—s'Dandü—(2)—second position—(2)—stay—(2)—and repeat plie.

Zaylie loved ballet. It was the whole set-up that fascinated her: the movement in the room, the clear instructions which could be translated directly into physical movements, the clothes and the colors (bright, mostly pink), the gentle but clear manner of the teacher, the other girls in the room, the big mirrors, and the fact that on Saturday mornings the family made a trip by bus to take Zaylie to ballet class. Even if she was sick or had had a bad night's sleep, she would not let it stop her from going to ballet, her mother Rose said with a laugh.

I had never seen Zaylie more composed, more delighted, than during these dance lessons. The ballet school was close to Mühlekon and managed the balancing act between popular education and high-quality sport. Zaylie seemed to be absorbed in this place, as if she had disappeared in the group of ballet dancers.

Based on the standards of what a good ballet dancer was, Zaylie's physical performance could probably be challenged quite a bit. She often focused on a hand turn or facial expression when the instruction would be about going up on her toes on a specific cue. Or she was not in time, half a second late. But that did not seem to matter. She was not good enough for the teacher to push her to excellence, but took joy in being part of it. So she just let her go, correcting her infrequently in a sympathetic voice. For Zaylie, the ballet hours seemed hours of sublimity.

During the years with Zaylie, in kindergarten, in her day-care center, at home, on a family visit to Ghana, on visits to the social welfare office, in the swimming pool, at ballet lessons, in the playground, while shopping, and during the acts of worship, I often watched her observing others. She often appeared hesitant, uncertain, when it came to relating herself to others, to what was being

done. She wanted to do things right and only dared put herself forward when she was certain. As expectations of who she was supposed to be in a given situation, and what was desirable, addressable, shameful, or good within certain social orders, changed frequently, Zaylie was moving in rather uncertain territory when she enrolled in kindergarten, and she is certainly no exception in this regard. The challenges involved in shifting social orders can be described particularly well by following Zaylie through her daily life in Mühlekon and beyond, as I was able to observe her much more intensely and for longer periods than other children. This interlude uses the fieldnotes gathered around Zaylie to elaborate on body language and social position, as well as on strategies to navigate social belonging. Two strategies are outlined with regard to Zaylie: mimicry and camouflage.

Moving Like a Cape Coast Girl

Down the road from the family's home in Ghana, there was a small market stall. We walked past it several times on the way to the main square and saw that there were games for sale. Zaylie's little sister Debbie was squeaking that she would like to play UNO, so Zaylie and her cousin Zoe were sent on their way with a few coins to buy the game. Zoe pocketed the money and was off through the gate, with Zaylie—glancing back—trailing behind a little uncertainly. A teary-eyed and frightened Zaylie returned some minutes later. The market stall did not have the game, and so Zaylie wanted to come back. But Zoe insisted that there was another market, Zaylie explained, and the girls could not agree on a course of action. Zaylie must have followed Zoe around the neighborhood for a while but finally got scared and headed back alone. About fifteen minutes later, Zoe arrived, furious, also crying. She had the game in a plastic bag and literally threw it onto the terrace. "Here!" The two crying girls were irreconcilable for a long time. Their encounters during this time in Ghana were generally highly emotional and with high levels of reciprocity, but the game-buying event was deeply upsetting. Both felt abandoned. Zaylie, it turned out afterward when speaking to her mother, Rose, had never been sent shopping without an adult. She was relying on Zoe during this walk but her cousin—as Zaylie explained later, still outraged—simply took off and ran across a field, where Zaylie no longer knew her way around. Zoe, in turn, was outraged that Zaylie had not listened to her. She *knew* where there was another game stall, and Zaylie had simply refused to follow her.

"In Switzerland, I can't do that. I always hold my children's hands, especially if I see the police somewhere." Rose's behavior toward her children in public spaces in Switzerland was strongly influenced by a fear of being accused of being a bad mother. She had all kinds of stories to tell about what you had to worry about in Switzerland as an African mother, which resonates strongly with Feldman-Savelsberg's analysis on migrant motherhood in Berlin: "Using tales of

their own and others' experiences, migrant mothers forewarn each other about ways state actors make them redraw the contours of appropriate child-rearing" (2016, 196). Although she had her own ideas and notions of what she thought was right for children, she was reluctant to let Zaylie out alone. In Ghana, she could finally catch up on what she would like to teach her girl: self-confidence and independence and proper respect for adults. After several years holding her mother's hand, this seemed to overwhelm Zaylie. But Rose only had this short time here in her family circle, this short time where she too, as a single parent, could finally hand over responsibility.

Zoe already exhibited these traits and was often used by Rose as a role model for her daughter. "Play with Zoe!" "Ah, Zaylie, can't you see we're having a conversation here? Look, Zoe's just doing her thing too." But Zoe was not only independent; she also felt no shame, it seemed. She peed wherever it suited her. She did not mind using the outhouse with the door open and was not disgusted by the maggots and worms in the hole. Rose insisted on certified drinking water for us, the visitors from Switzerland, while Zoe sucked water from a plastic bag. The simultaneous admiration and contempt of the two cousins made the relationship so difficult, and while Zaylie kept trying to emulate her cousin (but lacked virtuosity in dancing and autonomy in independence), Zoe took advantage of this behavior. Time and again, she successfully proved that she was the better Cape Coast girl; hesitant mimicry can be reproached.

For Zaylie's mother, Rose, it was clear that not everything was better for her in Switzerland. But she had various stories to tell of institutions where she was consistently impressed by the support and helpfulness. Her gratitude and enumeration of the opportunities she had in Switzerland were always explained with a reference to her everyday life in Ghana. "You wouldn't be able to do that in Ghana." "You don't get that kind of support in Ghana." However, this was not without disgruntled comments—that the social welfare office was difficult to reach, that one could not get a quick answer, that you'd have to complain so often. And Rose did not like complaining. When difficulties arose, she preferred to apply a wait-and-see attitude for herself and for her children, to push problems into solvable spheres, and instead lead by example, but also with self-kindness. This was particularly evident when it came to her skin color.

> ROSE: It's not insult, m-mm, if you let your child note that it's not insult, she will not have problems. If you build up confidence, it is not insult. It is, it is hard . . . but if you take it as insult: how many times will you get angry? Because almost every month somebody tells you that. Will you break down because somebody tell you? . . . I don't think you can survive like that if you always will take it to your heart.

In this context, Rose explained about Zaylie's first weeks in kindergarten. Butterfly child Elena was the big topic of conversation at home. Again and again,

Zaylie said that Elena would not let her join her group, for various reasons: because she was a caterpillar, because she was not her friend, because she was Black. "I almost went to the teacher," but in the end she did not go to the school and did not complain. "The teachers try their best but the children come from different homes, each one has different character," and instead of expressing outrage or referring to racism, she preferred not to stress, not to complain: "Let's give it a chance."[1]

Zaylie endured. She cried at home, she looked for other playmates, and finally Elena realized that knowing this loyal girl was by her side was not too bad, after all. After the initial, sometimes very crude, exclusion of the new caterpillar girl with darker skin, the two girls eventually became more like friends, even if Elena clearly set the tone, it was still important to her that Zaylie was there. But Zaylie memorized the mechanisms of exclusion. She observed what could be used against her. Again and again she was, for example, preoccupied with the fact that she had nothing to say about any vacation experiences. While other children were telling about trips, Rose lacked the money to travel and saved up for the stay in Ghana, and Zaylie complained at home that she lacked this storytelling capital. And when she saw opportunities to retaliate for missed opportunities and her own experiences of exclusion, she took them. After a year and a half in kindergarten, an opportunity arose here. In the weeks before the trip to Ghana, and in the weeks after it, she hardly talked about anything else. Back in Mühlekon, she used her new green braids in conversation and let the other girls express their admiration. Finally, at last, she too could show off! Sometimes, however, I had the impression that these compensations came too late. The other children had already drawn the lines of belonging differently, and by the time Zaylie wanted to talk about things like a certain characteristic or her vacation, they had lost all their valency.

Boundaries of Shame

While spending time with Zaylie, the analysis of different social orders with regard to bodily practices and emotional compatibility were intriguing. Ethnographic studies with young children might never be able to provide a well-founded description of children's emotional entanglements by navigating across different socio-spatial orders. Shame is not so easy to observe anyway (Katz 1999), and personal stories of shaming at times can only be verbalized years later and might be difficult to share, even for adults (Scheff 2003). Given the methodological limitations, the following statements are nevertheless included in this study of children's pathways of belonging.

As already described, Zaylie could often be seen observing and trying to be quite inconspicuous, or at least not negatively noticeable, in social orders. She had a good memory in this regard and a great sensorium for mechanisms of

exclusion. Zaylie appeared more often and more intensely embarrassed than other children. While her peers at times would, for instance, fart with pleasure in a large group or not care about a negative word from the teacher, Zaylie tried to make sure that such things did not happen to her. At the same time, she seemed to have more trouble than others crossing the boundaries of overlapping social orders. She had a greater need for harmony and stability, and yet she repeatedly realized that these did not always exist. And, aware of the attempt to contain divergent social positions, she shamefully retreated, as the description of two encounters might help to illustrate.

Rose often went to church with her children. The African Migration Church, to which they belong, has taken up residence in a Protestant church outside the city, and we took the local train toward the outskirts. It was an African space; people knew each other, some were friends, called each other *sistas* and *brothas*, greeted each other laughing, and expressed happiness to see each other again. The day I accompanied them, we quickly found ourselves in an intense mood; movement came into the pews, people stood up, sang along, danced. In front of us, a woman spoke in tongues. Her body was engaged in a conversation with God. More and more people around us left their seats, moved around, became louder together and joined in the pastor's sermon. Zaylie, who continued to stay with me, became restless. The two of us, situationally coupled as a pair, had nothing to add; she seemed to not know what to do with me and the situation, and neither did I. As Rose also closed her eyes and started singing, Zaylie took my notepad and began to draw on it, whispering softly to me what she was doing, referring to a game in kindergarten. In that situation, I was amazed at Zaylie's initiative. I had the impression that she was drawing us back into another world in which she did not have to explore the limits of translatability of divergent social orders but instead used camouflage tactics to remove herself from this situation of negotiation.

I could see similar body language when it came to her family, and especially her mother, having to make journeys to the welfare office. Rose could speak German, but not particularly well. Six years of schooling and growing up in a plurilingual and non-linguistically standardized context meant she could switch very quickly between different language repertoires, and she navigated everyday life very well and without complications (Blommaert 2015). But situations that insisted on standardization, such as the school, but especially state institutions like the social welfare office, intimidated her. Because telephone and written contact were even more difficult, Rose preferred to go directly. I sometimes accompanied her on these visits, and once Zaylie was there as well. It is difficult for children of migrants when they notice their parents are deficient in terms of language and status in the country they grow up in (i.e., Bourgois 1996; Orellana 2009; Tertilt 1996), and it was not difficult to see that this also applied to Zaylie. When we entered the entrance area of the office, and Rose and I both threw a

diffuse "Grüezi" (formally: hello) into the round of waiting clients and staff, this was met by Zaylie with a loud "Grüezi mitenand" (plural, as learned in the song in the kindergarten), before she faded into silence and immobility. It took a good hour before she thawed out again when we decided to get an ice cream in the supermarket and to warm our faces a little in the sun.

Zaylie had more trouble than others with status incongruities and divergent demands on her behavior, as well as the negotiation of what is considered good and correct and where this applies. These insecurities are strongly interwoven with the impositions placed on a Black body in a predominantly white environment and the various forms of racism that families like Zaylie's face. She helped herself navigate the situations with mimicry and camouflage. These strategies made her robust enough, but "not good for competition," as Rose once reflected on her older daughter. But it also seems that Rose's attitude toward her daughter concerning empowering the girl rather than dramatizing the situations at hand eventually did not go badly. As far as I could tell during my follow-up visits and in small conversations here and there, Zaylie had less trouble with the contingency of divergent social orders. All the observing, it seems, paid off later. Hence, it is worth thinking about the different physical encounters—in ballet classes, going to the social welfare office, and shopping for games with Zoe in Ghana—and how they made different demands on Zaylie's body. Weaving these ethnographic vignettes into the analytical figures of the study, it becomes clear that the disciplinary pedagogical order in class can become a safety net to fall back on when social situations become unclear. The retreat into the structuredness of the pedagogical order and the reference to getting it right within this order can provide support when the terrain becomes too bumpy and unclear elsewhere. This seems to be the interesting flip side of kindergarten classes. The daily practice of a clearly defined routine—in which there is also *supposedly* no racism—can also be called on in other fields, whereas the extent to which other socio-spatial orders are transferable remains unclear. We will come back to this in the overall conclusion of the book with regard to emotional compatibility.

5

Unfolding the Neighborhood

All children that attended Wiesengrund Kindergarten lived within walking distance of the small building. Its catchment area was defined by a large city highway, the area of a waste incineration plant, and the regional train line. At certain times of day, the nearby Zurich airport was approached via a flight path just over Mühlekon; to a certain extent, the kindergarten catchment area was cut by traffic axes in all three dimensions. Noise pollution was higher than elsewhere, and rents tended to be a bit lower than in other parts of the neighborhood and much lower than in other parts of the city. A small river flows through the area, now straightened and rarely more than a trickle. There used to be a big mill (*Mühle*) at its side. The suffix -kon is common in the region and refers to "the place" or "the house" of someone or something. Mühlekon therefore means the place where the mill is located. The mill, however, has been subsumed by the city of Zurich, and Mühlekon is now home to around ten thousand inhabitants. Within the Swiss context, Mühlekon has a bad reputation. Images of the neighborhood include a combination of noise, violence, social problems, concrete, migrants, and deprived families. It is sometimes referred to as a *multi-kulti* neighborhood and sometimes as one of the "ghettos of Switzerland." Both terms are frequently used to describe Mühlekon in public discourse and in the media but were also used by my interlocutors. Neighborhoods that attract a great deal of media and political attention are also receiving social scientific focus; urban ethnographers in particular have cast valuable perspectives on life in stigmatized neighborhoods, productively dynamizing the simple narratives of social decay (Bourgois 1996; Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005; Alkan and Maksudyan 2020; Low 2015; Kromidas 2016; Goffman 2014; Kalkan 2022). This chapter contributes to this literature by feeding reflections on social butterflies into larger contexts and enriching research on urban migrant lives with a focus on children. "Unfolding the Neighborhood" de-institutionalizes the view of

children's negotiations of belonging, as it focuses on everyday life in Mühlekon, the stigmatized outskirts of affluent Zurich. In comparison to the now classic neighborhood studies à la Elias, which helped the analysis of figurations in socio-spatial orders to develop a relational and very nuanced language, for neighborhoods like Mühlekon, these figurations must, as I will elaborate below, be extended by the dynamics of a multi-referential everyday life that in different ways exceeds the neighborhood. The various socio-spatial orders to which the residents refer on a daily basis have a decisive impact on the social constitution of the neighborhood itself and on the children's pathways of belonging. As Blokland aptly notes, "People not only make places as articulations of social relationships, but through place-making processes also create, renew and restructure such relationships" (2014, 164). Thus, when this chapter elaborates how the children of Wiesengrund Kindergarten and their families weave themselves into social life in Mühlekon and beyond, it becomes clear that the neighborhood is not thinkable without its connections to multiple socio-spatial orders that transcend Mühlekon (Levitt and Dehesa 2017; Low 2015).

From ground level, Mühlekon looks surprisingly unspectacular. There are campaigns to improve the neighborhood's self-image, greening and renaturation are underway, and the public transport network was also recently extended. The Social Democratic Party received by far the most votes (around 30%) in the most recent elections in Mühlekon, indicating that the long-standing socialist's municipal administration (clearly left-leaning and calling for a strong welfare system) is supported by the Mühlekon electorate. Against the background of the democratic deficit—a large proportion of the population in Mühlekon is not allowed to vote because they do not have a Swiss passport—this is also remarkable. Dissatisfaction, rage, and dramatization would look different. However, for decades now, voices from the political right have determined the political discourse on immigration, and with several so-called popular initiatives,[1] decisively shaped the atmosphere, and not in a benevolent way from the perspective of most people without Swiss citizenship and people that are denied belonging in different ways. The following description, although referring to Mühlekon as a typical Swiss metropolitan suburb, cannot and will not hide the fact that the consequences of this xenophobic discourse and its stigmatizing potential for the people who live there are real (Thomas 1928). But the story is more complicated.

This chapter will therefore not only describe the neighborhood within a Swiss context, but look *through* the neighborhood *beyond* the nation and will look *at* the neighborhood through different lenses. It examines how navigating social belonging in Mühlekon is both interfused with the fact of being located in the rather deprived outskirts of Zurich and simultaneously taking into account the opportunities and contested social locations the children and their families find themselves in while being part of transnational families and social relations.

The chapter is organized as follows: I will first describe Mühlekon both in terms of population dynamics and in relation to otherwise affluent Zurich. Why do families like the ones from Tereza or Harun move to, live in, and stay in Mühlekon? This will help to reflect on the description of the history and policy of immigration. In the third part, I will use three stories to elaborate more deeply on how Mühlekon as a neighborhood is a *multi-referential location*, eventually helping to dynamize the analysis of the social configuration of the neighborhood, and how children therein navigate belonging.

Locating Mühlekon within a Swiss Context

Mühlekon is a working-class neighborhood. It has always been so, since the former bogs around the small village with its mill were drained and houses were built for the many workers and their families arriving in the greater Zurich area during industrialization. The workers were initially recruited mainly from the poorer mountain valleys of the Swiss Alps, getting work in the many new factories and in construction. Being a geographically unfavorable for big factories, as the area was not connected to the main arteries so important for the industrial revolution (navigable rivers and railways). Mühlekon itself had and still has little industry. It is sometimes considered a bedroom district, with workers commuting to their places of work: to the airport, to the offices they clean downtown, to pizza or parcel delivery services, to factories, construction sites, gas stations, shops, restaurant kitchens, or supermarkets. Of all my interlocutors' parents who were in paid work, only the mother of Kim was hired at a local supermarket. All the others commuted up to one and a half hours each way. So, it is mainly the children who rarely leave the neighborhood during their everyday life in Mühlekon, because their obligatory daily occupation—visiting the kindergartens and schools—takes place there.

The neighborhoods' working-class composition has changed. Mühlekon's comparatively cheap flats have more and more been rented out to people who have immigrated to Switzerland. Today, four out of ten residents appear in the statistics as foreigners, and significantly more have at least a familial history of migration, with a higher percentage among the younger generations. This rate is even higher in the catchment area of Wiesengrund Kindergarten: Out of the twenty pupils of the first year of research, seven had a Swiss passport.

Looking at Mühlekon today, and especially in discourses around childhood, migration and schooling, it is possible to say that the "migrant-marker" led to the disappearance to some extent of the "working-class marker." We can thus clearly see what Eriksen describes for phenomena like this, arguing that "class tends to be drowned out thanks to a widespread eagerness to discuss cultural differences" (Eriksen 2006, 13). By deploying a conceptual lens of multi-referentiality, this study aims to destabilize this cultural/ethnic lens in two

ways: first, by bringing class back in, and second, by adding a transnational perspective that allows the notion of working class belonging to be blurred yet again and thus, ironically, by reintroducing migration, but tackled from different angles.

Mühlekon's Low Rents and Thin Walls

Childhood scholars from different disciplines have shown how children's lives unfold in the conditions of their possibilities. During the fieldwork in Mühlekon, several families struggled with cramped housing conditions, mold in the bedrooms, and poor insulation, but also with poverty in general. This reflects a social reality that is certainly true for many childhoods unfolding in the neighborhood: "Mom, can we get a new apartment one day too?" Arian must have asked his mother when the municipal housing cooperative built a new housing estate on their street, with huge balconies and a modern glass facade. "It broke my heart," his mother Valmira recounted. Arian's family lived right next to the city highway, on the top floor of a three-story six-family block. A bigger family lived in the front part of the block, which according to Valmira, would often be very loud. Broken glass littered the path to their doorway when I visited them, and the mailboxes were in worse condition than at the other houses I came to know in Mühlekon. Valmira therefore had reservations about sending her children outside to play. The mood among the tenants was rather tense, and the police visited from time to time, called for disturbances during the night and other reasons.

At the beginning of this study, Tereza lived in the same street as Arian. She was sharing her room with her mother, while the older two siblings shared a second room, leaving their father sleeping on the sofa of their three-room apartment. Those flats were made for poor families. The fabric of the building was often from the 1950s and 1960s without ever having been substantially renovated. Right next to Tereza, in the next entrance of the same block, Harun lived with his older sister and his mother. His grandmother also lived there, on the top floor in a two-room apartment. But Sezen, Harun's mother, was really taken with this house. As she recounted while having a cup of coffee at the local supermarket's take-away:

SEZEN: . . . And next door's my colleague rented the apartment, she is my colleague, we work in the same place. She also has children, and next to her is an Albanian, she also has two children. We have become like a family in the house, we don't close our doors at all. When we have something, we just go in, knock once, and in. It really has become such a good family in this house. If we have something, everybody, for the children, so our eyes are on all children, and we also have a good apartment where the garden is

> separated, so the children can play well and it is, it is a child-friendly apartment. But in Uster [the former city], I was really in the center, I could never leave my children alone, . . . so it was a very bad place there. I have always searched and now found here. That's why we came to Mühlekon. . . . So when we cook something, together we share, "ah, look, I have that and that's really very good", we don't close our door, so I don't and my neighbor doesn't either, that's (laughs) uh–

While Tereza and Harun lived in similar flats, their families had very different experiences of the housing situation. Contact with the neighbors was more difficult for Tereza's parents, Blerta and Gezim (explained in more detail in the appendix): violence and loud arguments permeated the walls, glances from neighbors were attempted to be avoided. In the Goffmanian sense, one can speak of these blocks as "bounded regions" that are acoustically, but not visually connected (Goffman 1959, 106). The absence of a "barrier to perception" (Goffman 1959, 106)—good isolation protection—unites the neighbors. Interestingly, the opposite is true of the new buildings in the neighborhood: the view axes are much wider due to the generous glass facades, but the apartments have much better noise insulation.

These "bounded regions" led equally to compulsory obligations of complicity and to communities of solidarity. Involvement in the lives of other families was common. Petra, a girl enrolled in Wiesengrund Kindergarten in my second year of research, lived one floor below Zaylie. Quarrels and aggression from Petra's family penetrated the thin walls, and neighbors were unsure how to react. Zaylie's mum, Rose, was often worried but had a strong feeling that she "didn't want to be a snitch." However, Rose cared about the girl and tried to make sure she would make it to class and would sometimes give her some of Zaylie's clothes if she felt Petra was dressed inappropriately for school.

If we therefore analyze the living situation of the children's families from the perspective of affluent Zurich, housing conditions were tight. Walls were thin and neighbors thereby somehow always present. This was bearable in some constellations, and families found a social network in their home communities that would stabilize their everyday lives in Mühlekon. It was possible for super-familial microstructures to form, as in Harun's house, in which (especially female) solidarity and socio-spatial proximity were lived, with stabilizing effects for the children's everyday lives. In other cases, the neighbors' and their own quarrels were common points of friction. National categories of difference and racial prejudice also gained weight over the perceived family problems in the cramped living conditions. The question of whether the children's everyday life in the neighborhood was viewed as being part of a supportive multicultural community or in an unprivileged and socially marginalized situation depended on much more than the residential address. Studies looking at how

children grow up along the attributions of the neighborhood (Kusserow 2004; Lareau 2011), then, do well to dynamize the lens of social problems with local—and, as we will see below—transnational support and social structures.

With a view to the future, as the children grew up and perhaps wanted to have their own rooms, the situation was thought to become more difficult regardless of how well the neighborhood configuration was currently described. But Zurich has a very tight housing market. It is difficult to get a new apartment. During a more formalized interview with Arian's mother, Valmira, she recounted the following:

VALMIRA: I also have to change my apartment (laughs) somehow—too much for me there now 10 years. I try it with one of those housing cooperations, but it's very hard to get anything. I ALWAYS get—even when they write: "You have to at least have one child": rejection, rejection, rejection.

U: But actually, you would fit well for housing cooperatives, or not, with two children and–

VALMIRA: Exactly, if they say: only with at least one child—that is, those with no children do not get, but I still get rejection. . . . I keep those rejections, and then I take everything and I (suggesting banging a huge pile of rejection letters on the table) (laughs) I go and say: "yes WHY? I've never had a debt recovery, I always pay my rent, I live on one wage, but still: rejection, rejection!"

Valmira was told by acquaintances that Mühlekon would be a bad place for teenagers, so it would better go somewhere else before Arian and his little sister got into bad company. Unlike in the case of Valmira, I have frequently seen families not daring to ask for better flats, or the current apartment was already an improvement on the last one and so they had the impression that they should not ask for more. Rose, for example, explained that they had been living in their flat for three years now, and Debby and Zaylie even had their own rooms. Apart from the situation in Petra's family, which was distressing, there was an old woman living downstairs in the block, and Rose liked to refer to her as a white dragon: "Wow, she really gets on my nerves. She always tells me what I would do wrong. She's a really mean, doesn't like my skin color," Rose commented once when the two of us left the house and got a skeptical look from that elderly Swiss woman. But Rose insisted that her two children always say "Grüezi," the usual formal dialect greeting. The fact that the "white dragon" sometimes made her life difficult could not be brought up with the property's management and she hoped that the disputes right underneath in Petra's flat would soon be resolved somehow. (The conflict was indeed interrupted toward the end of my research, when Petra's new stepfather was remanded in custody and sent back to Ukraine later, and Petra was taken away from her mother and placed partly

with her father and partly in a care arrangement). Not only in Harun's case, but also in Mathumai's, for example, the stories of how cramped and noisy the last apartment was affected the evaluation of the current living situation. When I was sitting at home with Mathumai in the living room of the four-room apartment for the family of six, her older sister told me that it really would have been difficult to open the windows in the old flat because it was always so loud and the dirt from the highway got right into every crack of the apartment.

In the last few years, new buildings have risen up on a grand scale in the neighborhood. These new housing estates, still a bit ostentatious when compared to the otherwise rather inconspicuous chains of older blocks, either belong to cooperatives where the families were not affiliated or are rented out privately and therefore not affordable to the families I got to know in Mühlekon. They led to the fact that the more affluent Zurich had also arrived Mühlekon, bringing hitherto barely visible differences in housing conditions right to the fore. Thus, children like Arian noticed that one could also live differently in Switzerland, and even in Mühlekon.

Governmental Policing and Protecting of Mühlekon's Inhabitants

Many of the families in Mühlekon had interactions with social institutions such as the child protection authority, the social welfare office, or school social worker. Some got unemployment benefits, and almost all received subsidies in one way or another: for the apartment, for the children's day-care, or the health insurance fee. These interactions could intensify at certain stages (during divorces, in police interventions based on a report of domestic violence, in clarifications regarding naturalization) and then again fade away. The families' assessments of the relationship with these authorities fluctuated between grumbling and gratitude. And even when none of these state agencies actively intervened at a specific point, previous experiences influenced family life. In her analysis of divergent ways of Cameroonian mothers seeking belonging in Germany's capital, Berlin, Feldman-Savelsberg (2016) aptly describes such forms of entanglements with various social institutions as living in the shadow of the state, a shadow that can sometimes appear as a protective umbrella but sometimes also as a threatening danger—and a state shadow that becomes larger when school-age children are present in a family.

State interventions thus at times also create problems for families in the first place.[2] But the parents of my young interlocutors seldom complained. Time and again, they had to go to various authorities, and sometimes they were annoyed because something was not working. No new flat, no financial support for the ballet lessons, no visa for the brother, no reallocation of the school placement for the younger sister, adding to other issues they were struggling with. Most of their struggles can be identified as working-class and poverty problems: the shift schedule making it difficult to coordinate childcare, the low income making it

impossible to buy a car, and the travel time to work therefore being longer; mold affecting health; the cramped living conditions making it difficult to provide a quiet place for the children to do homework, and middle-class pedagogical advice from schools criticizing this; the low income making a divorce hard to imagine and even harder to put into practice; little time to relax or to pursue a hobby. These everyday worries were made more dynamic by the families' uncertain residence status and the migration-related uncertainties in their dealings with Swiss authorities. There was an insecurity around what was possible to ask and request and, time and again, the parents could not understand the letters they were sent by different institutions, complicating the issues further. Deadlines were missed because people had not obtained a translation quickly enough. Applications were filled out incorrectly or returned to administrative contacts that were not responsible for processing. More paperwork, more uncertainty, less resolved coordination with bureaucracy, and hence even less time to sleep, relax and play with the children, were the consequence.

When I complained about systemic disadvantage, I was admonished for not paying enough attention to, e.g., the "Albanian culture" or the "personal mistakes of individual people," and not infrequently, parents praised the system, which according to them was, after all, much better than what they knew "from back home." Although these interpretations and gestures of modesty and gratitude were counteracted in the course of research by annoying encounters with state institutions, the bottom line remained positive. When Tereza's mother Blerta received help from the women's counseling service after the police intervention due to domestic violence, I received a voice message from her saying excitedly, "Ursina, they really listen to me! . . . They believe what I have been gone through." The following intervention eventually led to a complex and very ambivalent entanglement of Blerta and their children with different states agencies, in which the protective and threatening backdrop of the state's shadow merged into one combined force (Feldman-Savelsberg 2016). The initial euphoria generated by social protection also disappeared again, and Blerta soon felt harassed by the many bureaucratic hurdles, even though she stated that she really could never live anywhere else ever again.

Residence Permits and Naturalization

U: Where do you want to go then—or where would you go?

VALMIRA: That's a problem (laughs), because next year I want to try naturalization. Because I am now 10 years in Switzerland, I have permit C, um, and then I do not know, you cannot change canton, or the community, I think.

The examination of living in Mühlekon, the stigmatization of the neighborhood, and the links between housing and the welfare state make several things clear: the old buildings in the kindergarten catchment area were mainly inhabited by

people who or whose parents migrated to Switzerland and who are poor by Swiss standards, by people who cannot gain access to other segments of the housing market and other, more popular and expensive areas of the city.[3] In addition to the difficulty of getting alternative apartments, a further important point often influenced the living situation of the families I spent time with in Mühlekon: naturalization. Swiss naturalization law stipulates that new citizens must have lived in the same municipality for at least ten years to be entitled to the naturalization examination. Citizenship works according to the *ius sanguinis*, i.e., children born in Switzerland are not granted Swiss nationality but retain that of their parents. So, whether they liked the neighborhood or not, if a family was thinking of applying for citizenship, this ten-year barrier left them little room for geographical maneuver.

Furthermore, since applications for naturalization are judged negatively if one has already been guilty of something under criminal law, or if one has made use of unemployment compensation or social welfare money or has debts, this had far-reaching consequences for the families of the social butterflies: Tereza's mother, Blerta, would have liked her nursing training in Kosovo to have been recognized and to start working again in the profession she learned before she fled the war. But to do so, she would have needed money from the state and thus endangered her possible naturalization. She thus carried on cleaning airplanes, preferring the night shifts due to the better salary. Arian's family stayed in the small apartment right on the busy street so that the family's money would be enough for his mother Valmira to train as an infant educator. Abshiru's parents stayed in Mühlekon because it allowed them to be able to afford holidays, and they only had to wait two more years before they could initiate the naturalization process. After that, they planned to move away quickly, "to a better neighborhood, perhaps somewhere on Lake Zurich, outside the city." It resonates with Brubaker: "As for those with the wrong kind of citizenship, they and their descendants are bound to a subordinate position in a powerful and consequential global structure of unequal positions, constituted by nation states with vastly unequal public and private goods and opportunities" (2015, 21). The reference to the legal regulations and the family organization associated with them was remarkable, and—as the small insights show—more far-reaching than expected. Some parents remained married for residence reasons, others did not undertake any additional education due to the fear of financial dependency, and others were forced to remain as a nuclear family because the entry of further family members was denied. Harun's mother, Sezen, who divorced her husband while pregnant with Harun, wept as she explained that she worked 100 percent as a waitress just after giving birth to avoid being deported back to Turkey.

SEZEN: Oh no, well I am a strong woman, I have given several chances.

U: Mhm.

S: And we already had problems at the beginning, I wanted to divorce before my first child was born, but my family always said, "No, you are married, you are not allowed to divorce anymore and so on and so on." Six years, seven years passed and at some point I saw that I was mentally broken and my daughter . . .

U: It's so exhausting when you're not at ease in a relationship . . .

S: . . . and of course it wasn't just that, it has many things, that he always makes a disaster, and uh—at some point I said, my first child, my daughter experiences everything . . . and then I said—I was already pregnant, actually I didn't know that I was pregnant.

U: with Harun then?

S: Exactly. But I couldn't take him away because I said, his heart is beating, I can't die children, that is, I can't kill it. I say no, I'm having this child but I'm doing divorce, at least my son is not experiencing this bad time. My daughter has experienced a lot . . .

U: Hmh.

S: . . . she has a lot of problems . . . she gained too much weight, I had to take her to the nutritionist, because psychologically she always ate, I didn't do that with my son. Then afterwards I got a letter from the migration office, they wrote to me: In ten days you have to leave Switzerland . . . um . . . take both children with you, because I'm on welfare and my son was two months old. They didn't send an ID for my son and they didn't send an ID for me. It was such an exhausting time. I wanted to work already, but I . . . I had new baby and I looked for job everywhere. Nobody wants to take me and I have already worked in the nursery for one and a half years as an intern, after that I got adult education, because of my ex-husband I couldn't go.

U: Hmh.

S: He didn't let me work there and then I looked for work every day. Finally, I found 100 percent somewhere and my son was three months old. I was still breastfeeding, my breasts were full . . .

U: Uff.

S: . . . it was a very difficult time for me, in one month there was no breast milk anyway. Since then, I have been working 100 percent and I got my card after, uh . . . three months, yes, after probation period finished, they sent me B-card. When I was in the ten years—now I am twelve years—they sent me C-card. So later my son also. But in Switzerland I find regulations are so exhausting!

These small insights make it clear that the migrant working-class in Mühlekon is much more involved in state control mechanisms, and that the law has

a significant influence on the way transnational families are constituted, with consequences for the children's pathways of belonging (Lavanchy 2014; Olwig 2020). A closer look at the way Switzerland is dealing with migration is overdue.

Diversification of Migration Histories

The children of Wiesengrund Kindergarten see themselves in a continuity of the way the Swiss population deals with migration. Up to the third generation, fellow residents often remain without Swiss citizenship. The country "emphasizes internal ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity and tolerance and has produced one of the most restrictive immigration and naturalization regimes in Europe," writes migration scholar Dahinden (2015, 1; Wimmer 2011). In the 1930s, there was already poisonous discussion of so-called *Überfremdung* (overforeignization), i.e., the fear of losing a Swiss identity and culture through too much immigration, with xenophobic as well as anti-Semitic tendencies fueled further during WWII, and there was not much critical reflection thereafter (Kury 2003; Tanner 2015). When this book analyzes at various points what children need and what society needs from kindergarten, this must be seen in the context of the historically evolved migration regime.

When the so-called Italian guest workers, the first people addressed as a foreign group, came to Switzerland and arrived in Mühlekon, it was believed that they would stay for certain seasons and leave again, an assumption that turned out to be wrong, also because it made sense for Swiss companies to retain good workers rather than constantly recruit new temporary staff (Ricciardi and Cattacin 2018). Attitudes towards migrants from the south of Europe became increasingly hostile, and xenophobic harassment was part of the everyday life of migrant workers (Seiler 1965). Politically, this culminated in a 1970 initiative against the supposed *Überfremdung*. Had it been accepted (which it almost was), a good 400,000 mostly Italian citizens would have been expelled from the country. Even though almost no votes on restricting migration have been successful in the fifty years since the *Überfremdungs* initiative was defeated, the pressure of direct democracy nevertheless indirectly influenced federal policy. "What resonates in all these debates is the fear of an imminent crisis: A deep-seated fear that if cultural difference is tolerated, this will inevitably lead to the collapse of Swiss traditions and values and to the disintegration of the country's wealth" (Lems 2020, 120). While the country was able to position itself ever better economically—also due to migration—social cohesion was seen to be under threat. It is this double discourse of migration as opportunity and danger that still shapes the migration policy today, in neighborhoods such as Mühlekon as well.

Looking at the situation in Mühlekon, the reasons for migration for a good half of the people I dealt with were an immediate flight from their home

country, and just over half of the people came to Switzerland legally citing marriage migration and family reunification. In most cases, one person was already in the country, and the second—almost always the woman—came later: Zaylie's mother, Rose, for instance married a Swiss man she got to know in Ghana (they divorced when Rose was already a naturalized citizen); Sezen, Harun's mum, married a man living in Switzerland. Abshiru's father had been in Switzerland for a long time before his mother was able to come from Eritrea. Mathumai's father came to Switzerland from Sri Lanka via France, was granted asylum in Switzerland almost 20 years ago, and was only then able to reunite with his wife. During the war in Kosovo, Blerta was brought over the border from Austria to Switzerland by her future husband, Gezim. Peter's parents were living in Poland, but the father had a Swiss passport, so they came to Switzerland a year before Peter's birth. Arian's mother first married a Kosovo Albanian man she had met on the internet and was already living in Switzerland at the time. Both Adnan's and Dilek's mothers married a man with a Turkish passport who came to Switzerland in the 1990s. Natalja's and Dragan's parents fled Serbia as teenagers with their parents during the wars in Yugoslav. The current migration is limited to labor migration of (highly qualified) foreigners, mostly from the Schengen area, significantly fewer asylum seekers, and marriage migration and family reunification from all over the world. Bureaucracy continues to have a differentiated approach to rights of residency, and the type of alien's permit—B for temporary admission, F for refugee status, and C for permanent settlement—comes up in everyday narratives: "I have C now" (Sezen). Different rights are attached to these various types of residency statuses, and many of the children's parents reported the relief they experienced when they were granted C status, and with it the reassurance of being released from a status of temporary insecurity and state control.

Most of the people who currently migrate to Switzerland are very well educated and get good jobs, e.g., in the health sector, research, and finance, but also skilled workers for the construction industry. So, the kinds of migration, and also the kinds of the problematization, are quite diverse. While alarm bells are being rung in neighborhoods like Mühlekon, other neighborhoods are enjoying a rise in cosmopolitanism. Research on migrated children also reflects this different reference to the marker of migration depending on the social position of parents in the host country: the debates around so-called expat kids and the children such as those I accompanied in Mühlekon have interestingly little exchange. However, the diversification of migration is about more than just the distinction between high-earning skilled workers and low-earning unskilled workers, and it will become clear that easy attributions to a lower working class and a story of dependence and exploitation do not represent their various social positions sufficiently. This picture also does not reflect the ways my interlocutors pictured themselves. In the remaining pages, I will therefore use three

stories from the families of Zaylie, Harun, and Mathumai to shed a different light on everyday life in Mühlekon. It shows how supposedly poor residents quickly lose their social lower working-class position if Mühlekon is looked at, not from affluent Zurich, but from a different perspective.

Multi-Referential Mühlekon

My thinking about Mühlekon as something other than a stigmatized, poor, and diversified working-class neighborhood under a strict migration regime took shape when I spent more time with the children. It became most clearly apparent when I left the neighborhood and, eventually, the country with them. For instance, sitting on a veranda on the outskirts of Cape Coast, Mühlekon was addressed as rich Switzerland, and neighborhood-dividing lines between affluent Zurich and stigmatized Mühlekon disappeared. Mühlekon was the place where the flush toilet always worked, and the children went to kindergartens. In other cases, Mühlekon was the place from which one had the money to set up schools in Sri Lanka or finance the education of a cousin in Turkey. But this different view of the neighborhood is not restricted to the geographical. The view of Mühlekon also shifted with the references to respective social orders and as the influence of the Swiss migration regime and the hierarchies it calls fell away.

Zaylie's Family: New Freedom, New Sorrows

Rose Zimmermann was able to save about 3000 Swiss francs (around 3000 U.S.$) during the three years she was not in Ghana. This is not so much money in Swiss terms, but it was enough to afford the flights to Ghana and still have a good rest during the three weeks the family spent there. The house that Rose's siblings had bought on the outskirts of Cape Coast was still under construction at the time of her visit, and work continued on it—especially with her financial help. Once in Ghana, the ideas for what the money could be used for did not run out: the veranda could be extended, an air conditioning unit could be put in Rose's room, and a woman could be hired to take care of washing and cooking. A seamstress as well as a hair-and-make-up artist were furthermore ordered by Rose for house visits. Rose clearly wanted to make up for what she had been missing for a long time. "Here in Ghana, I'm free!" she commented once. "This here is *life*," she explained. All those troubling issues, the debt collections and bills and planning, could wait until she was back in Switzerland. "This here, this is freedom. Here, I'm the princess!"

The freedom to which Rose referred was not only connected to her life as a single mum in Zurich and the familial help she experienced in Ghana, being able to have such possibilities as an evening out without having to watch the children. Only in Ghana would she come to understand how stressed she was in fulfilling the perceived obligations of being a single mum in Mühlekon: Swiss insistency

on punctuality, having the snack packed for the kindergarten lunch, "always bills bills bills." She referred to her constant fear that the state would take her children away, so in Mühlekon she would always hold them close while walking through the streets, not wanting to let them play alone outside (see interlude 3). Police might think they were neglected! Once in Ghana, the question of poverty in relation to other people living in Switzerland, difficult neighbors like the "white dragon," the mold in the apartment, or the search for a job receded into the background. The focus was on a more general difference between looseness and tension in everyday life: Mühlekon became a symbol of overregulation, stress, and control in administrative terms. But at the same time Mühlekon also became a place where careers (though not defined more precisely) were made, a place where Rose was able to accumulate money to act as a generous donor to her siblings. Mühlekon was therefore also seen as a place where she could get by at least to the extent that not only Rose, but also her family in Ghana, could benefit from a socially upward trend. It was the place that made her feel like a princess while visiting Ghana.

Their suitcases were filled with all kinds of souvenirs from Switzerland, including many products from *Migros Budget*, the Swiss supermarket's cheap own brand. While those products have little status in the Swiss context, and Rose would certainly not bring them along as a gift in Mühlekon, they could shine in Cape Coast: products made in Switzerland, proof of quality. Thus, as is the case with regard to Mühlekon, those product's stigmatization was lost over the Mediterranean and the Sahara.

However, in Cape Coast, too, Rose's means were limited, and while she could finally afford a cosmetic treatment and the latest haircut, the family and friends living three hours away in Kumasi (surely waiting for her support as well) were put off until a possible visit next year. Rose spent hours on the phone, and not infrequently, she also explained that she did not have time now due to this foreign ethnographer accompanying her, winking at me complicitly. It becomes clear that Rose could control certain representations and channel information that transgresses the socio-spatial orders. Some of Mühlekon's attributions migrated with Rose, others were left behind in Switzerland, and several of them, like *Migros Budget* energy drinks, were filled with new meaning. Simultaneously, there were also decisions, social obligations, and difficulties that Rose and her children left in Ghana when they got back on the plane. It was, so to speak, the new haircut that boarded the plane to Mühlekon, not the outhouse, and also not the son of the cleaner who did not get the money he begged for.

Back in Mühlekon, I soon met the Zimmermann family again. Zaylie was still very happy with her new shiny green braids and was also getting a lot of praise for them in the kindergarten. Rose was also in a good place. She told me that she was happy to be back and not to be asked for money, and to be able to do her thing again. Being a successful migrant visiting from Switzerland was

obviously connected to all sorts of demands that required emotional responses from her. Back in Mühlekon—it seemed to me—not much was missing, and she would have repeated the sentence: "Here I'm free," but with regard to her duties in Cape Coast, replacing Ghana with Switzerland. The simultaneous incorporation in social and local respects is thus not understood as incorporation to antagonistic others, but as mutually generating and constituting reference points. Mühlekon can be looked at as both her biggest success and the toughest time ever.

The unfolding of the neighborhood gets dynamized even more if we take social media into account. An online-offline nexus (Blommaert and Dong 2019) energizes the configuration of the multi-referentiality of social orders. Hardly touched so far, the online world is now brought into focus. But I will turn to this question in the second story, of the Shanmugalingam family, looking at what happens if you influence the online world from a Mühlekonian living room.

Mathumai's Family, Media Stars

When I visited Mathumai for the first time at home, she was just coming back from a Navaratri festival in the Hindu temple of Shaivite tradition in the Zurich agglomeration. The father told me that the proximity to this place of worship was important in the choice of residence. They were happy with this flat, especially since they had memories of living in cramped conditions in the past.

Mathumai lived with her mother, father, two older siblings, and a baby brother in a small four-room flat in a housing estate between the regional train tracks and the city motorway. They were all sitting with me in the living room, the whole family festively dressed. Hashika, Mathumai's older sister, excitedly told me about the events of the morning, and the father pulled out his mobile phone and showed short videos which he had just shared on Facebook on his way home. A "likes number" in the three-digit range within less than an hour made me realize with astonishment that he was well connected. "You have many friends!" I stated, which provoked Hashika to encourage her father to show me "the video." Within a few clicks on his phone, I came to see a YouTube video of the family's father in his younger years as a singer and actor on a huge stage in Amsterdam. The children seemed to know this video inside out, flanking their father, who had the mobile phone in his hand but turned toward me. They were visibly proud, even knew certain dance steps of the choreography by heart, and cheerfully serenaded him. We all had to laugh when Mathumai eventually joined her siblings and made some funny gestures, too.

The family was well connected, in Switzerland, but also transnationally. The older two siblings each had their own online account on YouTube, and the father had long since reached 5,000 friends on Facebook. The images from everyday life, which were carried into the world through several social channels, did not

show the small flat in Mühlekon into which little light fell. The images shined, in all imaginable colors.

Both the temple and a Tamil afternoon school, which took place every Monday, were easily accessible by public transport. The flat did not cost much, so a certain amount of the family's income could be donated to a Sri Lankan charity every month. The mother laughed at me when I told her how much I paid for my two-room apartment closer to the city center. Why spend so much on something as senseless as an apartment? The Lingam family was involved in a local NGO in the north of Sri Lanka which was founded after the destruction from the tsunami in 2004. Now the organization would mainly build schools, as Ms. Lingam explained. With a few clicks again, we were on the organization's homepage, and I could identify Mr. Lingam in front of a new school—he was in Colombo only the other month. This transnational embeddedness of the family and the way recognition and status was received resonates with Blommaert and Dong's findings on the question of what happens when your field goes online, pointing to "immediate translocal involvement" (2019, 8). Starting from the living room in Mühlekon or while commuting between temple and flat, Mr. Lingam coordinated his social environment, feeding it with new events from the faithful community. Mr. Lingam studied communication in Madurai (Tamil Nadu, India), and he could apply his acquired knowledge well, but not so much in his current bread and butter job, working in a kitchen. The recognition followed online. This online-offline nexus is central for understanding the everyday life of the neighborhood and the living conditions of the families. In this case, for instance, the affluence of downtown Zurich was a secondary consideration to common ideas about a more peaceful Sri Lanka. It seemed that the individual members of Mathumai's family had acquired great performance skills online, but also by performing in front of audiences in their communities. They brought the world into their living room but also carried a certain part of their Mühlekonian everyday life in all directions, with smartphones being much more than fancy toys that should be kept away from children.

Harun's Family: "I Used to Be the Boss"

Harun's mother, Sezen Sönmez, was divorced, and in living together with her neighbors she had found a family-like cohesion which she was proud of and which she did not take for granted. Her own mother, who came to Switzerland well before Sezen, also found a man for her daughter with a residence permit in Switzerland. Sezen previously had completed a commercial apprenticeship in Ankara and was employed as a consultant to supermarket chains around the Turkish capital city before coming to Switzerland. Her eyes shone when she talked about her work in Turkey, her posture more upright. "You know, I used to be the boss! With my make-up on, nice dresses, I went to the customers and I showed them how it should be done." Migration to Switzerland, first to

Uster, then to Mühlekon, meant social descent, and for a long time also social isolation, violence, and less independence. Sezen's story repeatedly tipped into the emotional; we sat in front of our cakes and coffee for so long that the children she brought along got both bored and uncomfortable. The narrative was fragile; Sezen could not hide her pride in what she had achieved in recent years, and it was obvious that she had received too little recognition for it. But she knew that her current boss was very pleased with her, and she had managed to place her colleague from work in the same house in Mühlekon, so that they could now look after each other's children, and her own mother now lived there as well. Sezen had organized this, too. Everyday life as an unmarried businesswoman in Ankara seemed to have regained some resonance. Sezen had been able to break away from an unhappy and violent relationship and establish an immediate micro-cosmos in the house. That gave her positive energy and she could, as she told me, joke with her boss and dared to make fun of him, or to make extra requests regarding shift work. In school and in day-care, Harun repeatedly attracted unwelcome attention in the first year because he was seen as insolent and disobedient. However, in the encounters with those educational institutions, Sezen always appeared as a resolute woman who had everything under control. In the end, she was "proved right"; the boy was headstrong but he eventually gained respect from both his peers and teachers. Sezen had learned to assert herself but also to cope with setbacks. Over the years, she has lost her confidence in the state and in justice but not her entrepreneurial self. Her social contacts were limited to her family, the block, and her work. All were important to her, so she had to put up with one and a half hours of commuting each way between Mühlekon and the take-away at the petrol station where she worked.

THESE THREE STORIES ARE, of course, quite different. But they all show, even in their inevitably abbreviated versions, how everyday life in Mühlekon refers to various social orders of different scale and scope. The question of which distinctions are relevant for individual persons and under which conditions they negotiate belonging can only be answered empirically. Repeatedly, Mühlekon was clearly more, or something completely other, than a poor, stigmatized neighborhood.

The various shifts in perspective in the description of everyday life in the neighborhood have also shown that Mühlekon's diversification works differently throughout the neighborhood. Sometimes local orders get a clear charge with a certain person- or group-oriented differentiation, such as when a given church is visited by African Baptist preachers, or when a Galatasaray İstanbul match is shown in the back room of the Turkish bakery. Sometimes it turns out that all the people living in the same building speak Portuguese or that shortly before an important Hindu festival starts in the temple, public transport is suddenly

full of Tamils. Private space has a further specific relationship to these public places and temporary configurations of the social fabric of the neighborhood.

At Ease with Diversification?

Accompanying the children and their parents, it sometimes seemed to me that Mühlekon could also be seen as a place of retreat. The point is a bit tricky, as there is a danger of being misunderstood for romanticizing poverty in the Swiss context but also for naively glorifying a diversity discourse. Anthropology has rightly been criticized for putting the lives of situationally poor people into perspective and identifying them as more beautiful or genuine. The point here is a different one, namely, to be able to perceive one's own social positioning as contingent and to be able to "take a break" in the diversification of social backgrounds.

The idea that cities are organized in a functionally differentiated manner is not new (Lofland 1973). For example, qualifications such as aesthetics or volume can function in a decisively different way whether you enter a banking district, the grounds of a monastery, or a playground, and the functionality of the space can affect the people who enter it. With regard to Mühlekon, it can be seen that ethnic and racial markers of differentiation became partly relevant but that everyday life often took place "beyond the ethnic lens"—precisely because of the ordinariness of migrant references (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006; Römhild 2017). Going beyond the ethnic lens is to be understood in a double sense. On the one hand, a multi-referential unfolding of the neighborhood has shown that migration-related distinctions were often not the relevant variables for the negotiation of social orders. On the other hand, Mühlekon's social configuration also offers a diversification that does not create clumsy groups or simple majorities. The fact that one lives in Mühlekon and "actually comes from somewhere else" is often seen as so normal that it is no longer a decisive criterion.

That the neighborhood's social configuration can also offer a certain space of retreat, for instance, became clear to me when Rose visited me once at work downtown. The Zurich University of Teacher Education, where I was working at the time, is centrally located. Major Swiss banks, but also the Swiss Google headquarters in the modern buildings right next door all contribute to the fact that people move through the canyons of houses with confidence, chic, and determination. Zaylie came running toward me as I was picking them up at the station. But as soon as we were sitting at the tables in the cafeteria of the University and she had her iced tea in front of her, she slurped, intimidated, and left half of it. Rose and Zaylie became quieter. I could not make their feeling of not belonging to that place disappear, and Rose soon said that she had something else to do. They left quickly and went back to Mühlekon.

In my reading, intimidation was also the central emotion of Blerta when we met once downtown. Actually, we agreed to go swimming in the public river swimming pool in the inner city, but on several occasions, Blerta had a reason why it would not work on that particular day. The borders are quite invisible. It is not that life and everyday life by the river downtown was not diversified. Quite the opposite. Right next to a youth center, there are public bathing places, Latino music is often played on small boomboxes which have been brought along, and young people enjoy themselves on the wooden footbridges at the riverside, dance in their bikinis, drink canned beer and watch the people swimming, or the daring ones jump from bridges high above into the river. But it is the successful Zurich that meets in these places during the summer months. Success is not necessarily tied to money, and not only to whiteness. It is also the beautiful youth, the good skaters, those who like to show off their bodies or who are at least not intimidated by being seen. Instead of going downtown, there is an outdoor pool in Mühlekon, too. I often went there with Blerta, twice with Rose as well, and several times with the different day-care groups in the hot summers of 2017, 2018, and 2019. It seemed to me that Blerta would rather pay 6 CHF (francs) in Mühlekon for the swimming pool and escape the feeling of not belonging in the "vibrant hipster" Zurich than use the free swimming opportunities downtown. The meadows in Mühlekon are always full, too, and you meet many neighbors, even those whom Blerta did not want to see because they would certainly badmouth her. But as Rose once told me, here she "could simply be."

Rose once talked about this feeling, which is of course also a fragile one, when I sat on the sofa with Zaylie and watched YouTube videos while Rose served a client who was having her hair redone. The woman had travelled all the way from the canton of Schwyz, a good ninety minutes by train and bus. The customer soon came to notice that here in Mühlekon, there were many Black people around. "Back home in Schwyz, uff," she would still stick out like a sore thumb. She was the only African woman in the whole canton when she migrated there in the 1970s, she said, and people had stared at her, sworn at her, and mocked her. Here in Mühlekon, this did not happen. "Here you are not alone."—"That is true, I meet all the other African *sistas* at the *Sozialamt*" (welfare office), Rose returned with a resounding laugh.[4]

Concluding Remarks

Following the children through their neighborhood, I used a conceptual lens of multi-referentiality to understand everyday life in Mühlekon. Different sociospatial orders appeared before the ethnographic lens. On the one hand, they brought the question of class back to the table. Examining the children's housing conditions in comparison to standard Swiss housing revealed the poverty and precariousness in which many of the families lived. Common working-class

problems, however, were dynamized by the entanglement with a Swiss migration regime. The fear of state interventions such as deportation or state custody of children and the consequences of anticipated or imminent evaluations by state actors put families under pressure.

Even though none of the children I followed closely through their everyday life in Mühlekon and beyond were born or raised abroad, living in Mühlekon but "*actually* coming from somewhere else" dominated their discussion of the neighborhood and their own positioning in it. The inclusion of different social orders (some of which refer to quite different everyday lives and different social positioning *elsewhere*) made Mühlekon not only a poor stigmatized neighborhood, but also a much more multilayered context. Status arenas of recognition ran not only along the hierarchies that the Swiss migration regime conditions and establishes. People may stay in Mühlekon until they become naturalized and plan to move to the countryside and resume their former professions at a later date, seeing the current time as an intermediate phase; or they might feel at ease with the diversification of Mühlekon's social configuration. The analysis of social location becomes infused with questions of situated hierarchies of different socio-spatial orders, with consequences for the children's navigation of social belonging.

Conclusion

The aim of *Children as Social Butterflies* was to better understand the belonging of children living in a diversified Swiss neighborhood. By exploring ethnographic pathways with the children from the kindergarten through their out-of-school lives, it was possible to get different social orders into the ethnographic view and study their entanglements. I reflected on the question of how shifting social orders affect configurations of social belonging and how children manage sameness and difference with reference to them. I have spelled this out in different chapters, each with a specific focus. This paved the way to think about multi-referentiality in a multi-referential way, developing an analytical figure that brings together method and epistemology, helping to grasp children's social belonging across time and space. Exploring ethnographic pathways through the Mühlekon neighborhood and beyond put the everyday life in the kindergarten which is both the study's starting point and central reference point into perspective. This was not without consequences in terms of both the intellectual problems that were explored in the work and the possibilities for reflection on the children's pathways of social belonging. In this conclusion, three points are discussed in greater depth in the hope that the empirical material and different analysis in the chapters and the interludes have also inspired the reader to open new and individual lines of investigation.

The following will be a reflection for a multi-referential understanding of social belonging in three different ways. First, by summarizing what could be said about the children's everyday life through this lens. What contribution can such an ethnography make to understanding children's pathways of belonging? Second, by discussing what the analytical language proposed here has to offer in terms of understanding complex configurations of social belonging, and where further work would be of benefit. And in a final point, by leaving the academic sphere, some elaborations on the lessons learned for the Swiss school system and

the understanding of social cohesion and living together in general are due. With that, this concluding chapter ends on a thoroughly optimistic note.

Children's Social Belonging across Socio-spatial Orders

This work dealt with the children of a kindergarten class and the conditions for social differentiation they found in the established orders of the kindergarten and beyond. Through this work, an infinite number of possible (and almost impossible) ways of social differentiation became apparent which were related to different logics and reference points of sameness and difference. Children were situationally differentiated and differentiated themselves from adults, and girls (or girls who nevertheless would not be excluded from the boys) and boys differentiated themselves; they were identified as musically gifted, jittery, or born in spring. They were attributed and attributed themselves to those who liked to play in the construction corner, went to the CB II day-care center, spoke Kurdish, or none of these, and much more. Many of the (configurations of) attributions and suggestions for differentiation remained inconsequential. By no means were all acts of differentiation therefore also a "way of expressing relatedness" (Feldman-Savelsberg 2016, 8) or unrelatedness. But sometimes, they could be charged with a meaning that stood out, positioned, moralized, excluded, and unified in relation to other differentiations. Belonging can become a *social* belonging; i.e., that differentiation can also be used to hierarchize, group, relate, or expect a certain kind of behavior or practice (Gammeltoft 2018). These categories of social belonging could be affirmatively brought in by the children themselves; they could be ascribed, reclaimed, felt, and rejected (Hirschauer 2017). And they could be charged with different meanings over time or as children navigated through different socio-spatial orders.

In the field of kindergarten, it could be worked out how the two categories of caterpillars and butterflies—categories of differentiation *only* implemented in kindergarten and introduced with significant effort by the teachers—affect how the children negotiate sameness and difference and how the teachers seek to render sameness and difference pedagogical. By investigating these categories, it was possible to analyze, in a partially isolated context, how one distinction of social belonging could be established and be manifoldly operative and how this also temporarily suspended, or at least strongly suppressed, the working of other categories of social belonging. Being a butterfly or a caterpillar was much more relevant and much more impactful in the early weeks of the school years than, for example, migration-related categories of differentiation. Furthermore, it was possible to examine how they could be charged with different meanings and adapted for different purposes, which also made it possible to analyze what children do with the contingency of divergent modes of belonging and how they use this knowledge to navigate divergent social orders (Vigh 2009; Lindemann

2021). Over the long period of participant observation in kindergarten and the ritual metamorphosis of caterpillar children into butterfly children after the first year of kindergarten at the same time as a new cohort is stepping into their caterpillar shoes, I could look at multi-referential configurations of social belonging in class in terms of both their emergence and consolidation, their disappearance and renegotiation (Katz 2001). In navigating their pathways of belonging, children repeatedly took meaning loadings both from one social order to another and from one category to another. Learning what it means to be a butterfly clearly helped the children both in other orders to which they belonged at the same time as kindergarten and when they later entered school. Even if there were not any butterflies there, the configuration of expectations was transferable even without referencing this category.

The ethnographic work in kindergarten brought to light how teachers rendered differentiations pedagogical and how this could only be done through reference to the children's out-of-school lives and other (anticipated) social orders. The narrative that Wiesengrund Kindergarten cared for children from a stigmatized migrant neighborhood guided the teachers as much as the respective ephemeral insights into the children's family lives. Even though multi-referential perspectives of the neighborhood and the everyday life of the families also showed that simple attributions to a supposedly educationally deprived poor working class did not hold empirically, both were essential reference points for everyday practice in class. The two identified simultaneous classroom processes of demarcation and involvement with the families supposedly neutralized certain categories of belonging, while diversity was embraced under certain conditions of pedagogical utility (Bundgaard and Gulløv 2006). The work done by the teachers, described as care work, aimed at tackling identified needs of individual children as well as the supposed identified needs of the future Swiss society, with the teachers having the ambitious task of taking care of both (Thelen 2015). These needs play out in different temporal referencing, which will be discussed again later.

It was crucial for the findings of this book to follow the respective attributions and the children's negotiation of sameness and difference across different social orders, to acknowledge "the contingency and variability . . . of the relationship between the lived body and its environment" (Lindemann 2021, 18). This was particularly revealing with regard to day-care. It was possible to show how new conditions to navigate social belonging were available to the children through the figure of the *authentically normal*, which was marked as a counterpart to the school's efforts at order. The entanglement of divergent social orders could be further elaborated along the children's pathways of belonging. It was possible to observe that referencing entrainments identified as coming from *elsewhere* mutually coproduced the given social orders in the first place and thus left the children with room to maneuver. Comparing different social orders

brought to light that the kindergarten had, in a sense, devoted significantly more energy to establishing its own order and demarcating its borders. Teachers in class had basically the repertoire to render every action and every presence in class pedagogical. In so doing, the social order of kindergarten had more mechanisms, but also curriculums and guidelines, to hand by which to judge children's social belonging in terms of pedagogical utility, whereby the pedagogical approval was also transferred to a moral judgment. I will come back to this later. For now, it is important to note that reference to the pedagogical good of kindergarten was also constitutive for the social order in day-care, where it was more a case of creating a place in which children were *not* to be assigned according to their supposed pedagogical appropriateness.

While incongruence between different social orders and thereby the conditions of the possibility of social belonging were frequently addressed by the respective adults, children seemed to incorporate the contingency of the meanings of social belonging more easily. After some initial puzzlement, children could deal with the clear demarcation of the kindergarten from the rest of their lives in interesting ways. As can be seen from various descriptions throughout the chapters, children learned which references to the extracurricular were desired, recognized, and valued within the social order of the kindergarten and dealt with the pedagogical repertoire (even if, of course, they were also at times unsuccessful at it) when they entered the kindergarten. At the same time, however, other references did not simply stop at the kindergarten fence, but were partly transformed or were introduced in peer negotiations which did not at all adhere to the pedagogical order. Carrots could be wonderfully stuck up one's nose, and the cartoon characters of the Disney Channel remained present on the T-shirts and backpacks as well as in the conversations and games among the children. New hairstyles and widening experiences and knowledge of a different position elsewhere could be brought to the kindergarten after family vacations in Ghana, and with them further strategies for both navigating ambiguous social terrain and for better understanding of how divergent social orders work, and work together. National belonging (at times proven by children through the ability to count to ten in a given language) could be used for bonding even though the teachers tried to maintain a neutral educational zone in terms of distinctions based on political (non-)belonging (Kromidas 2016). Elena and Adana, strongly connected in kindergarten by a shared understanding of good behavior for a butterfly girl, could lose their friendship as soon as they left kindergarten for day-care, where they no longer shared the same bonding categories. Big butterfly boys could be released into the position of a still young child in day-care. The diversity of social orders and the possibility of working on the conditions of the configuration of social belonging, partly in a quite self-determined manner, enabled the children to learn about contingency early on. Understanding that things can and could be ordered in different ways

made it possible for them to learn emotional compatibility when navigating through divergent social orders. In terms of children's potential to negotiate social belonging, incongruence offers opportunities. Incongruence is thus not the problem.

This will be critically examined again below in terms of social hierarchies. But first, a few thoughts on the insights that multi-referentiality has made possible.

Everyday Multi-Referentiality

"The theoretical and the empirical must always have each other in mind and be finally riveted, even though at times they need their separate work," Willis advises (2018, 581). In this book I engaged with the exploration of the concept of multi-referentiality while studying children's social belonging. These assumptions did not guide empirical action from the outset, and the contingency of social orders and the question of their mutual constitutiveness gained attention only after an extended period in the field and through many different experiences along the ethnographic pathways and analysis of fieldnotes. When Lindemann identifies the "contingent multi-sociation" as one type of "ordered approaches to the world" (2021, 24), a heuristic of multi-referentiality makes it possible to describe precisely those divergent approaches to the world that she theorizes. Multi-referentiality made it possible to describe the social order of the kindergarten *in relation to* its environments. But it also allowed it to be conceptualized as one order among many in which children navigated social belonging.

The greater focus on the mutual conditionality of social orders and the related possibilities of configuring children's social belonging made it possible to challenge easy assumptions about the ethnographic field. It enabled thinking more dynamically about the interplay of social differentiation and inequality (Brubaker 2015) and made it possible to focus on mechanisms of hierarchization, privilege, or exclusion within the negotiations of social belonging. As analysis of the data from the everyday life of this kindergarten class with this heuristic has shown, social belonging is not simply arbitrary, and in divergent social orders, specific energies have been invested in prioritizing certain configurations over others. Referencing multiple elsewheres can be considered in terms of space as well as time and deployed synchronously as well as diachronically. This is a prerequisite for the everyday life of the kindergarten class. The references to *elsewhere* or *an uncertain later* or to another status arena of recognition are relevant to the negotiation of belonging (e.g., it does not matter that I do not have a good job here, but the children will get a good education and I can help the family in Kosovo; or here in Ghana I am free and can make up for what I missed over the last three years or was not able to do for financial reasons; or if I always have to be a role model in kindergarten as social butterfly, I can be even more of a

toddler in the day-care, while simultaneously learning from the older children in day-care how to be an even stronger butterfly child in kindergarten). These divergent social orders cannot be dissolved into one another; their mutual conditionality and separateness are an essential part of children's everyday navigation. This heuristic brings to the fore how inconsistent belonging and changing social orders are related.

The question of multi-referentiality in the entanglement of social order and belonging was approached here through a particular place, the kindergarten, and through a particular group of people, the children in this kindergarten class. This is a rather specific anthropological view of society and a particular lens to understand social belonging. On the one hand, it can be seen as much more playful—in that children sometimes very refreshingly subvert adults' social differentiations, finding their own new conditions of social belonging (Toren 1993; Hirschfeld 2002). The view of social novices also destabilizes taken-for-granted category attributions by the researcher. On the other hand, the view of a kindergarten class, with its significantly more dynamic perspective than other parts of society, could allow social research to discuss the negotiation of social order and its interaction, as this was repeatedly an explicit and constitutive part of daily life for the respective interlocutors (Gilliam and Gulløv 2019). The multiple references that are constitutive of the social order in kindergarten, such as the ephemeral glimpses of families, the reference to the need to care for a Swiss social imaginary, or the repertoire of everyday kindergarten life which has developed over the years, condition the possibilities of children's social belonging in class as much as the children's references to other social orders. It was this symmetrization of multiple references and symmetrization of different ordering powers that provided a better understanding of the children's pathways of belonging. It has allowed a certain view of the epistemic object developed throughout the chapters, but it must also know its limitations. The focus on the interrelatedness of social orders in the *children's* everyday life, of course, hides other references to a greater extent, and such a child-centered approach, with its focus on human actors, undoubtedly enforces a humanocentric focus at the expense of other approaches to the world. Furthermore, taking children's references seriously also entails a certain *de-politicization* of existing and generally assumed social hierarchizations, even more than a heuristics of multi-referentiality would otherwise entail, because in many negotiations about equality and difference, children do not consider their hierarchy using the same criterions as the school standard would suggest (one illustrative example: McDonalds was almost always considered better than visiting an expensive restaurant, and all the children I met in Mühlekon preferred the television to books—so certain hierarchizations only make sense from an adult perspective). It might only be years later that situational choices, and situational desires of belonging, translate into disadvantages, discrimination, and fewer opportunities

for advancement. But the de-politicization of multi-referentiality also relates to another level. As elaborated on specifically in the interludes, multiple points of reference can reduce objections and scandalization in the here and now. If it is possible to compensate in Ghana for what is not affordable in Switzerland, or if recognition is not sought through a particular affiliation anyway, it is also not such a big deal not to be recognized. So if one asks why those poor people (by Swiss standards) who live in stigmatized neighborhoods like Mühlekon do not rebel more, do not fight social inequality more, one answer is obvious with a multi-referential view: people have different (often transnational) narrative frames; they refer to other orders, than (only) being looked down at by affluent Zurich, than (only) being affected by racism. The people I came to know in Mühlekon did not feel as discriminated against as the Swiss middle-class view would suggest and, with reference to somewhere else or some other time, might think differently about their social positions. Simply put, *multi-referentiality relativizes* specifically with regard to changing orders. This prevents a clear prediction of how the children's pathways of belonging will eventually crystallize into more stable configurations of social belonging and, rather, "leaves the way open for indeterminacy and the necessarily fragmentary character of all projects of self-formation, be they individual or collective" (Bénéï 2008, 3). So, as far as the potential and future practices of social differentiation within shifting (social) orders are concerned, the analytical lens suggested here might become what Spyrou calls an anthropologically informed childhood study that is "more generative in its explorations, to overcome its theoretical stagnation, and to attend to the political potential of children as future-makers at a time when a deeper understanding of the possibilities for social change is absolutely necessary" (2020, 6).

Contingent Openings

In a recently published article with a combative plea for the notion of society, Dubet noticed that—especially with the Covid-19 crisis in mind—we would see that "school was not . . . a machine for producing and reproducing inequalities" (2021, 5), and a little later he returns to the accusations against schools and asks, "If the school, for example, is only a machine for whitewashing and justifying social inequalities, why defend it against liberal reforms that would at least have the merit of revealing their true nature and not advancing in disguise?" (2021, 10). It is worth taking the consequences of this idea seriously. Creating a social order that negotiates a specific future society and, to a certain extent, self-consciously puts it up for discussion, offers the possibility of participation and critique, but it also offers the possibility of succeeding within this established order, irrespective of any social positioning in other orders. The consequence of this realization is not a trivial matter. It presupposes that the school positions

itself as a *possible kind* of social order and presents it sufficiently clearly for children like Zaylie, Tereza, and Harun to learn how to navigate it. It also requires the courage to do what the children in Mühlekon have long been able to do: endure contingency—and to endure as well as to negotiate the fact that there is a conflict of goals in the school system, which, among other things, is related to divergent references (the needs of children in the here and now, the assessment of the needs of a future generation, and the fact that these partly contradict each other). This also requires a willingness to continue to discuss how society can be thought of and a willingness to keep self-critically renewing the terms of societal membership and to keep them transparent so that they can be used as a guide (and also to target certain criterions). In this way, the school can offer children and parents an idea of which configurations of social belonging *might be advantageous* in perspective, that is, with a view to future educational pathways. But it must also be modest enough to see itself as no more than an order that provides opportunities for understanding while not taking a moral stance. Teachers should not be the moralizers who assign children a place in society but should allow the space to take advantage of educational opportunities. Thus, when Gilliam, for instance, concludes that a "key experience" of (older) minority children is "that they have been given up on by teachers and that their attempts to make an effort have not been seen or recognized" (2018, 147, own translation), it becomes clear that teachers would benefit from more modesty in judgment. Rather, to come back to Rorty, teachers should be advised to worry about education instead of "which students will make the best use of the education they are offering" (1986, 528).

Such a way of understanding schooling could unburden the school field and its teachers (after all, they are often blamed for all social injustices), and it would perhaps open up the discourse and allow us to talk more fundamentally about the relationship between differentiation and social inequality when it comes to children navigating social belonging across space.

APPENDIX

ETHNOGRAPHIC PATHWAYS

Ethnographic research is unpredictable, and empirical knowledge production works slowly. Intellectual agendas permeate people's social realities, and in the present case, accompanying the children through their daily lives helped move the epistemological interest along. This appendix will use the example of starting on an *ethnographic pathway* with Tereza to discuss how field, theory, and methodology coconstitute the epistemic object of this study. It is about qualifying the consequences, possibilities, and limitations of the research strategy with regard to the epistemic object. Focusing on an individual ethnographic pathway allows elaboration on the conditionality of ethnographic research, on precarity and fragmentation in gaining data, but also, by and large, on the (re-)construction and (re-)figuration of the ethnographic field. It also explains how some children from the kindergarten class happened to become main informants (while others did not) and how this influenced the whole ethnographic endeavor. The careful description of how an ethnographic pathway opens up in this way will help to make plausible and explain what ethnographic research can do and where its limits lie.

Tereza is one of the children that appeared a lot throughout the chapters of this book. Our encounters mainly took place in the neighborhood I came to call Mühlekon, and there mostly in Wiesengrund Kindergarten. But I also accompanied her to other sites, located both in Switzerland and in Kosovo. My interest in scrutinizing what is happening to the configuration of social belonging when children like Tereza simultaneously transgress an infinite number of boundaries of socio-spatial orders opened up an ethnographic pathway that was yet to be established. The starting condition of this research and a definition of ethnographic pathways will now be developed, in order to then look more closely at the pathway that opened up in this study along Tereza's everyday life.

Kindergarten Ethnography

I first met Tereza in Wiesengrund Kindergarten in late summer on the day of her enrolment. Hundreds of pages of field notes, drawings of seating arrangements, photos of children and situations, audio recordings of social interactions, transcripts of parent-teacher meetings, and copies of many different lists and artefacts from being with Tereza in class started piling up in the folders of my computer since that day. Put together, they give a quite reasonable account of what could be called the kindergarten child Tereza. Similar data were gathered for all the twenty children of the first kindergarten year, and when the older cohort left the kindergarten to proudly enter primary school after the first twelve months of fieldwork, yet another cohort of thirteen children entered kindergarten (and my fieldnotes) after the first year of research in the kindergarten. It gave me the opportunity not only to study practices of differentiation and the enactment of specific categories of social belonging from the very first day children entered this building with its particular social order(s), but also to "follow [certain] phenomenon . . . through disappearance" (Katz 2001, 461). I was introduced to the class by the teachers with the words "This nice woman who was here today, was Mrs. Jaeger. She will come again tomorrow and just visit us sometimes," and I was amazed at how quickly the children realized that I had nothing to say in kindergarten. However, they also realized quite quickly that they had nothing to fear from the ethnographer in terms of instructions or scolding for (moderately) unauthorized things, such as uttering certain swear words or puzzles that were not put away properly. The social order in the kindergarten allowed this kind of free-floating additional adult in the room (Zeitlyn and Mand 2012). Given this position, I could withdraw and observe silently from the sidelines, or I could actively play with children, talk, or let them tell me their view of the world during those hours when no activities guided by the teachers were happening. The teachers treated me collegially, almost as "one of them," and I was trusted by them.[1] However, the relationship toward the teachers underwent a noticeable change when I accompanied some of the children through their out-of-school lives. Bringing those social relations and additional information back to kindergarten sometimes threatened to upset established relations in class.

The research field emerged by focusing on the kindergarten class and following individual children through their everyday lives. Methodologically, it has proved fruitful to understand the individual accompaniment of the children as ethnographic pathways. Such an understanding borrows from the analytical language proposed by scholars of transnationalism, indicating and emphasizing "that there is no single, exclusive trajectory of migrant incorporation" (Werbner 1999; Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006, 614), but that the pathways of both settlement but also transnational connections are multiple, depending on the social circumstances over the course of time. This also

pictures individual pathways woven into the social fabric without being predetermined by certain forms of belonging or by different types of demarcation (e.g., national borders or ethnic affiliation). Symmetrizing this assumption of movement with the research process and movement through an opening ethnographic field, I argue that there is also no single, exclusive trajectory of ethnography pathways, either. Rather, research interests had to be adjusted according to the possibilities of participation and access.[2] It was always necessary to sound out *empirically*, on the spot, which boundaries were introduced by my interlocutors as lines of demarcation or where there was a possibility for further research. Often, a transgression or entry into a new site of a child's life unexpectedly led to new shores, new insights. The insights in turn also helped to shed new light on previously studied field sites such as the kindergarten; the expansion of the field highlighted both the effectiveness of social orders in field sites and their potential permeability. Putting those ethnographical movements together, it is possible to picture this ethnography of a kindergarten class as research *with multiple ethnographic pathways*, which in its summary can say less about individual sites along the way but much more about the constitution of the in-between. The ethnographic pathways have exposed me—just like the children—to the multi-referentiality of their everyday life. As an ethnographer, I hence became a person with whom the children had to establish different relationships at different sites, which often put us in delicate situations of unclear loyalties and positions, but also strengthened our bonding. This proved to be a very fruitful resource for analysis, as will elaborated along the ethnographic pathway that opened up from following Tereza.

Glimpses into One Ethnographic Pathway: Following Tereza

First Encounter

Together with seven other children in her age cohort—Arian, Mathumai, Abshiru, Linos, Harun, Peter, and Zailey—Tereza was enrolled in Wiesengrund Kindergarten the same day that my ethnographic work in Mühlekon began. After those first hours in class full of impressions and a notepad full of field notes, however, little was written there about Tereza. In the class with its twenty pupils, its teachers, and the parents who accompanied their offspring, she did not seem to catch the ethnographer's attention. Forcing myself to write down something about all the children, in her case I wrote:

> Tereza came into the building as one of the first new children—she seemed to be looking forward to kindergarten, at least she actively took part in everything and tried to do everything properly (the singing, the clapping, the drawings, . . .). She came with her mother, and her mother was the first to leave again—(she probably works at the airport?)—her

> mobile phone rang once during her stay in the kindergarten, relatively loud, she picked it up and went outside. Tereza was not impressed by her mother leaving early, did not cry or show any visible emotion. She seems quite self-confident and has distinctive, curly dark hair.

Over the following months of research in class, Tereza's image became clearer, the curly dark hair certainly faded as a criterion for attribution. She appeared in the fieldnotes as a cheeky, courageous child who was popular in class (with Harun and Arian, who both wanted Tereza as their best friend) and was repeatedly picked out by teachers as a good example of how to behave as a proper pupil: "Children, look how quietly Tereza can wait!" However, she also appeared as an uncombed child with bad teeth and parents who responded little to the school's requests. She suffered time and again with stomach pains; once we all turned back on the way to the Zurich Zoo at Mühlekon's local train station because Tereza felt extremely sick. This child did not worry the teachers in social or intellectual respects. In their opinion, she could articulate well, had friends, laughed frequently, and was always one of the most successful when dexterity, memory, or things like phonological awareness were required. However, they suspected and worried—as they did with other children, too—that the parents would not be supportive when it came to "proper, good" child rearing. Time and again small bits and pieces of teachers' ephemeral insights into Tereza's family life also entered the field notes. The teachers did not initiate formal interventions (such as informing the schools' social worker) and were cautious about making the matter public. However, behind closed doors they commented that Tereza's home "was probably not easy."

Leaving Kindergarten Together

After some months, I extended the field by accompanying the children to their afternoon day-care centers (not all went; but out of twenty pupils, sixteen did). As with almost every child, the recommendation came to Tereza's parents to send her to day-care, both for reasons of professional care in the afternoons and for exposure to the German language, since the family spoke mainly Albanian at home. Tereza was sent to day-care CB II. Sylvia Dominioni, the responsible caregiver, already knew Tereza's older sister, Enea. In comparison to the kindergarten, day-care is neither mandatory nor free of charge, but price reduction for poorer families is guaranteed, which applied to Tereza's family. However, right from the beginning of participant observation in day-care, Sylvia complained about Tereza's parents not paying the bills. Furthermore, they would always have their own special wishes, making the days of Tereza's visits depend on her mother's different shifts at work. I learned and later confirmed that Tereza's mother Blerta—a mother of three—worked at the airport cleaning aircraft and was assigned irregularly and with many early and night shifts. "I only do that

[make the exception for her] because I know how much the mother is struggling," Sylvia told me once, with the addendum "Her husband is an assh-le."

As an ethnographer, I soon had to organize new impressions and decide how I wanted to deal with these insights from different contexts.

Knocking at Doors: Rejection, Hesitation, Delay

In early 2017, after six months of research within the state institutions of kindergarten and day-care, I started to follow the children through their everyday out-of-school lives. Although child-centered, it was again the adults that had to provide access. It did not take long, for instance, to accompany Zaylie, going to church with her and her family, having dinner with her, having her visiting me at my workplace, etc. But things were less easy-going with other children, including Tereza. Several times I had asked her mother, Blerta, if she would tell me over a cup of coffee how these snippets I had been getting here and there on the doorstep and through fishing conversations, could be brought into a bigger picture of their everyday lives in the neighborhood and beyond. But the requests were politely and repeatedly rejected, or they were put off for later. After months of several unanswered or negative inquiries, it was an upcoming trip through the Balkans with a friend that caught Blerta's attention. She had never heard from "people that were not Albanians" visiting her home country. Blerta took her cell phone and showed me their village on Google Maps and recommended a hotel in Prishtinë with a nice view. During this conversation, she gave me her number and said in case we would pass by, she was looking forward to our visit.

Kosovo, Cold Turkey

When my friend Heike and I approached the Kosovo border, I was in contact with Arian's mother, Valmira, and caregiver, Arbnora, who worked at Tereza's day-care. But I could not reach Blerta. Her number did not seem to work anymore. However, being in Prishtinë and hence close to their village, I decided to pass by and have a look anyway. Without possible prior notice, we drove into the village and asked for directions to the houses of Blerta, Gezim, and their children, eventually leading to people getting into our car and leading us through small alleys to the grassy forecourt of a three-story house. I got out of the car excited but also a bit anxious about my own impertinence. Tereza's older sister, Enea, came out of the building, and soon after, Blerta appeared, visibly surprised and with a giggling excited Tereza at her side. It did not take them long, however, to lay a table, and an ever-growing group of family members gathered in the living room. I was introduced to everyone as one of Tereza's teachers, which I felt was a little embarrassing for Tereza and at the same time filled her with a certain pride. Obviously, someone had come to visit her and interrupted the family's daily routine. She sat at my side and showed me her newest toy, a small children's computer, on which one could dress people of all kinds. We left after

some hours, with more suggestions on what to visit nearby and an appointment back in Switzerland.

Complicated Social Positioning

When kindergarten classes started again after the summer holidays, Tereza did not tire of telling the other children and teachers that I was with her in Kosovo. When Blerta and I met, we kissed each other three times on the cheeks as is done in Switzerland with confidants, but certainly not with children's teachers. Social relationships anyhow started to become more complicated the longer the ethnographic fieldwork lasted, particularly in and before kindergarten. Some of the children had started to call me Ursina outside of kindergarten, and for some I lost the marker of the assistant teacher, becoming friends with some parents, while other parents avoided me—after all, some had politely but repeatedly put off my requests, and the constant encounters were somewhat uncomfortable for both sides.

Although the small encounters with Blerta after the visit to Kosovo were quite positive, it took another three months of brief conversations until one day in November, after a parent-teacher talk where I was allowed to accompany Blerta (Gezim did not show up and it was not questioned), we agreed to meet again the following week. Over a cup of coffee, Blerta told me that she "had never before talked about her life to a Swiss woman" in all the twenty years she had lived there: "Ursina, our story would fill not one, but twenty books. I would need to talk for a thousand hours to tell you about our lives." Blerta then told me—sometimes very emotionally—about her strict father, her difficult childhood, her flight from Kosovo during the war, the abandoned education, the undocumented entry into Switzerland, the wedding with Gezim and the problems she would sometimes face with him, how much she loved her children, how Tereza was like an angel ever since she was born. The conversation was the first longer yet hesitant glimpse into the everyday life of their family from Blerta's perspective. Eventually, neither Blerta nor I had the time for those thousand hours. But there were many. Every now and then I was at their home for a tea or home-made *pitë*. The family initially lived in a narrow three-room apartment and later in a larger five-room apartment which Blerta was able to organize through a cooperative for economically deprived families. Gezim was seldom around, having two jobs himself. I had the impression that Tereza would not really know how to deal with "her teacher" being at her home during those first encounters. Nervously, she left the living room, where we used to sit and chat, to go to the room she shared with her sister, and back again, at the same time overexcited and insecure. Sometimes I "visited" her in their room, and she showed me her favorite toys (especially a figure of Ladybug), and we talked a bit about things and people we had in common. However, Blerta was always around, and Tereza was told to be a good girl, which meant that she should show respect and not disturb the adults too much.

Visiting them, it was Blerta (and sometimes Gezim) who decided how I should spend my time with Tereza and where in the apartment I should be. However, the visits at home intensified our relationship in the kindergarten and day-care. Tereza began to seek my attention more often.

Friends Become Witnesses

During this time, Blerta, initially hesitantly but then increasingly clearly, spoke about difficulties, money problems, and a husband and father who would be unpredictable at times, who would be violent, not toward the children, but toward her. There were plans to leave Gezim, but in fear of his reaction, the family's reaction, and what "their people" would think of them, they were not put into practice. Sometimes those conversations were just in passing; others took place during quiet times together and would probably, methodologically speaking, be regarded as an ethnographic interview with the audio recorder of my smartphone turned on and more awareness about the research setup brought to the fore. Sometimes it was just the two of us; sometimes the children were around, too.

In the meantime, Tereza worried and astonished the teachers in Wiesengrund Kindergarten. She had relapses, often complained of various pains. Often, no one was there when the teachers called home. But Tereza also taught herself English, mainly by watching Snow Queen Elsa videos on YouTube, and with these new language skills (which were truly amazing, and for which she was praised everywhere and always), she found a new playmate at the kindergarten: Zaylie. Together they drifted off into English role-playing princesses and beauty queens, apparently forgetting the world around them.

While I went for those visits to Tereza's home (and to Zaylie's, Arian's, and Mathumai's homes), the participant observation both in kindergarten and day-care was still ongoing. The ethnographic pathway was not a one-way street, but I was repeatedly back at the site where I got to know Tereza, Wiesengrund Kindergarten. Hence, Tereza and I met at various sites of her childhood simultaneously. Our social positioning and how we related to each other continued to be a difficult negotiation process. For the sake of clarity, it could be said that at first, she had the "teacher at home"; later in fieldwork, it was probably more a case of her meeting the "friend of the family" at school.

After around two years, my fieldwork was officially over and I temporarily left Zurich, which prevented me from visiting the children in Mühlekon. However, Blerta and I—as it happened with other interlocutors, too—kept in touch. After about two months I received a call. In a fierce argument, Gezim had attacked her with a bread knife, Blerta told me, and her son had called the police. At the time of the call to me, Gezim was in custody. Blerta decided she would finally file for divorce. As an ethnographer, I suddenly got a decisive role as a new contact from outside, seen as a person who was explicitly interested in *her* life, who cared.

Even though Blerta had lived in Switzerland for a long time, she explained that she had always held back on private matters at work and in her children's environment, and now that Gezim's family refused to support her, her social network had basically been removed.

The separation brought with it all sorts of unexpected additional challenges, from unresolved tax debts to unpaid alimonies and court hearings, and brought the family into contact with almost all the institutions within the Swiss state apparatus (police, social welfare service, court, maternity advice center, tax administration, immigration office, child protection authority, social work, school psychology, etc.) Various documents fluttered into their mailbox, written in a bureaucratic German language that was difficult to understand. I thus quickly gained insight into a great deal more of her everyday life, for example, by translating court decisions and going through her bank statements together, by drafting letters for the social welfare office and the local services and calling the housing cooperative for her to ask for a postponement of reminders. While both Blerta and her children were aware that I still was doing research, would still be writing a book, the concrete reference was surely sometimes somewhat neglected, and my thoughts were often very far removed from the research.

Closing Ethnographic Doors

After various unsuccessful attempts at rapprochement and many moments in which Gezim threatened the family, he died in a car accident that was declared a suicide, somewhere near Milano/Italy. Even though I was involved in various bureaucratic papers that had to be resuspended due to the death of Tereza's father, I decided not to include these insights in the intellectual case study. Despite being invited, I did not go to the meeting at the school where the social worker informed Tereza about her father's passing (Blerta could not bring herself to tell her). I did not include that part in my thinking around the emotional compatibility of children's social belongings, nor did I accompany Tereza any more than usual during those days and weeks. "The more intimately one works with informants, the more important becomes the task of communicating the aims of research" (Spradley 1980, 23), and that seemed wrong and irresponsible to me in this situation. This book should not be important during that time. It was probably the first time that I had consciously closed a door on an ethnographic pathway myself. In the meantime, however, several years later, I perhaps would decide differently, because when, if not in such situations, do we learn how children deal with such tragic situations, and can we learn to support children better? It points to the tension between research ethics and epistemological interest, which is judged differently at different times.

Blerta, during a visit to her in 2023, could not believe that this book was still not finished: After all, "Tereza will soon be starting secondary school!"

Methodological Thoughts along the Ethnographic Pathways

Many of the situations along the ethnographic pathway with Tereza got analyzed in more depth in the different chapters of the book. For this appendix, the focus lies on the elaboration on the relationship between field, method, and epistemic object. Following Katz, it is the "methodologically sound links between, on the one hand, the data gathering and data presentation tasks, which aim at showing how social life takes the shapes that it does, and, on the other, the explanatory challenge of making a convincing argument about why social life works as it does" (2001, 447). Other pathways could have been chosen for explaining field and method, but this one seemed particularly fruitful because it was both fragile as well as intense. Thereby, some words on the role of a researcher are due. Two things are apparent: on the one hand, there is the question of the relationship between research and friendship, and on the other, the question of how to deal with Tereza's (and also my) uncertainty caused by the shift of social positions across multiple socio-spatial orders.

A Methodology of Slowness

There are many examples of ethnographers who became friends with their interlocutors from the outset or even fell in love, or who would move in for several years with interlocutors or be prepared to do their utmost for them (Goffman 2014). Multilayered relationships, friendship, and trust certainly complicate field relations as moral entanglements intensify, but they also lead to more nuanced representations. In methodological debates, the subject of relating to the interlocutors is something for which ethnographers are either envied, attacked, or celebrated.

Almost every ethnographic monography that discusses in-depth human encounters reflects on friendship and relations in the field; some served as models for this study: Bourgois, who, in *In Search of Respect*, continuously refers to the crack-dealing, at times violent interlocutors as his friends, argues that "only by establishing long-term relationships based on trust can one begin to ask provocative personal questions, and expect thoughtful, serious answers" (1996, 13). Or Hochschild, who in *Strangers in Their Own Land* travelled to Louisiana to find out about the great paradoxes of Trump voters in the making and who used friendship as an active tool to be able to cross what she captures as "empathy walls." Friendship is thus seen as the "capacity to connect across difference" (Hochschild 2016, 13). Kromidas on the other hand, studying children transforming racial baggage in NYC (2016, 2012), sees especially in ethnography the possibility of good relations with the kid participants if research is done along principles of a "'methodology of slowness', that emphasized patience, reciprocity and the humanity of the ethnographic method." She argues that this implied

"surrendering to the kids' agenda in the daily course of fieldwork," which "ultimately humanized the research encounter and [her] participants, allowing them to emerge as complex and sophisticated actors with multifaceted agendas" (Kromidas 2012, 319). In the present ethnographic study, an attempt was made to initially keep the relationship to the children open by definition and to give the children, as the central interlocutors, the opportunity to actively collaborate on the quality of the relationship. However, it was precisely through the joint navigation through the children's everyday life that the researcher-child(ren) relationships not only became precarious again and again, but at the same time became an important analytical momentum for the research interest.

Unfulfilled Expectations and Disappointments

This research strategy is sometimes interpreted as manipulative. Fine, in an essay titled "Ten Lies of Ethnography" (1993), saw in the friendly ethnographer surrendering to the field a moral dilemma intrinsically embedded in the method. Not only would the faking of friendship be a common lie, but in the end, the ethnographic text would simply omit all the unsympathetic people from research as well as the moments when the ethnographer felt annoyed or disturbed, or those when s/he harassed and disturbed others—an assessment that makes the anthropologists think of Malinowski's diaries. There may be something to it, and as with the ethnographic pathways taken here, little can be said about all the cases when research did not go smoothly. This also has something to do with informed consent, as people with whom contact has been difficult for various reasons cannot be further informed (without being encroached on) about the progress of the analysis and the inclusion of their everyday lives in ethnographic texts. It is useful to briefly touch on such a situation, as I became a sort of persona non grata to Dragan's mother. As with many other parents of the children, there was also occasional contact with her, and we often stood together in front of the kindergarten and chatted a bit. A first, longer conversation, which I asked her for, was continuously postponed. In the end, she had (financial) expectations that the project and I as an ethnographer did not meet. We were not able to rescue the relationship. In other words, the interrupted ethnographic pathway shows not only the fragility, but also the different expectations that are sometimes placed on researchers, and how global economies and (anticipated) positions therein also flow into shaping relationships between ethnographer and possible interlocutors (Punch 2012).

Switching Social Positions

As the glimpses into the ethnographic pathway with Tereza (but also the interrupted pathway with Dragan) show, both the ethnographer and the interlocutors have a say in establishing a relationship. The changing relationship with the ethnographer was repeatedly used strategically by the field participants to

pursue their own interests: Tereza, for instance, tried to use my visit in Kosovo to show off in front of her companions in class. The ethnographic strategy suggested by Fine (1993), who sees friendliness as a rather cold calculation, and where the ethnographic text ultimately prescribes a social upgrade of the ethnographer, does not seem to work out. The reality was quite the opposite. As part of the field, one's own person assumes, as it were, divergent roles. I could sometimes not put myself in these roles; I was insecure and vulnerable, switched between different behavioral repertoires and attached categories of social belonging. We had to (re-)negotiate not only own social positions within the given orders, but also the mutual relationship, particularly when children and I navigated *together* through the divergent socio-spatial orders. The relationship negotiated outside kindergarten was put to the test several times in class, and the more physical, intimate relationship from the day-care center (such as hugging), in other more formal situations; and mutual witnessing of all sorts had to be stabilized while navigating through the multi-referential everyday life. Like Tereza, who was sometimes the well-behaved kindergarten child, sometimes the wild daughter, sometimes the unkempt child, sometimes the Kosovo-Albanian, and sometimes the hope of a new Swiss generation, I too had to live with being addressed quite differently, sometimes as a prototype of an academic (and rich) white Swiss woman, sometimes as a somewhat quirky friend who has nothing whatsoever to do with this Swiss system, or just a soccer goalkeeper or an opponent in a snowball fight. It became clear how divergent modes of social belonging work, and how they stick equally to all the people along the ethnographic pathways and sometimes walk together in different company. The fact that the researcher cannot avoid this is one of the great strengths of ethnography. Equally important is the openness of the research, which is also demonstrated by the fact that field conditions change over time. This is discussed in the following section.

Limitations and Routes Not Taken

Many things turned out differently than expected. Some children who were very much in my focus at the beginning lost this position, and others and their families suddenly became central, as in the case of Tereza, for example. While Abshiru's mother, for instance, talked quite openly when we met outside kindergarten, about the nursing training she was just completing and her husband's career advancement in a fashion shop or about her migration from Eritrea to Switzerland, it did not get any further. Both of Abshiru's parents worked a lot, and the concerns of the ethnographer seemed to have little priority. However, even though this ethnography was obviously also not a priority to other parents, it might also not have been so easy for them to get rid of the ethnographer. Some parents might have been afraid to dismiss the requests that bluntly, and I often found myself agreeing with Kusserow's impression "that for some

[families] I was seen as an authority from the educational system who was trying to see how well they were raising their child" (2004, 15). But not all the parents who refused to open their doors seemed to feel threatened by a "shadow of the state" (Feldman-Savelsberg 2016), nor did all the children who refused to engage with me seem to feel threatened by the pedagogical order and a seeming power of the older generation. Some also just knew better, so to speak, their rights to decline such a request. There were also families who—unlike Tereza's mother Blerta—were incorporated into different Swiss social contexts, and "finally telling their story to a Swiss woman" would have been neither new nor special, and I was also more able to offer something "in return" to some families.[3]

The issues of access, relationship, and thereby explored spaces of thought along the ethnographic pathways are crucially related to the epistemic object. This is what the remaining pages of the appendix will be about.

Approaching "the Field" along Ethnographic Pathways

I was given a field site to start with. It was the kindergarten on the outskirts of Zurich, in the neighborhood I came to call Mühlekon. I could scout it out on Google Maps before I ever set a foot in it: one can see the modern architecture of the one-story house of exposed concrete and explore its surroundings—the playground with a big swing in front of the building, even the wooden fence around the plot of land, which supposedly represented the end of my physical field site. This was the beginning. From the moment I first entered Wiesengrund Kindergarten, the field was never again as clear as it was back then on Google Maps.

Leaving the topographical map and zooming out to the academic debates on the epistemology of ethnographic research and understanding one's field of study opens a box which proves to be fruitful for the process of analysis.

Ethnography Meets Epistemological Complications

There is a certain anthropological legacy for the understanding of ethnographical fields as given patches of earth. We still refer to our methodology as ethnography, commemorating those days when anthropologists courageously raised the sails (or employees in colonial systems did it for them) in order to write about different ethnē and made these insights accessible to their own society (Berg and Fuchs 2016). Physically "being there," co-present "in the field," became the doxa (Geertz 1993, 9–30). This practice of knowledge production can itself be understood as a methodological radicalization, directed against the evolutionism of the nineteenth century and the so-called armchair anthropologists (Breidenstein et al. 2020, 14–23; Eriksen 2017). In recent decades, however, field epistemology has undergone a critical reflection, and conceptualizing the

ethnographic field became both more interesting and more unobtrusive. The naturalistic assumption of a clear field site (an island, a tribe, a people, a spot detected on Google Maps) has clearly lost grounds of legitimacy. This loss can again be embedded in a wider context that is often connected to what has become known as the *writing culture critique*, leading to a deconstruction of many leading narratives and concepts (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Zenker and Kumoll 2010a). Debates evolving around postcolonial representation and representativeness, as well as the postmodern and feminist critique, jointly shook thinking within the social sciences in general and anthropology in particular. The limits of the idea of a "fixed, unitary, and bounded culture" (Wolf 1982, 387) and the "methodological localism" (Brenner 2009, 121) of ethnography tied to it have been highlighted. Consequently, going "to the field" could no longer be an unproblematic synonym for traveling to a geographically localizable site which was seen to be different from home (Amit 2000a; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Candea 2009; Brightman 1995).[4]

Rather than an ontological given, fields are nowadays considered at least as much a construct of the ethnographers themselves rather than being considered to exist "out there" to be observed and discovered. As Amit (Amit 2000b, 6) brings to mind, the field

> has to be laboriously constructed, prised apart from all the other possibilities for contextualization to which its constituent relationships and connections could also be referred, [defining this process as a] process of construction . . . inescapably shaped by the conceptual, professional, financial and relational opportunities and resources accessible to the ethnographer.

But even though constructivism, following Brubaker, has "become the epitome of academic respectability, even orthodoxy" (2004, 2), we can observe that anthropology, with its core methodological assumptions and analytical language, still remains deeply connected not only to the local, but also to the assumption that there is a world "out there." Thus, fieldwork and the anthropological endeavor remain obliged to reflect on the social *reality* of field constitutions while simultaneously being aware of social constructivism. The assumption that there are social orders relevant for and to the people being studied will be an axiom of this ethnographic research in order to not run the risk of what Zenker and Kumoll, referring to Reyna (2010), so insistently claim when stating, "If ethnographers are indifferent to the truth of their fictions, then their fictions are ultimately irrelevant" (Zenker and Kumoll 2010b, 23). Taken together, this refers to an interesting and intellectually fruitful dilemma. On the one hand, there is a methodical and methodological localism in anthropological thought, which demands the socio-spatial co-presence of the ethnographer with the object of research. On the other hand, the openness of research processes, which suggests

following informants, ideas, policies, etc. across space and considering that social orders transcend localities, does question this very methodological localism again.

Challenging Sited-ness

The recognition of the ambivalences in thinking about the field of this study gained weight by leaving the kindergarten with the children. Destabilization "makes us recognize our own site awareness and makes us more able to explore the site awareness of those we are writing about" (Hovland 2011, 105). Leaving kindergarten provided much more than a mere geographical extension.

Most prominently discussed was the abandonment of a given field site by adherents of a multi-sited approach. Marcus (1995) argued that the mobility of people, ideas, and goods would force ethnographers to do the same. One should "[move] out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings . . . in diffuse time-space" (Marcus 1995). Instead of closing the field locally (e.g., the village, the street corner), the multi-sited approach was interested in the *opening* of the field for its trans-local connections. But in doing so, one runs the risk of simply multiplying the first unquestioned field notion. Skeptics were quick to.

Burawoy for instance grumbled that ethnographers should not be "jet-setting academic cosmopolites" who, instead of paying "focused attention to detail and process by assimilating the point of view of participants" would only be "tripping around from site to site" (Burawoy 2001, 148). Wacquant in turn pointed in a similar direction by calling multi-sited ethnography "a flimsy cover for a practice more akin to cultural tourism than to fieldwork worthy of the name" (2009, 115), and Ferguson argued that multi-sited ethnography was at the expense of learning local languages and discourses, ultimately reproducing dominant global discourses instead of embarking on the, in his opinion, more difficult path of approaching subalterns and their perspectives (2011, 199–200). What is striking about those interventions is that they remain on a more general level. Even though the supporters and opponents of multi-sited ethnography inspired my thinking, they did not answer the questions regarding the conceptualization of the field. The discussions were, it seemed, less concerned with how concrete research is conducted than with traditional self-images of anthropologists or the extent to which the tried and tested must be defended against a supposed postmodern arbitrariness. Leaving the battlefield of disciplinary politics aside allows the critique raised to shrink to a pragmatically manageable degree: regarding the language question, for instance, research on a transnational ethnic network may, for example, require far fewer language skills than research in a metropolitan high-rise housing estate.[5] Likewise, giving up the idea of a geographically bounded field does not mean that social relations become superficial. Sometimes, the complete opposite is true: following

the same people through time and space might even reveal more intimate and multilayered insights into the interlocutors' lives, and some topics, such as status paradoxes experienced by migrants, only came to the fore when researchers visited various local arenas of status attribution (Killias 2018; Feldman-Savelsberg 2016; Nieswand 2011).

The interesting questions regarding the construction of ethnographic fields such as the one evolving around the social butterflies cannot be solved in a geography limitation or opening but lie in the interplay between locality, sociality, and methodology. They are thus remarkably more analytical in the strict sense of methodological nature, asking about the edges and limitations of the research subjects (Jaeger and Nieswand 2022). So, in the present case of following children from a kindergarten class, this meant that successively accompanying the children to different places of their childhood could only initially refer to different *localities or sites*, which could be distinguished from each other in relatively basic terms (e.g., kindergarten, day-care, home) and whose separation was marked as analytically relevant. The analysis of internal and external relations of differently localized social orders became the thing to be more deliberately addressed. At a second look, therefore, it was precisely this other understanding of a previously almost naturalistically set field conception which revealed the relational character of different sites and their mutual conditionality. Thus, it is the *conditions of the constitution of different sites* and *interdependent socio-spatial orders* which, after all, came to the fore. Such a framing allows an analysis of how "the relationship between places and times affects knowledge—that is, it affects what can be known" (Green 2018, 4).

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Thanks | Danke | Takk

The major difficulty with acknowledgements in ethnographic work is that the gratitude expressed often does not reach the study's VIPs in two ways: they may eventually never read this book, and their names remain anonymized throughout. It's the children, and also their parents, families, teachers, and caregivers whom I accompanied for a long time, who made the intellectual journey of *Children as Social Butterflies* possible. The book it is but a humble attempt to capture what I learned along with them. Sometimes, my role changed from researcher to friend and back again. I was given a lot of trust, and I hope that I handled it carefully and responsibly.

Children as Social Butterflies comes with an institutional backstory. The research and writing took place at various institutions, and so a big "thank you" goes to my colleagues and supervisors at the University of Zurich, the Zurich University of Teacher Education, the University of Tübingen, the Danish School of Education, and the Thurgau University of Teacher Education, for their support at very different points in the process: the book at hand is a substantially revised version of my PhD study, which was defended in 2021 at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zurich. The endeavor started in 2016 when I became a project collaborator and PhD student in a team ethnographic study called "Children Who Are Different," funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and carried out by the research group "Children—Childhood—Schooling" at the Zurich University of Teachers Education. I am more than thankful that the coleaders of the project, Anja Sieber Egger, Gisela Unterweger, and Christoph Maeder, have given me the opportunity to become part of this interesting undertaking. Alex Knoll joined the team with me and became a bit of a peer mentor, also caring for my delving into the academic field. My PhD was supervised by Annuska Derks at Zurich University. Over the years, she has remained such an attentive and supportive advisor and interlocutor, and several retreats with Annuska and the members of her chair in Zurich and the Swiss Alps helped sharpen the arguments. I thank Molly, Olivia, Esther, Mathias, Michael, Wahyu,

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The Swiss National Science Foundation not only funded the research project "Children Who Are Different," but made it possible for this work to be professionally edited and published in open access form and awarded me a mobility grant that enabled me move to Denmark in 2018. It widened my intellectual horizon while sitting among an inspiring group of educational anthropologists at the Danish School of Education. My stay in Denmark lasted just over six months, but the intellectual resonance continues. To my great fortune, Laura Gilliam agreed to come on board as a second supervisor and has remained such an engaged and motivating adviser throughout. Laura and her colleagues from the Danish School of Education made sure that during those months in Copenhagen, I had not only a lot of intellectual exchange, but I was also socially cared for, and that there was *hygge*.

Over the years, I brought valuable feedback from conferences, workshops, and interpretation groups back to my desk. Particularly noteworthy are the interpretation groups, colloquiums, and retreats from our Undisciplined Knowledge at the University of Tübingen network (UnKUT): I shout out Annelen, Anno, Boris, Claire, Damian, Fynn, Judith, Polina, and Manu for their collegiality and thoughtfulness and for pub visits after the daily work was finished. Various colleagues have repeatedly taken time out to read parts of this work and manuscripts of articles and commented and criticized on them in delightful conversations: Micha, Florian, Carola, Anna, Molly, and Kai—I thank each and every one of you so, so much! Phil Jackson proofread a previous version and provided valuable comments on its content, two anonymous reviews have helped decisively to refine the arguments and to sharpen the analysis, and the editors of the Rutgers Series in Childhood Studies and their colleagues at Rutgers University Press helped the book in the most positive way to its final form. My heartfelt thanks to you all!

I would also like to thank my friends and family for accompanying me during those years. The children of this study and their everyday life had a great influence on my thoughts and my perspectives on societies. I have not always been able to respond empathetically to the problems of my personal social environment without diminishing or dismissing them in relation to the financial constraints, the limited opportunities, and the discrimination my main informants were facing in Switzerland. I guess this was not always socially acceptable, and I am thankful that I did not scare everybody away. Special thanks goes also to Heike, who agreed to combine our joint road trip through the Balkans with my research interests.

I don't know how many hundreds of hours Boris spent on the train during the first three years of this study between Switzerland, Germany, and Denmark. And how many unexplored thoughts (or the same conversation over and over

again) he got to hear from me in search of analytical readings of the ethnographic data. Who would have thought that one day we would be strolling through the world with Giovanna in tow? I gratefully say, I couldn't imagine a more beautiful journey.

My godfather Hans died during this research. Since I was a child, this prudent and deeply humble man provided me with books and reading suggestions, which over the years had been increasingly influenced by his admiration for Adorno and Benjamin. The conversations with him had a decisive impact on my thoughts ever since. This book is dedicated to him.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. I was a research collaborator in a project dedicated to the study of the pedagogical differentiation practices of teachers in Swiss kindergartens ("Children Who Are Different. An Ethnography of Processes of Recognition in the Kindergarten"), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. As a team (Anja Sieber Egger, Gisela Unterweger, Christoph Maeder, Alex Knoll, Fränzi Buser, Fabienne Kaiser, and myself), we examined how children would come to be conspicuous in the school system and what norms of recognition would lie behind the teachers' practices of differentiation. The project and its research questions had a decisive influence on the possibilities for the emergence of the ethnographic field and the empirical case study, and even if this is not explicitly done in this book, the comparison to the two other kindergartens in other Swiss neighborhoods that were researched in the project implicitly resonates (Knoll and Jaeger 2020; Sieber Egger, Unterweger, and Maeder 2019; Sieber Egger et al. 2022; Sieber Egger, Unterweger, and Kaiser 2021). Further information and current new publications can be found on the profiles of the collaborators, as well as on the homepage of the Swiss National Science Foundation under grant number 159328, and at the website of the Centre for Childhood in Education and Society (https://phzh.ch/en).
2. Strictly speaking, there is no national curriculum in Switzerland. The twenty-six cantons can decide on their own education plans, but in recent years many cantons have moved towards planning children's school careers together. Under the banner of harmonization, most cantons, including the canton of Zurich, now have a common curriculum. In the course of this standardization and cantonal harmonization, kindergarten attendance has also become compulsory (in these cantons).

CHAPTER 1 ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CHILDHOOD-MIGRATION-SCHOOLING NEXUS

1. When talking about anthropology, I broadly refer to the academic field(s) of social and cultural anthropology. Interestingly, in this context, while regional schisms and differentiations within the discipline were cultivated and probably even fetishized to a certain extent as a way of boundary making (Barth et al. 2005), recent introductory works tend to smooth out historical distinctions in order to try to achieve a common disciplinary enterprise: while Eriksen's introduction, *Small Places, Large Issues* (2001), for instance, was "an introduction to social and cultural anthropology" two decades ago, his recent work simply asks, *What Is Anthropology?* (2017). This is at least remarkable.
2. However, Mead was read—probably more than any other anthropologists ever—outside the academic realm, and her insights into growing up in Samoa and the

critique of the U.S. "ethnotheory" (Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017) had a huge impact on a substantial number of parents in the United States. I am also aware that work that is done in cognitive anthropology does pay more attention to the child's mind and biological development, and attachment theory and socialization did not disappear, but were separated from the debates of scholars who thought in socially constructivist ways about childhoods. New projects will eventually reconcile biology and social constructivism (Brubaker 2015).

3. Sobo (2015) provides a nuanced meta-analysis of the anthropological interest in children, comparing the three recent standard textbooks/edited volumes by Lancy, Bock, and Gaskins (2010), Montgomery (2009), and LeVine and New (2008), all seeking to deliver a historiography of the anthropological interest in children and eventually aiming at giving the subdiscipline a sort of coherent genesis. Sobo addresses the disputes and disagreements, especially in the U.S. Anthropological Society, and very vividly presents the struggle for interpretative sovereignty, which can only be hinted at here.
4. The focus was more often on maturing males; Mischung explains this, however, by the combination of the often male researchers' access to the field and the possible lack of interest in the female counterpart (2006, 216). Wells' review (2012) of female circumcision and the question of examining gender and generation is a telling counterexample in that area, as is Lutkehaus's edited volume, *Gender Rituals* (1995), which focuses mainly on female initiation in Melanesia.
5. Several times he describes how people move and tries to capture patterns of migration in several sections of the monography, such as "We have noted the spread of one of the main cultural elements, of the canoe, from South to North. We saw how the . . . canoe has been superseded by the masawa or tadobu, which spread a few generations ago, till it arrived at the island of Kitava. It is more difficult to follow the movements of beliefs" (Malinowski 2002, 222).
6. This can also be seen, for example, in the fact that we can observe a category shift from cultural diversity to linguistic plurality. Holm has illuminatingly elaborated on this for the somewhat new category of "bilingual" students (instead of categorizing those pupils as, for example, minority pupils) in the Danish context (2019).

CHAPTER 2 OF CATERPILLARS AND BUTTERFLIES

1. For legal reasons, school children with transnational family lives are often thrown back on the typical nuclear family, even if the parents' idea of family practice and responsibility in raising children might not go hand in hand with that family model.
2. It is interesting here to go back to Hanson's (2017) argument (elaborated in chapter 1) to see children as having (a right of) a past. West and Zimmerman, referring to Cahill, note in their now classic contribution, "Doing Gender" (1987, 141), that in this differentiation there is also a determination in gender, that is, that the (linguistically) gender-neutral baby, growing out of the category, would become a girl or a boy.
3. The question of Swiss dialect and standard German and the given diglossia situation in Swiss kindergartens is elaborated more in depth in Knoll and Jaeger (2020) and will be discussed a little further in chapter 3.
4. Pedro is an exciting example in this respect. He was one of the only ones who repeatedly defied the teachers' requests and often did not follow the rules. Paradoxically, from the point of view of the pedagogues, this stubborn, resistive manner also

brought him more attention and thus more opportunities to put himself in the limelight, either as a child who is supposed to show something to the class, being the putative role model teachers were seeking for, or as a child who could make other children laugh.

5. Sugar was banned from kindergarten, with the exception of birthdays, when parents of the celebrating child were supposed to bring a cake. There was, however, one other exception where chocolate was everywhere. It was the staffroom in the primary school building, which children never accessed. Snack time and the making of healthy food was an issue we also dealt with comparatively as part of the "Children Who Are Different" project (Sieber Egger, Unterweger, and Kaiser 2021).
6. The question of who was Albanian was not so easy to decipher. None of the children in the class came from Albania, and sometimes a clear distinction was made between people from Albania and people from Kosovo. It was clear that none of the Kosovo Albanians referred to Serbia, although some of their passports were issued in Serbia.

SECOND INTERLUDE

1. For the considerations of translations and the usage of transcripts, see the reflections in the introduction. With special attention to language, however, it should again be pointed out that it is not a matter of highlighting errors in spoken German (and a supposed meticulousness in its transposition to an English version) for the sake of "schoolmarmish" grammatical accuracy. Rather, the important point is to show how language is used differently in different social situations and how this can become relevant. The retention of the marked otherness is therefore analytically relevant at this point, even though the written text obviously loses strength compared to the spoken version, as intonation and pronunciation, pitch of voices, etc. disappear in this rendition.
2. In another context, Bundgaard and Gulløv, referring to Gitz-Johansen, conceptualize such an interpretation of "the behaviour of ethnic minority children . . . with reference to cultural background as a kind of 'social pathology'" (2006, 148). Cultural or social pathology as an explanatory model of deviant behavior of minority students is thus nothing new (see also Singleton 1970).

CHAPTER 3 KINDERGARTEN CARE

1. At the cantonal level, there are discussions in Switzerland about inviting children to take a language test much earlier. In the case of little or no knowledge of German, it could then happen that children would have to attend certain lessons before starting kindergarten. This measure is already in place in the canton of Basel, for example. The age at which children officially enter a state education system also varies from country to country. For example, in Eastern European and Scandinavian countries, early childhood education often has state-organized institutions from the age of 1 (Gilliam and Gulløv 2017; Haukanes and Thelen 2010).
2. Another very crucial category of differentiation is not listed here but is kept and negotiated separately. These are clarifications of delayed development, previously certified learning difficulties, or disabilities. Children with such previous diagnoses are closely monitored before enrolment and then assigned either to special schools or to regular classes that have a higher supervision ratio. The current pedagogical buzzword regarding special needs education in Switzerland is "inclusion."

3. However, some of the first identified categories of classroom diversity are in use when, for example, children are asked to sit in a circle on their respective chairs marked with their animal picture. Analyses of my many records of seating arrangements show that attention was paid to gender and age, and children like Pedro and Kenny, who moved around a lot and were often louder than others, almost always had a seat next to a teacher. However, this was never publicly negotiated in front of the children, they just found this arrangement apparently by chance.
4. The difficulty lay especially in the use of past tense. While standard German uses the imperfect past tense, in dialect you use the perfect tense for everything that has happened in the past. Only the auxiliary verb is in second place, the past participle, on the other hand, usually comes at the end of the sentence, so for example: "Ich ha mit mim Papi und mim Mami Fernseh gluegt" (this would mean: "I have with my daddy and my mummy television watched").
5. Li herself borrows the term "rendering technical" from (the Foucauldian) Rose (1999), who has an even stronger governmentalist twist on the expression than Li, whereas she turns it into a figure able to explain and capture ambivalences in normatively charged professions such as development aid workers.

CHAPTER 4 LEAVING KINDERGARTEN

1. This happened twice during the research period, resulting in a lot of tears and uncertainty for the child and crestfallen faces on the part of the adults, with an urgent appeal to pay more attention again to ensuring that all children get where they should go. It happened with butterfly children who usually go home alone and are not picked up by their parents. At this point there is a *security gap*, because on days when they are expected at home for lunch, they simply run out of the kindergarten, and this is desirable from a pedagogical perspective.
2. *Liegi* comes from lying down (*liegen*). It is a substantivized dialect term that I only know from the day-care, which in its specificity refers to both the space and the activity: a room for lying down, possibly sleeping. It is an institution within day-care. Caregivers and kindergarten children alike were "doing the *liegi*" and "going into the *liegi*."
3. The fact that I made a note that Lisa was on the pill—on one of the first days in this day-care center—would have been difficult to explain. When my presence was already a bit more familiar, there was another situation where I withdrew and took notes just as the caregivers were talking about a supermarket's points-saving program. Lisa said to me, "Oh well, you're not going to write that down, right?" which gave me the opportunity to explain how things like that and mentioning birth control could also be relevant to research. Reflecting on it, Sylvia said, "We are just normal here."
4. In situations like the ones described here, my position as a woman in her 30s is certainly less problematic, than if, for example, an older man had accompanied Tereza. However, what I am concerned with here is not a potential risk of physical closeness but, rather, what happens socially when a different kind of physical interaction prevails.

THIRD INTERLUDE

1. Rose, noticing my discomfort with this narrative, tried to placate me. "You Swiss people are not the worst. I mean, it is your country," but what would annoy her were the other foreigners, an argument which led me to become even more involved in

issues of privilege and arrogance on the part of the Swiss—a discourse with which Rose disagreed. Over the years I spent with Zaylie's family, I became more relaxed and better able to listen without immediately intervening when Rose talked about experiences of racism. This made our conversations less tense. On the other hand, there were various twists in this Swiss/foreigner narrative, and Rose, who was, after all, Swiss, also had agency to determine in which situations of our conversations she wanted to be Swiss and in which she wanted to be Ghanaian.

CHAPTER 5 UNFOLDING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

1. The Swiss political system is often described as direct democratic and consociational. This means that the electorate not only elects the parliament but is also repeatedly asked to vote on given issues. In addition, every person in the country (but this is often organized through parties and established interest groups) can launch popular initiatives. If their own idea has received sufficient support through signatures, the two-chamber parliament will deliberate on it, and a popular vote is held. Consociationalism refers to the joint exercise of executive power by all elected representatives. The system is known for its slow decision-making process and thus also for a certain stability and situational coalition building.
2. These debates on social intervention are often carried out with a Foucauldian spin. In the 1970s, Donzelot (1979), for instance, provided a historical analysis on policing the families that traces public intervention in poor families as bio-political measurements for the last two centuries.
3. In their study *Do Foreigners Pay Higher Rents for the Same Quality of Housing in Geneva and Zurich?*, with analysis and comparison of the two most expensive Swiss cities, Baranzini and his colleagues "found evidence of segregation, prejudice and discrimination against foreigners, particularly the less educated ones. . . . However, the magnitude of these biases is not very large, except for low-education foreigners who pay between 5 and 7 percent more on average for the same dwelling than low-education Swiss" (2008, 725).
4. While the conversation took place in English, the office of the social service, which handles unemployment benefits, was mentioned with the German name, *Sozialamt*. It is my view that this is both a strategy to keep the moral implications of this interaction off your back and that feelings about the welfare state encounter are difficult to translate.

APPENDIX

1. The question of distancing oneself from the teachers to get a less distracted view of children, a relationship to them which is less inflicted with power relations, more child-like, less embedded in the general order of the school, thus gets more problematic especially in cases like mine, where, on several levels, I looked confusingly like the teachers. A look at the methodological and epistemological reflections of classroom ethnographies shows that an intensive study of the alienation of one's own role in the field has taken place especially where the ethnographers had put themselves in a similar social position to the teachers. Interestingly enough, the methodological reflections on research in which the ethnographer did research in a classroom in another country, for example, as a white Western European in Cameroon (Notermans 2008), are not permeated by the same efforts to differentiate the ethnographer from

the teaching staff, but focus more on getting the children's view and questions of methodological difference while carrying out research with young people.

2. This analytical symmetrization and, consequently, the juxtaposition of the ethnographic pathway and the migratory pathways might include the danger of trivializing the experiences of the interlocutors. This is by no means intended. I am fully aware that being unable to carry out research in a family cannot be compared with closed migration routes, denied citizenship, or fear of deportation, and that it would require a closer examination of different forms of exclusion (are they formalized? how negotiable are the mechanisms?). Yet on an abstract level of conceptualizing pathways and the consequences of simultaneous incorporation into various fields for further thinking, moving, and living, the analogy seems convincing to me. It is a "symmetry of ethnography and analysis" and "their kinship in the heuristic of double vision" that therefore emerges. This symmetrical figure of thought is described in another context by Jiménez as "a method of enchantment that dazzles and reveals—and revels in—the possibilities that ethnography and analysis uncover and afford for one another as they zoom in and out of the worlds of wonder and understanding" (2018, 7).
3. The question of why people opened doors (or not) and what my research has changed for them cannot be answered meaningfully, but some reflection is in order. I was sometimes persistent and tried several times to get access to families. Some will have felt obliged to talk to this "kindergarten-ethnographer," while others more deliberately refused. The justifications and power relations in which this is tied up remain open questions, because ethnographic work is often interested in the lives of people positioned as "subaltern" or "deviant" or "marginal." Within that assumption of making their perspectives and voices visible to a broader public, the overall framing is often designed in a way that researchers can (or think they can) give something back in a nonmonetary way, be it, for instance, ideas of prestige, justice, dignity, or access to previously closed social fields. Much anthropological work claims that this would be one of the reasons why these studies were done at all. More generally, research is often done against payment; one might, for example, think of subjects of clinical tests who receive an expense allowance, which becomes higher when the tests are riskier. Ethnographic research is on an unsecured footing in this regard. Openly paying participants is rare, though nevertheless possible; a known case is the widely received study on unequal childhoods by Lareau and her team (2011), in which the participating families received a compensation of $350. Whether one finds this much or little money, however, is again a question of the financial possibilities of the receivers. As with clinical tests, poorer people are probably more likely to participate than people who are not worried about money. And when it comes to other kinds of showing thankfulness or "giving something back," it might also be easier to do such a thing to people who are less privileged than oneself in certain shared contexts. This impressively shows, for example, Punch's (2012) work with transnational children whose everyday life took place between the family context in the southern part of Bolivia and their places of work in Argentina. As a European ethnographer, she was able to travel back and forth between the different places much more easily and deliver messages to children and parents. She simply could use her voice recorder to grab messages, given that those family members had not heard each other's voices for a long time. It is not a question of discrediting this favor, which was of great importance to the families. Rather, it is necessary to negotiate this tension of social positioning and possibilities without either becoming complacent or being unable to move because of the unjust starting position. The fact that the privileges of the ethnographer can be

important for access to the field and the further course of research can be nicely seen, among other things, if balances of power are thought of differently from the outset of the research design; an interesting case in point for comparison is thereby work engaging with methodological concerns that goes under the rubric of "studying up" (Gusterson 1997), where access is imagined to be much more difficult, especially because anthropologists do not have so much to offer in return, suddenly making them less sure of how to position themselves.

4. Much has changed since, and nowadays Malinowski and the other "heroes" and fieldwork examples *sine qua non* have certainly been knocked from their pedestals. But still today, the strong attachment to a far-away place has a lot of resonance within the discipline. Gupta and Ferguson came to picture this as the "archetype" of anthropological fieldwork, a kind of golden way that is subsumed by them under the formula: The further away from home, the more "exotic" the community, the longer and more immersed the stay, the less contact with Western languages and cultures, the higher the reputation of both field and research. In this context, Gupta and Ferguson speak of an implicit "hierarchy of purity" within anthropological research that has determined the self-conception of the discipline to the present day (1997, 12–15). The voices within the discipline—strengthened by works such as those by Gupta and Ferguson—that criticize these putative hierarchies often aim to make their own research (which may not meet the putative "purity" requirement) equally valid, namely, equally anthropological. Even though most anthropological works today no longer meet this standard (or have never done so), many describe how the deviation from it affects recognition in the academic field. This would particularly manifest itself in the filling of positions (Marcus 2009, 2011; Caputo 2000). The last few years may have brought further changes in this respect; successful anthropologists are now researching infrastructure or mushrooms. The remaining question, once you put aside the emotional questions of disciplinary self-understanding within the anthropological realm, is indeed, how fields are conceptualized.

5. However, the language issue and connected questions of power (and also the current prioritization of English, including in the anthropological discipline) remain highly contested.

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