

Call for Papers

A Historical Perspective on Childhood, Children and Their Rights in 20th Century East Central Europe

In 1924, the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child addressed for the first time all the nations of the world to affirm the duty of States and individuals to systemic care for children. The Declaration set out 5 points covering aspects of: children's physical and mental health, safety, support, and the development and fulfillment of their talents and abilities. 100 years after the Declaration, the editors of a planned publication invite to explore the development and implementation of the law of children and childhood protection, everyday practices, issues and challenges from the perspective of social history with a focus on East Central Europe.

Since the demographic revolution of the late 19th century, the view of the relation between families children and states had changed dramatically. Children were seen as a crucial element of the state's power, and their position in their families became a topic of public interest. Children were topics of family politics and of social engineering and nationalizing projects as well as of ideologization. These aspects have become of research interest lately. So, children's and childhood history has become a recent trend in historiography, combining family, social and political history.

Nevertheless, Eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea region seem to be under-researched in this respect. Acknowledging the 100 years anniversary of the Declaration in 2024 seems to be a great incentive for stimulating further research, we aim at taking an interdisciplinary and retrospective look at the theoretical and practical dynamics of these processes and the resulting development of children's rights policies in a comparative perspectives in the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe.

We expect proposals discussing e.g.

- national experiences
- ethnic, gender and other minorities' experiences
- war experiences and occupation experiences
- socialist experiences
- times of disptures and transitions

Possible approaches could be:

1. to analyze the legal history of children's rights: law-making and enforcement practice.

Researching the practice of child and childhood protection, the specifics of the application of the concept of children's rights in different historical, economical, and socio-cultural contexts.

2. to raise the issue of ethnicity, gender, or disability in the context of children's rights policy. Bringing social engineering, education, and re-education policy issues into the spotlight, and considering development of medical, pedagogical, and other scientific approaches to children and childhood.
3. to Identify the activities, contributions, and influence of different social actors in developing alternative or complementary practices to the existing state provisions to ensure the five points mentioned in the Geneva Convention.
4. to analyze the connection among discipline, education, and children's rights in different socio-cultural contexts.
5. to analyze children's rights policy issues in the context of the rights of other social groups (e.g. women).
6. Papers with an comparing and methodological experiences are highly welcome.

Depending on the interest, we plan to compile a special issue or an edited volume in an internationally renowned journal or publishing house (with peer review and a ranking in Scopus and WoS).

Expressions of interest are expected until: **May 31 with an abstract of up to 500 words** and a **including your ORCID** of max. 300 words.

We expect your **article of up to 9.000 words** including references until **October 31, 2026**.

Please send your abstract and bio to Ieva Balciune (astro.ieva@gmail.com) and Heidi Hein-Kircher (heidi.hein-kircher@rub.de)