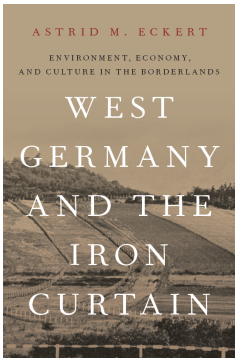
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West Germany and the Iron Curtain: Environment, Economy, and Culture in the Borderlands

Eckert, Astrid M.



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West Germany and the Iron Curtain takes a fresh look at the history of Cold War Germany and the German reunification process from the spatial perspective of the West German borderlands that emerged along the volatile inter-German border after 1945. These border regions constituted the Federal Republic's most sensitive geographical space, in which it had to confront partition and engage its socialist neighbor, East Germany, in concrete ways. Each issue that arose in these borderlands—from economic deficiencies to border tourism, environmental pollution, landscape change, and the siting decision for a major nuclear facility—was magnified and mediated by the presence of what became the most militarized border of its day, the Iron Curtain. In topical chapters, the book traces each of these issues across the caesura of 1989–1990, thereby integrating the "long" postwar era with the postunification decades. At the heart of this deeply-researched study stands an environmental history of the Iron Curtain that explores transboundary pollution, landscape change, and a planned nuclear industrial site at Gorleben that was meant to bring jobs

into the depressed border regions. As Eckert demonstrates, the borderlands that emerged with partition and disappeared with reunification did not merely mirror larger developments in the Federal Republic's history but actually helped shape them. (Source: Oxford University Press)

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