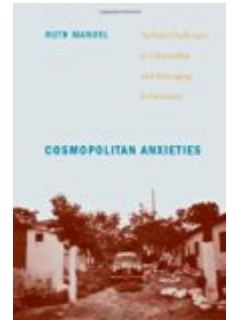


Ruth Ellen Mandel. *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. xxiv + 413 pp. \$24.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8223-4193-2.



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Published on H-SAE (November, 2010)

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Sharing the lived experiences of both Germans and Turks for over two decades, Ruth Mandel traces the transnational lives of Turkish guest-workers living in Berlin and assesses the complexities and contradictions of the German body politic and their impact on this migrant population's self-understanding of citizenship and belonging. One key concept she uses to frame her approach is "demotic cosmopolitanism." Mandel posits that this extension of James Clifford's interpretation of the concept refers to the "relatively anonymous translation [of?] peoples" (p. 50), in particular the Turks, who, she argues, also inhabit multiple localities but are left out of Clifford's original elitist interpretation.[1] By "inverting the hierarchical ranking of cosmopolitanism" she effectively draws attention to the broader ethnographic context in which migrants exist. However, Mandel has further to go to prove that the concept differs from more traditionally used descriptions of such migrants as transnationals or diasporic, terms she uses interchangeably without sufficient operationalization.

Mandel begins by placing the Turkish migrants in the broad social and political framework of Germany and then quickly moves on to situate them in the particular context of Berlin, where she conducted the bulk of her longitudinal research. Throughout the rest of the book she gives nuanced descriptions of what Turkish people perceive as their place in Germany, and how those perceptions are affected by German representations of them politically, religiously, and demographically.

One of her more provocative arguments is that the complexity of Turkish identities is at odds with the homogeneous Muslim collective imagined by the Germans. This is most fruitfully explained in chapters 6, 9, 10, and 11, in which Mandel demonstrates how first- and second-generation Turks, Kurds, and Alevis have multiple identities outside of German perceptions. To that end, Mandel introduces us to a variety of Turks living in Germany who hold different legal statuses and observe divergent religious practices (including with respect to veiling), who have migrated for

multiple reasons, who have diverse social statuses, and who have met with varied levels of economic and bilingual success. One of the book's achievements is in demonstrating the diversity, complexity, and highly fractured nature of the Turkish migrant population in Berlin.

Another strength of the book is the historical depth Mandel gives to the politics of otherness in Germany and, more particularly, in its capital city of Berlin. In chapter 5, Mandel involves the reader in a detailed discussion of the background of Berlin's Kreuzberg, its pre- WWII identity, and how it became a "Turkish ghetto." She uses the rich data from this environment to point out the relationship between place and hierarchies and to argue that "perception plays a central role in the meanings assigned to spatialized practices" (p. 154). In chapter 8, Mandel presents detailed analyses of Germany's citizenship and immigration laws (including a nice discussion on citizenship theory) and how national debates over what constitutes a rightful German have changed over time to include returning ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*), while systematically excluding the Turkish guestworker from conceptions of national belonging. Narrative accounts of Turks' response to the changing laws and how it has affected their self-perception follow. Through these accounts Mandel illustrates how Turkish strategies of belonging in Berlin are determined by individual perceptions that shift with time and public perception—a process she describes as a "mimetic play of mirrors" (p. 21). From this she posits that the environment (both physical and political) continues to put constraints on Turkish individuals and broadly paints them as "misfits" who are perpetually relegated to "second-class status" (p. 230).

The last section of the book is devoted to cosmopolitan challenges for Turkish and other "demotic" populations which Mandel suggests stem from German discourses of over-foreignization and new integration programs that continue to push for a common culture. She argues that at the

heart of German multiculturalism is a "hierarchical ideology" that relegates the Turks to an ethnicized underclass (p. 323).

Cosmopolitan Anxieties is successful at problematizing constructions of ethnic categories, culture, and homeland as processes that both replicate and challenge ascribed and assumed ethnicities. However, some aspects of Mandel's analysis appear contradictory. First, there appears to be an inherent contradiction between Mandel's compelling analysis of Turks in Berlin, a city whose "centrality is unavoidable when exploring the interplay of local and global identities" (p. 27), and her ubiquitous extension of these factors to all Turkish peoples living in Germany. Left perhaps for future analysis is any evidence of how otherness is interpreted, lived, experienced, or ethnicized by Turks who have settled in other, less exceptional areas of Germany; a small village, perhaps. If one is going to treat the city of Berlin as a unit of analysis, as Mandel does, then the conclusion should more explicitly discuss how its absence might affect outcomes of citizenship and belonging for Turks living elsewhere. Similarly, Mandel extends her analysis of Germans living in Berlin to the whole of Germany, and in doing so the book dedicated to un-ethnicizing the Turks inadvertently succeeds in essentializing the Germans. More importantly, by overextending this analyses Mandel misses an important opportunity to add to theories of locality in belonging.

Another weakness of the book is chapter 4, "Haunted Jewish Spaces and Turkish Phantasms of the Present." Here Mandel overestimates the connection between social attitudes toward Turkish identity and ancient stereotypes about German Jews. For example, her analysis of food prohibitions compares the consequences of past German associations of Jewish people with feces to the current social consequences of German "anti-garlic prejudice" against Turkish people. Mandel discloses her own Jewish heritage at the outset of this chapter, and as a result of her vested interest,

might see these and other “similarities” as more apparent than they will come across to the average reader.

Despite some shortcomings, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties* offers historical depth, rich and complex longitudinal ethnography, and nuanced analysis of the way Turkish guestworkers in Berlin rise above ethnicized perceptions to negotiate citizenship and a sense of belonging. Mandel’s book is, therefore, a crucial contribution to longitudinal ethnographic research on immigrant populations in urban centers, and contributes to an anthropology of movement, displacement, and emplacement. It may be too densely written to be used in undergraduate classrooms but should be read by scholars interested in immigrants in contemporary Europe, Muslim migrants, or governmentality.

Note

[1]. James Clifford, “Mixed Feelings,” in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 36-70.

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Citation: Faith Nibbs. Review of Mandel, Ruth Ellen. *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany*. H-SAE, H-Net Reviews. November, 2010.

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