

Stefan Manz. *Constructing a German Diaspora: The “Greater German Empire”, 1871-1918.* Oxford: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2013. 360 pp. \$145.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-415-89226-1.



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In this volume, Stefan Manz starts from the observation that German nationalists, both in imperial Germany and abroad, increasingly emphasized the importance of preserving ethnic links between Germany and German migrants for the benefit of both migrants and the metropole. Through this process, Germans worldwide underwent a redefinition from geographically scattered and disparate groups to a diaspora, an ostensibly unified transnational “community of spirit.” The questions Manz asks of this phenomenon are: what were the elements and mechanics of this process? To what extent did it actually have an impact on migrants’ experiences of belonging and, in turn, national identity construction within Germany as that of a nation which was not confined to state borders?

In order to answer these questions, Manz does not focus on metropolitan representations of the diaspora alone, nor on imaginings of the diaspora in a single state or region. Rather, the scope of this study encompasses detailed examples from both the German metropole and German mi-

grants in Australia, Brazil, Britain, China, Russia, South Africa, and the United States, as well as touching more briefly on many other migrant communities. The sheer scale of this study is one of its most impressive features, allowing the author to demonstrate that many seemingly isolated developments were in fact transnational in scope. At the same time, Manz does not reduce the “Germans abroad” to a single entity. Rather, he analyzes the manifold ways in which the diaspora-nation was negotiated both within Germany and in migrant communities. He concentrates on the means by which ideas were disseminated through globally operating organizations, means of communications and transport, and the German-language press. By approaching the diaspora-nation relationship from the metropole as well as the periphery, Manz seeks to break up the paradigm of the nation as a self-contained unit, instead concentrating on its transnational entanglements. He recalibrates German nationalism as “transnational nationalism,” arguing that “Imperial Germany and its diaspora have to be seen as one permeable

space in which the themes of migration and nation were experienced and negotiated” (pp. 6-7).

The first chapter provides a brief but solid overview of the history of migration from lands that formed part of Germany after 1871, and will be of particular use to readers unfamiliar with German migration history. The second chapter examines three key drivers that led metropolitan German nationalists to embrace (and invent) the diaspora: unification of imperial Germany in 1871 on the basis of shared German nationalism encouraged metropolitan Germans to also look to Germans abroad; Germany’s increasing international profile encouraged metropolitan Germans to view Germans abroad as expressions of imperial power; and finally, Germany’s unification and growing international influence inspired many German migrants to take a new interest in the metropole.

Chapters 3, 5, and 6 address three selected areas of national identity construction: politics, religion, and language. Chapter 3 focuses on political associations, especially *Flottenvereine* (naval clubs) as a measure of active participation by the diaspora in creating a transnational German nationalism. Manz argues that for German nationalists in and out of Germany, the navy symbolized German power, Germany’s interest in the Germans abroad, and the commitment of Germans abroad to Germany (as manifested through local fundraising efforts for the German navy, and welcome committees for visiting ships, which were accompanied by national celebrations).

Manz also notes that there were no *Flottenvereine* in the two largest state recipients of German migration: the United States and Russia. Potentially, then, the choice of naval associations as a subject of analysis might have limited the scope of the study. However, in chapter 4 Manz breaks with his thematic approach to examine German migrants in these two key states in greater detail. Russia and America serve as counterpoints to the other case studies, providing key examples of how

German migrants embraced German nationalism—but also of the limitations of diaspora. In America, leaders of ethnic associations embraced pan-German nationalism in an attempt to compensate for declining membership, itself a reflection of declining outward migration rates from Germany after 1890, and increased assimilatory pressures. In Russia, increased assimilatory pressures from the state encouraged a similar response. In both states, German national leaders, connected to the transnational flow of ideas, expressed very similar notions of *Deutschtum* to those expressed in Germany. However, in neither state did German nationalists center their Germanness on Germany. In America, Germans sought integration into the American dream, emphasizing their commitment as German Americans, while in Russia political opposition from the state and comparative isolation discouraged association with Germany.

Chapter 5 examines the pervasive role of Lutheran pastors in spreading concepts of German nationalism through church networks linking diaspora parishes to provincial churches in Germany, especially the Prussian Protestant Church. Manz highlights that just as Protestants in Germany reinterpreted their faith in national terms, they also reinterpreted their religious diaspora in the same fashion. Protestant churches established diaspora parishes, as well as publicizing the diaspora in Germany through their fundraising activities. Protestants faced competition from German Catholics, who similarly reinterpreted their faith in national terms. However, the international structure of the Catholic Church hampered efforts to create nationalist missions. Manz notes a number of limitations to attempts to present Lutheranism in national terms. Firstly, the fractured network of provincial churches in Germany was reproduced in the diaspora, limiting unity. Secondly, “national” congregations in the diaspora often included members of other nationalities, who resisted the reinterpretation of Protestant congregations as specifically German.

Finally, Protestant congregations in the United States and Russia developed their own overarching organizations that remained quite independent of, and sometimes competed with, missions from Germany.

Chapter 6 explores efforts at German language maintenance in the diaspora. Manz notes that language preservation took on an ideological significance out of proportion with actual linguistic impact, as a marker of transnational belonging and power-political aspirations. He argues that German state support for diaspora schools was driven by the desire to strengthen ties to the diaspora, maintain markets for German goods, reinforce a positive image of Germanness abroad, and in some cases (for example, southern Brazil) to reinforce potential territorial claims. Consequently, the Foreign Office restricted support to schools independent of host country control, and that reinforced a strong connection to Germany, excluding most schools in Russia and the United States. Teachers, sent out from Germany to improve educational standards, were also selected for their political views and commitment to German nationalism. In turn, teachers in the diaspora established their own association, the Verein deutscher Lehrer im Auslande (Association of German Teachers Abroad), which was driven from the periphery and informed members of educational developments throughout the diaspora.

Manz concludes his account by looking forward to the First World War and interwar period, arguing that Germans abroad were not passive victims of anti-German sentiment during the First World War as they are often portrayed; rather, migrants were tools in the hands of national leaders in both the metropole and the diaspora. Manz suggests that many of the experiences of transnational German nationalism are echoed in other national diasporas, drawing comparisons to the Turkish diaspora in Germany. Over all, this volume presents a highly persuasive thesis, backed by a very broad range of evidence. Manz amply

demonstrates the utility of his transnational approach, providing a broad overview of the diasporization process while still drawing out the complexities of attitudes to Germanness inside and outside of Germany.

A number of aspects of this volume invite further study. As Manz acknowledges, middle-class men dominated the transnational organizations and publications under study here. The author balances this focus where possible with evidence of participation, apathy, or resistance from other segments of society, including women's groups and working-class migrants. This is done more effectively in some chapters, such as chapter 3 on political associations, than in others. For example, the voices of few parents or students are heard in chapter 6 on schools. A transnational examination of other classes' attachments to German nationalism awaits further study.

Secondly, as broad as this study is, it inevitably excludes many German migrant communities. For example, Manz has comparatively little to say about German speakers in/from the Habsburg lands, who also embraced German nationalism in this period, but for whom Vienna presented an alternative center of loyalty. Did they experience the same transnational developments? Similarly, Austrian Germans, as well as Swiss Germans frequently formed part of German-speaking diaspora communities, and as Manz highlights, were often considered "German" by leaders of German nationalist organizations. Manz also notes that non-German citizens, including Austrians, sometimes objected to the nationalization of diaspora churches. How, then, did the Austrian diaspora identify? This question also awaits future study.

Finally, this study primarily focuses on the relationship between metropole and periphery. Manz also examines connections between different sections of the diaspora, but primarily (though not solely) in the sections on Germans in America and Russia, where local German nationalism

formed an alternative to ties to the metropole. Consequently, less is revealed about the interaction of ties within the periphery with ties to the metropole.

It would be churlish to criticize a book, especially one as far-reaching as this one, for what it does not do; rather, these limitations are invitations for additional research. The scope of this study is breathtaking. Manz presents here a very significant contribution to the field, and a model for the study of other diaspora nationalisms.

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