

»Germans like to quarrel«

Conflict and belonging in German diasporic communities around 1900

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Introduction

Nation-building processes always go hand in hand with discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Germany after 1871 was no exception. Socialists, Catholics, and Jews all experienced some degree of marginalization, and pertinent public discourses were largely male dominated. Yet another platform to discuss issues of national belonging and »not-belonging« were German emigrants. In the course of the nineteenth century, the term *Auswanderer* (emigrants) was increasingly replaced by the term *Auslandsdeutsche* (Germans abroad), emphasizing persisting ties with the metropole despite residence abroad. Emigrant communities were now represented as outposts of a »Greater German Empire,« tying in neatly with global power aspirations. In economic terms, they could act as promoters or customers of German industry and trade. In cultural terms, they could disseminate a supposedly superior Germanic culture and elevate the cultures of their host societies. In political terms, they could be used to legitimize territorial claims, especially in east central Europe. Recent scholarship has developed the term »diaspora construction« to encapsulate the process of bringing emigrants into the fold of the nation through globally operating organizations, means of communication and transportation, and a flourishing ethnic press, which was itself integrated into global information flows (Penny and Rinke 2015; Manz 2014; Conrad 2006).

Kaiser Wilhelm II himself projected expansionary aspirations into his distant countrymen by speaking of the diaspora as the »Greater German

Empire« (*Größeres Deutsches Reich*). In his speech marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the German Empire, he remarked:

The German Empire has become a world power. Everywhere, in the farthest corners of the globe, dwell thousands of our countrymen. It is your part, gentlemen, to help me in the task of linking firmly this greater German Empire with the smaller home. (Klaussmann 1903, 132)¹

By investigating conflicts in German migrant communities around 1900, this article raises doubts whether these ideologically inspired ascriptions of diasporic bondage and homogeneity were a universally applicable reflection of a more complex reality. »The« German abroad did not exist. What did exist were extremely heterogeneous groups or individuals of different geographical regions, political convictions, religious beliefs and social backgrounds, all moving into, and within, very different contact zones. Despite their heterogeneity, however, recent scholarship has made important inroads into integrating *Auslandsdeutsche* into a more comprehensive and polycentric understanding of historical national narratives. In negotiating their relationship with the metropole, these communities entered into both inward and outward facing dialogues to test the »boundaries of Germanness« (O'Donnell, Bridentahl, and Reagin 2005; Penny and Rinke 2015). The following article shares the polycentric notion, but approaches it from different theoretical and methodological angles. In conceptualizing *Auslandsdeutsche* around 1900 as a diaspora (Manz 2014), it follows recent theorizations which attempt to define what constitutes a diaspora. Robin Cohen's (2001, 26) criteria include »a strong ethnic group consciousness« and »a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement.« For Gabriel Sheffer (2003, 9–10), diasporas are primarily social-political formations, best defined by ethno-national parameters, that maintain »regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries.«

1 All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.

With these criteria in mind, utterances by, and about, *Auslandsdeutsche* assume a new quality as a transnational discursive platform to negotiate *aspects* of diasporic belonging. They were particularly telling when the discourse turned sour. Methodologically, therefore, the following article argues that instances of conflict are a useful but hitherto underexplored tool to bring to the surface the *boundaries* of diasporic belonging. The article takes internal conflicts from German communities around the world as a springboard to analyze public contestations of belonging to the respective local German community on the one hand, and to the imagined »Greater German Empire« on the other hand. Primary sources abound with gossip, aggressive bickering, and official complaints to authorities. As one German solicitor in Shanghai remarked, possibly with a pinch of self-interest: »*Der Deutsche zankt sich gern*« (Germans like to quarrel).² Case studies from southern Brazil, Glasgow, Cairo, and Shanghai will investigate themes such as politics, religion, class, language, and culture. These particular case studies were chosen for their wide geographic and thematic spread. The focus on public discourse analysis means that authorship profiles of primary sources are confined to the educated middle-classes, producing texts such as letters to authorities, reports and newspaper articles. The discourses studied took place not only *within* communities, but also between them, as well as with the metropole, all in multi-directional ways. Questions of belonging were discussed around the world using strikingly similar arguments and terminology. The article thus feeds into what Jürgen Osterhammel (2009, 1292), in his study of nineteenth century globalization, calls an »asymmetric densification of references.«

Cairo: Inclusion and exclusion

Religious life serves well to introduce the issue of inclusion and exclusion. Frictions could arise from clashes of interest, which were increasingly fought along national lines within multi-ethnic »German« communities. As a backdrop, however, it is first necessary to highlight the crucial

2 *Das Echo*, 5 June 1902.

importance of Protestant churches abroad within the ideological framework of a »Greater German Empire.« Negotiations of religious conflict and symbolism lay at the heart of national identity formation after German unification in 1871. Elites in the Prussia-led Reich polemicized fiercely against »fatherland-less« Catholic ultra-montanism and universalism, which allegedly stood against the essence of the »true« German spirit. Heinrich von Treitschke and other historians represented Martin Luther as a national hero who had tried to liberate his fatherland from Roman domination. Whilst Catholicism was condemned for spiritualism and superstition, Protestantism stood for modernity and rationalism. The ethnically homogeneous nation state was seen as part and parcel of this modernity (Eley 2003; Walkenhorst 2007). Increased emigration in connection with global political aspirations after 1871 meant that this nexus was replicated abroad. More and more diaspora congregations decided to become formally attached to one of the German *Landeskirchen* (regional churches), most notably the Prussian Church. The number of congregations affiliated with the Prussian Church rose from 21 in 1861 to over 100 in 1904 and about 200 in 1914. The total number of congregations abroad attached to one of the German state churches stood at 307 in 1914. Their statutes had been approved by the respective state church, they entertained substantial transnational correspondence, received some financial support, and were sent pastors who had been ordained in Germany. Examples of attached congregations include Blumenau in Brazil with 7,500 members in the prewar years, Cairo with 2,200 members, Cape Town with 1,800, Glasgow with 500, and Shanghai with 57 (Manz 2014, 176–227, 277–303).

The sources for Cairo enable us to take a closer look at internal frictions that were hardly in line with projections of diasporic unity. The congregation was founded in 1873 and closely connected to the hospital of the local Kaiserswerth Deaconesses. The small plot in the central Ismail quarter had been given to the General Consul of the North German Confederation in 1869 by Vice King Ismail Pascha for erecting a Protestant church and school. In 1906, a bitter dispute surrounding the church building opened up wider issues of national and transnational

belonging. Pastor Kahle and the German consul, Dr. Gumprecht, wanted to sell the plot, benefit from high real estate prices, and move to newly built modern premises on the outskirts of the city. Others in the congregation wanted to remain in the center of town. The conflict was widely reported in the German press and generated substantial correspondence between the congregation, the Foreign Office, and the Protestant church council in Berlin. Resisting the move, a retired General von Ploetz felt he had been »publicly insulted« in a congregation meeting by a consular representative, subsequently accusing him of being a »man with a questionable sense of honor« and the pastor of »immoral official actions.« Von Ploetz was, in turn, officially sued for libel. The German Foreign Office received a number of libelous letters in relation to the pastor.³

An important point of contention was whether non-German members should have a say in the move. The congregation was traditionally mixed, with Swiss, Dutch, and other Protestants being eligible to vote and admitted to vestry board positions. French-language Swiss Protestants were also allowed to use the church for their services. When it emerged that the non-German contingent tended to resist the move, some Germans closed ranks along national lines. Four congregation members protested to the Foreign Office about foreign elements participating and having a say in congregation matters:

The German church and school are preservers of German ways, culture, and influence, and it is a *Ehrenpflicht* [duty of honor] to look after them. [...] Only if we do not become internationalized, only if we are a firmly enclosed structure which draws its strong reserves from *Volkstum* itself will we be able to effectively keep up Protestant belief abroad through the German nature and to defend the German church and school in the Orient as a central fortress of the German Protestant creed. This will then act as a bulwark for

3 Ploetz to Foreign Office, 21 Apr. 1906, and Consul to Foreign Office, 1 June 1906, AA-PA R901/39638/129; several libelous letters and Consulate Cairo to Foreign Office, 4 Apr. 1907, AA-PA R901/39639; Consul Gumprecht to Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat, 3 July 1908, AA-PA R901/39639/72.

dispersed co-religionists from other nationalities. [...] The vote for non-German members is an abuse. [...] We have legitimate fears that sooner or later the German Protestant church will be flooded with foreign elements.⁴

When a majority vote decided to restrict any voting to *Reichsdeutsche* only, the German-speaking Swiss demanded compensation and wrote to Berne about the matter. A number of non-German members left the congregation in protest. The plot was ultimately sold for four million marks. In a different part of the city, a community center developed which was described as territorial demarcation by the *Kölnische Zeitung*, a newspaper close to the foreign office: »With admiration and pride we see new buildings [...] looking like a whole city quarter consisting of school, church, vicarage, Kindergarten, and consulate.«⁵ The newspaper also reveled in the fact that the church and school would now be just as representative as those of the French, and that the French press criticized this new German presence as being too ostentatious.⁶ *Der Montag* found that the protest of the French and German-speaking Swiss members derived from an erroneous interpretation of the law that the Protestant church

4 AA-PA R901/39638/134–40, no date; »Deutsche Kirche und Schule sind Träger deutschen Wesens, deutscher Kultur und deutschen Einflusses. Es ist eine Ehrenpflicht, sie zu pflegen. [...] Nur dann, wenn wir nicht internationalisiert sind, wenn wir ein fest geschlossenes Gefüge sind, das sich seine starken Reserven im deutschen Volkstum selbst holt, werden wir imstande sein, durch das deutsche Wesen den evangelischen Glauben wirksam im Auslande aufrecht zu halten und die deutsche Kirche und Schule im Orient als eine Hochburg deutschen evangelischen Glaubensbekenntnisses zu verteidigen, die dann einen Stützpunkt für die in der Zerstreuung lebenden Glaubensgenossen fremder Nationalitäten sein wird. [...] Das Stimmrecht nichtdeutscher Mitglieder der Kirchengemeinde ist ein Abusus, der gegen die Tendenz und den Inhalt der Statuten verstößt. [...] läßt sich in dem internationalen Egypten die Befürchtung nicht zurückweisen, dass doch über kurz oder lang die deutsch-evangelische Kirche mit fremdländischen Elementen überflutet wird.«

5 *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20 Mar. 1908; also 25 Apr. 1908.

6 *Ibid.*, 26 Jan. 1907.

was not *reichsdeutsch*, but international.⁷ Whatever the agenda behind each of these players, it becomes clear that national fault-lines were now part of the fabric of migrant communities, and that their negotiation was conducted within a transnational space which included Cairo, Germany, Switzerland, and France.

Southern Brazil: Politics and religion

Within Brazil, the southern federal states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina were the main magnets for nineteenth century German immigrants and hosted several hundred thousand by 1914. The town of Blumenau was founded in 1850 by a pharmacist from Braunschweig, Dr. Hermann Blumenau, and soon developed as an urban administrative center for the surrounding rural farm holdings. It also attracted artisans, small industrialists, merchants, and generally a bourgeois middle-class. This, in turn, led to a public infrastructure with German schools, associations, churches, newspapers, theater groups and choirs, as well as a hospital and a library (Schulze 2016; Frotscher Kramer 2008). Blumenau was not a self-contained, isolated town within an impenetrable jungle environment, but was involved in a global exchange of information, mirroring political cleavages in the metropole and elsewhere. One example was the conflict surrounding the local general practitioner, Dr. Hugo Gensch. Before coming to Blumenau in the 1880s, Gensch had practiced medicine in Frankfurt. Due to his social democratic affinities he had clashed with the authorities, spending a short time in prison. He also made a point of treating prostitutes for venereal diseases, which did not particularly please the authorities. Gensch left for Blumenau but did not leave his political convictions behind. He quickly joined the editorial board of the *Blumenauer Zeitung*, which was critical of the political course of the Kaiserreich. In contrast, the other local newspaper, the *Urwaldsbote*, was staunchly nationalist. In 1902, a press war between the two erupted. The *Urwaldsbote* accused Gensch of launching »disgraceful attacks against local *Deutschtum* and the German government.«⁸ The *Blumenauer Zeitung*,

7 *Der Montag*, 11 Feb. 1907; similarly, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 27 Jan. 1907.

8 *Urwaldsbote*, 2 Feb. 1902.

in turn, defended Gensch as an »upright social democrat« and an »enemy of the monarchy and the self-governing regime of his fatherland,« which was »autocratic, despotic and intolerant.«⁹

This was countered by a smear campaign which became more and more personal. It was led by a local merchant and honorary German consul, Gustav Salinger. He wrote to the police authority in Frankfurt, which happily supplied details of Gensch's former life. Particulars about his imprisonment and his contact with prostitutes were disseminated in the community through the *Urwaldsbote*. The paper depicted Gensch as an »intriguer and drunkard who hangs around in obscure bars and preaches his wisdom to the lowest elements, drinking schnapps and beer.«¹⁰ Bismarck's vision of the homogenous nation state had excluded social democrats as »waterlandslose Gesellen« (fellows without a fatherland), not least because they had argued against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. In the same vein, the *Urwaldsbote* recommended to Dr. Gensch that he should »look for a new sphere of activity outside Blumenau.«¹¹ Criteria of belonging to the local migrant community as well as to the »Greater German Empire« were highly contested, both in the metropole and abroad.

This kind of contestation does not square up with the armchair fantasies produced in and for the metropole. Settlement areas abroad were represented as spaces where political differences would disappear. The diaspora situation would heal those political rifts that were constitutive of the Reich itself—and Brazil was seen as a particularly suitable space to make this happen. The *Handbuch des Deutschtums im Auslande* (Handbook for Germandom Abroad), for example, explained that »Blumenau has the same character as a medium-sized German town in the countryside. [...]

9 *Blumenauer Zeitung*, 22 Feb. 1902.

10 Consul Salinger, Blumenau, to Imperial General Consul von Zimmerer, Florianopolis, 4 Apr. 1902, AA-PA R141741; »Ränkeschmied und Trunkenbold, der sich in den obscursten Kneipen herumtreibt und dort bei Schnaps und Bier den niedrigsten Elementen seine Weisheit predigt.«

11 *Urwaldsbote*, 2 Feb. 1902.

The whole atmosphere is one of peaceful comfort.«¹² Another text, by Robert Gernhard, a travel writer, maintained that those who arrived in Brazil as »fanatical Social Democrats« soon shed their »sectarianism« and ceased to be Social Democrats.¹³ The episode surrounding Gensch is a poignant example of reality on the ground not matching, in political terms, such emigrationist fantasies. This picture is corroborated by wider studies on, for example, German anarchists in New York or socialists in Australia, who remained politically active after emigration (Goyens 2007; Bonnell 2013).

The tendency of theorizations to homogenize diasporas in terms of their social make-up has recently, and rightly, been critically reviewed. Focusing upon internal differences does not question the applicability of the concept to a given ethno-national group, but rather generates a more comprehensive and differentiated picture. Parreñas and Siu (2007, 7), for example, call for an appreciation of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class as dividing markers within diasporic groups. In what follows, I argue that religion should also be considered within this context. By this I mean not only confessional splits (Catholic–Protestant), but also denominational differences within Protestantism itself. These call into question Wilhelmine constructions of Germans abroad as a unified block—but do not preclude the application of the diaspora concept. They also help to reflect on whether attempts by Reich institutions and organizations to link emigrants more closely to Germany were in fact successful. The Brazilian example shows that any answer must be qualified. A compilation from 1908 lists a total of ninety-five Protestant congregations, of which thirty-three were attached to the Prussian Church, nine to the *Lutherischer Gotteskasten*, twelve to the *Barmer Verein* (seven of them jointly with the Prussian Church) and thirteen to the North American Missouri Synod. Eighteen were not attached to any synod or organization outside Brazil (Bussmann 1908,

12 »Blumenau trägt den Charakter einer ländlichen deutschen Mittelstadt [...] Es herrscht im Ganzen eine friedliche Gemütlichkeit.« (Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein 1904, 141–42)

13 Quoted in Conrad (2006, 275).

412–17). Just within the Protestant sector, we therefore have a five-fold split caused by different denominations or desired levels of independence. Catholicism and Judaism would, of course, make up the sixth and seventh religious splits.

The question of external attachment caused a split not just *between* but also *within* congregations. There was friction between those who had settled in Brazil long ago and were often naturalized (*Deutsch-Brasilianer*), and those who had arrived more recently (*Reichsdeutsche*). The former were concerned about their congregations' autonomy and also about their standing within the Luso-Brazilian host society, which tended to associate German institutions with aggressive Reich nationalism (Dreher 1978, 94; Luebke 1999, 110–22). One church official from Münster, D. Zöllner, after a lengthy visitation to Brazilian congregations in 1910, found it »fatal when theologians, teachers or young merchants who have just arrived from Germany immediately act as the saviors of Germanness, proclaiming pan-German ideas in their extreme form.« For example they would say about community matters »it is about time you came under proper Prussian command« and on congregational matters, »The Prussian Church Council should have a say here and interfere in a way that your senses would leave you.« Zöllner mentioned the case of former pastor turned school director and prolific public speaker Herr Meyer in Porto Alegre, »who is guided by the ideal of Pan-Germanism in its sharpest form« and who approached church representatives with utterances such as: »I would rather march after the sounds of a Prussian regimental band than after those of your Pan's pipe.« *Deutsch-Brasilianer* often felt repelled by this tone, regarded Reich-supported institutions with suspicion and »feared the Prussian spiked helmet.«¹⁴

14 Travel inspection report, Generalsuperintendent D. Zöllner (Münster), Evangelische Gemeinden in Brasilien, 1910, EZA 5/2174. »Für besonders fatal halte ich es, wenn eben von Deutschland gekommene Theologen oder Lehrer oder auch jüngere Kaufleute nun sofort in der Weise als Retter des Deutschtums auftreten wollen, dass sie alldeutsche Ideen in extremer Fassung proklamieren. [...] Wenn nun der Reichsdeutsche ihm bei jeder Gelegenheit sagt, Ihr solltet einmal unter ein richtiges preussisches Kommando kommen, das thäte euch not, oder auf die kirchlichen

Brazil was contested territory when it came to religious authority, and this was always linked to questions of national attachment. The North American Lutheran Missouri Synod entertained active missionary activity and had 13 affiliated congregations in Brazil, mostly in the Rio Grande do Sul province. For visiting Prussian church officials such as Pastor Martin Braunschweig, this posed a threat to the »spiritual cohesion between colony and *Heimat*.« If Berlin did not provide more support, he wrote, »an acute Americanization of most of the Riograndensian *Deutschtum* is, in my opinion, unavoidable.«¹⁵ For Consul Karl Walter, attachment to the Prussian Church was crucial to strengthen »the German-Protestant congregations against the intrusion of the Lutherans of the North American Missouri-Synod with its hostile propaganda directed against Germanness.«¹⁶ The threat was therefore perceived to be a two-fold one: firstly of assimilation into the culturally »inferior« Luso-Brazilian society (*Verbrasilianerung*), and secondly, of Americanization through the Missouri Synod. Apart from the Missouri Synod, the Lutheran *Gotteskasten* posed a further threat to desired Protestant and ethno-national unity. Its pastors had received missionary (rather than academic) training

Verhältnisse angewandt: Ja hier müsste einmal der preussische evangelische Oberkirchenrat zu sagen haben, der sollte wohl dazwischen fahren, dass euch Hören und Sehen verginge« und dergleichen, dann kann man sich die Wirkung auf die Deutsch-Brasilianer vorstellen. [...] [Für Meyer] ist das Alldeutschtum in schärfster Prägung das Ideal geworden. [...] »Ich marschiere lieber nach den Klängen der preussischen Regimentsmusik als nach den Tönen Ihrer Hirtenflöte.« [...] fürchtet man sich vor der preussischen »Pickelhaube.«

- 15 Travel report Braunschweig, EZA 5/2173; »[...] des geistigen Zusammenhanges zwischen Kolonie und Heimat, der durch den Einbruch der Missourisynode ernstlich gefährdet ist. [...] ist eine akute Amerikanisierung des größten Teiles des Riograndenser Deutschtums m. E. unvermeidlich.«
- 16 Consul Walter to Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat, 30 Oct. 1905, EZA 5/311/213–14; »[...] ist der Anschluss im Interesse der Stärkung der deutsch-evangelischen Gemeinden gegenüber dem Andringen der Lutheraner der nordamerikanischen Missouri-Synode mit ihrer dem Deutschtum feindseligen Propaganda befürwortet worden.«

and were more concerned with the worldwide support of Lutheranism than with national issues. This approach, in combination with intrusion into what was perceived to be Prussian church territory, led to conflicts (Besier 1994, 475–76; Dreher 1978, 161–66). Reports draw the picture of a battleground of denominations, especially the »fight« (*Kampf*) in St Catharina province. The *Gotteskasten* had »conquered« (*erobert*) Itoupava, »strengthened its position« (*sich festgesetzt*) in Indayal and »tried to seize« (*hinübergegriffen*) Hansa-Harmonia. The local pastor in Itoupava, Gabler, complained about the rival *Gotteskasten* pastor, Rösler, who »incites his people [...], lies and slanders as he pleases.«¹⁷ As visiting church official Martin Braunschweig observed, »in a national sense it cannot be deplored enough that Protestant Germanness has been split by the intrusion of the *Lutherische Gotteskasten*.«¹⁸

The Brazilian case study shows that attempts by the German Protestant churches to reach out to emigrants and bind them closer to the Reich could have counterproductive effects. The increased global grip did not necessarily lead to denominational, confessional and ethno-national unity but, on the contrary, carried intra-Protestant fault lines and frictions into communities abroad. The diaspora resembled the situation in Germany, and the crux lay in the merging of Protestantism and nationalism. These two entities were not separable elements within a spectrum but rather complemented each other. As Walser Smith remarks, political Protestantism within Germany »harbored the potential for radical nationalism,« and as such, »it neither unified nor homogenized but rather divided and aggravated tensions within the nation« (Walser Smith 1995, 236–38). This analytical framework can legitimately be taken beyond the borders of Imperial Germany.

17 Pastor Gabler (Itoupava) to Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat, 19 Mar. 1913, EZA 5/2048/195; »[...] dass er seine Leute beständig verhetzt. [...] Er lügt und verleumdet munter darauf los.«

18 Travel report Braunschweig, EZA 5/2173/52–54; »In nationaler Beziehung kann es nicht genug beklagt werden, dass das evangelische Deutschtum dieses Staates vor elf Jahren durch das Eindringen des lutherischen Gotteskastens gespalten worden ist.«

Glasgow and class

In addition to politics and religion, the issue of class was another field of idealized diaspora construction: social differences dividing Germany itself would be neutralized in the diaspora. The latter was represented as a laboratory of an ideal nation state without inherent societal rifts. Glasgow is a representative example where associational life was, in actual fact, clearly separated by class. According to census figures, 1053 Germans lived in Britain's »Second City« in 1901. Trade and commerce was the most important occupational sector, both in terms of numbers and diasporic activity. Other occupations included teachers, musicians, brewers, restaurateurs, hairdressers, miners, butchers, and a range of craftsmen such as watchmakers and bottle makers. Whilst the *Deutscher Verein* catered to the bourgeois middle-classes, the *Deutscher Klub* was a meeting point for artisans, shopkeepers, and skilled workers (Manz 2003). The development of Protestant congregational life was a prism of class negotiation and conflict. During the 1880s, a former engineer turned pastor, Hanns Geyer, built up a congregation both for German transmigrants on their way to America, as well as the local migrant community. The United Free Church in Scotland praised the »continued and increasing success of his mission labors.«¹⁹ His services were attended by up to 80 churchgoers. In 1884, he was also employed as a seamen's missionary for Glasgow by the newly founded General Committee for German Seamen and Emigrant Mission in Scotland.²⁰

In the long run, however, Geyer failed to gather support from the wealthier middle classes, crucially the ethnic leaders. He mainly appealed to the working class segment, and class reservations can be detected behind negative comments. Pastor Wagner-Groben from Edinburgh reported to Berlin that he had heard »discouraging judgments from very respectable people« about Geyer's abilities and character, and merchant Carl H. Römmele came to the conclusion that Glasgow needed »a missionary or

19 United Presbyterian Missionary Record, 1 Oct. 1884, 515.

20 Hanns Geyer to Pastor Harms, 4 Aug. 1884, EZA 5/1824/30–31.

preacher for the poor, and one for the better classes.«²¹ Indeed, in 1898 a second congregation was founded with a clear agenda of class differentiation. In the words of timber merchant and leading ethnic figurehead Johannes N. Kiep, this was »established at the initiative of the better German circles,«²² and for some time it had the reputation of being a »church for the rich.«²³ Although over the years it managed to reach out to artisans and the working classes, positions of power remained firmly in the hands of the middle classes. In a sample year, 1908, only three of the 18 parish councilors were artisans. No artisan was ever represented in the executive council, which consisted of six men. Subscriptions were another indicator of class differentiation. In 1905 for example, the congregation had 463 members. Forty per cent of all annual contributions, or £90, came from just four individuals, and 60 per cent came from 14 individuals. All of them were merchants and/or businessmen.²⁴ The relationship with Hanns Geyer's congregation remained tense. As one visitation report put it, »quarrels arose which did not do honor to the German reputation abroad and which very much impeded upon the religious life amongst the Germans.«²⁵ Middle-class voices continued to refer to former engineer Hanns Geyer as a »locksmith.«

The new congregation depended financially on a small group of merchants, and the latter used their position to exercise power. This led to frictions

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- 21 Pastor Wagner-Groben to Pastor Harms, 30 Jan. 1885, EZA 5/1824/32–33; Carl H. Römmele to Pastor Harms, 10 Mar. 1886, EZA 5/1824/37; »Einen Missionar oder Prediger [...] für Arme und einen für besser Situirte.«
- 22 Johannes N. Kiep to Oberkirchenrat Berlin, 12 Nov. 1902, EZA 5/1823/89; »[...] von den hiesigen besseren deutschen Kreisen in's Leben gerufen.«
- 23 Annual Report German Protestant Congregation Glasgow 1901, EZA 5/1823/70; »Kirche der Reichen.«
- 24 Calculated from Congregational Annual Reports in EZA 5/1823.
- 25 Dr. Witz-Oberlin to Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat, EZA 5/1824/1–2; »Streitigkeiten entstanden, die dem deutschen Namen im Ausland nicht zur Ehre gereichten und das evangelische Leben unter den Deutschen arg gefährdet haben.«

with the pastors, who represented, together with the honorary consul, the second position within the migrant community which was sanctioned by the German Empire. They were ordained in Germany and sent by the Prussian Protestant Church Council, but nevertheless had to assert their position vis-à-vis the influential group of merchants. In 1902, for example, Pastor Reinhard Münchmeyer was approached from Dundee to hold regular services and help build up a congregation there. Consul Kiep intervened, threatened to withdraw his financial support, and ultimately managed to cut down Münchmeyer's engagement in Dundee. During the negotiations, he rejected a possible vote among congregation members with the following reasoning:

Simple majority decisions do not generate sensible results. It does not suffice to simply count the votes, they also have to be weighed. You know I have lived here for 35 years and am perhaps the best person to judge the circumstances. [...] The way in which Pastor Münchmeyer dealt with the situation sadly cannot be excused.²⁶

Notwithstanding these frictions, the new congregation was represented as a node within the »Greater German Empire.« Importantly, this happened at both ends. For the *Kölnische Zeitung*, the church was a »constant reminder for the 1,500 Germans in Glasgow to stick firmly and faithfully to their *Deutschtum* and to each other amongst a foreign people.«²⁷ And the main congregation donor in Glasgow, Johannes N. Kiep, stressed that »the German church congregations are destined to play a larger role for faithful

26 Kiep to Harms, 20 Nov. 1902, TH 8662/353, 11; »...Bei einfachen Mehrheitsbeschlüssen kommt nichts heraus. Die Stimmen dürfen nicht einfach gezählt, sondern müssen auch gewogen werden. Sie wissen, ich lebe hier seit 35 Jahren und kann die Verhältnisse doch vielleicht am besten beurteilen. [...] Die Art und Weise des Vorgehens des Herrn Pastor Münchmeyer ist leider nicht zu entschuldigen.«

27 *Kölnische Zeitung*, 25 June 1909; »Die künftige Kirche gilt den 1500 Deutschen in Glasgow als ein stetes Mahnzeichen, festzuhalten an ihrem Deutschtum [...] und treu zu einander zu stehen unter dem fremden Volke.«

adherence to the fatherland and German ways amongst compatriots.«²⁸ Constructions of diasporic belonging were at work abroad just as they were within the Reich.

China: Language and schooling

German romanticists such as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) had developed the idea that the prime marker of belonging to a *Volk* was a common language, rather than a geographically demarcated territory or legalistic nationality. Throughout the nineteenth century—and indeed until 1945—his ideas were politicized and underpinned demands that territories where German-speakers lived or settled were by definition German. The linguistic de-territorialization of national belonging was soon projected onto emigrants. Theirs was an unalterable belonging to a cultural community which was above all defined by language: whoever spoke German, was German. Language preservation as colonialist practice was therefore of crucial importance in order to perpetuate the (trans-)national community (Manz 2014, 227–60).

After a century of mass emigration, around 5,000 German schools abroad with 360,000 pupils existed on the eve of the First World War (Werner 1988, 33). Their organization differed widely. Some of them offered full-time education, others only some Saturday morning instruction. Most were only primary schools, but from the 1890s secondary education became more widely available. There was often a symbiosis with existing congregations, with pastors or priests taking a lead role in pedagogical and organizational management. Through its Department for German Schools Abroad (*Schulreferat*), the German Foreign Office greatly expanded its engagement for *Auslandsschulen* after unification in 1871, and then in an accelerated way during the period of High Imperialism from 1890 onward. By 1914, the Foreign Office supported around 900 schools abroad

28 *Gemeindebote—Monatsblatt der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinden Großbritanniens* XII/8, Apr. 1906, 59, 62; »[...] daß die deutschen Kirchgemeinden berufen sind, für das Wohlbefinden, sowie für das treue Halten am Vaterlande und an deutscher Art unter ihren Landsleuten eine größere Rolle zu spielen, als in früheren Zeiten.«

with 56,000 pupils. Its *Schulreferat* was headed by Dr. Franz Schmidt who, in a straightforward Herderian sense but with the added category of race, contended that »it is in the language, in the way it has developed and in linguistic expressions, that the spirit of the *Volk* reveals itself, its racial nature and its historical character« (Schmidt 1903, 15). In colonialist fashion, schools abroad were now molded into »fortresses of Germanism« and »guardians of the nation« in foreign lands (Judson 2006).

One example was the German School in Shanghai. The school was founded in 1895 by pastor Hackmann, the local missionary of the General Evangelical-Protestant Missionary Society (*Allgemeiner Evangelisch-Protestantischer Missionsverein*), and immediately interpreted by the metropolitan press as »a bulwark for the preservation and fostering of the German language and spirit in the Far East.«²⁹ It was first named *Bismarck Schule* in order to honor the 80th birthday of the former Reich Chancellor, but renamed into *Kaiser Wilhelm Schule* when it moved into new premises in 1911. The institution comprised a pre-school *Kindergarten*, a primary school, and a secondary five year *Realschule* (middle school). Annual support from the Reich rose from 3,000 Marks in the founding year to 7,500 Marks in 1913. Student numbers rose continuously from 22 to 112 during the same period.³⁰

Two instances of internal conflict shed some light on diasporic self-perception. The first of these can be typologically linked to the earlier example of national exclusiveness in Cairo. In Shanghai, demarcation from the non-German environment was clearly defined. Only a maximum of twenty per cent of children from other nationalities were admitted in order to preserve the German character of the school. Chinese children or those from German-Chinese mixed marriages were categorically ex-

29 *Vossische Zeitung*, 23 Jan. 1896; »Ein Bollwerk zur Erhaltung und Förderung deutscher Sprache und Gesinnung im Fernen Osten.« Also see *National Zeitung*, 21 May 1895.

30 Imperial German General Consulate for China, Shanghai, to Foreign Office, 10 May 1900, BAB 901/38906; Annual Report Kaiser Wilhelm Schule 1913/14, courtesy German School Shanghai; *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, 5 May 1905.

cluded. Pastor Ruhmer, school director in 1906–1907, found it important that »only pure white children have access to our institute, whilst all *Mischlingskinder* (mixed children), including those of German men and Chinese women are rejected.« This would preserve the »good, real German spirit« of the school.³¹

Pragmatic voices disagreed. The *Schlesische Zeitung* reported that the policy was under discussion because knowledge of the German language amongst the Chinese and mixed nationality children was beneficial for German trade.³² The *Tägliche Rundschau* suggested a third way. It wholeheartedly agreed that the school should remain »white« as a »protective wall of our national cultural heritage.« It found the mixing (*Vermischung*) of German fathers and Chinese mothers displeasing, but nevertheless pondered that one should at least draw advantages from this reality and establish designated *Mischlingsschulen*. The fact that English schools had an open-door policy meant that these bilingual children were currently turned into pioneers of English, instead of German, trade.³³ Pragmatism, then, stood at the center of a fourth strand of argumentation. In his book on *Germany and China*, Hamburg merchant Julius Kähler argued that dissemination of the German language had only limited benefits for German engagement in China. Rather, he asserted, it would be far more beneficial if Germans felt the need to learn Chinese in order to conduct direct business. According to Kähler, one German with Chinese proficiency was worth more than 500 German-speaking Chinese (Kähler 1914, 93–94).

The issue of language and schooling can thus be integrated into the far wider discourse on Germany's engagement with China around 1900. The

31 Annual Report German School Shanghai 1906/07, BAB 901/38908; Imperial German General Consulate for China, Shanghai, to Foreign Office, BAB 901/38906, 10 May 1900; *National Zeitung*, 25 Dec. 1903; »Nur rein weisse Kinder haben Zutritt zu unserem Institut, während alle Mischlingskinder, auch solche von Deutschen und Chinesinnen zurückgewiesen werden. [...] der gute, echtdeutsche Geist.«

32 *Schlesische Zeitung*, 20 Mar. 1907.

33 *Tägliche Rundschau*, 9 Feb. 1906.

country's vast resources and economic potential generated a flood of publications on how to exploit this potential. Racism was an integral part of this discourse, especially when interwoven with fears of the »Yellow Danger« of a potentially re-emerging economy. These ideas spread throughout Europe during the 1890s. China was represented as the Other that was incompatible with Western European culture. Through its dynamism, it could potentially threaten the cultural and economic balance of the Occident. Racial mixing between »white« and »yellow« was seen as particularly fatal. This fear was made concrete for the German public in the wake of discussions to »import« Chinese *Kulis* (coolies) as agricultural workers into Eastern Prussia. The nationalist writer Stefan von Kotze, for example, expressed fears of a »physically and morally degenerated mixed Volk. [The Chinese] is as alien to us as a Martian, and if he mixes with us we will, as a race, inevitably draw the short straw.«³⁴

Perception patterns of this kind prevented German schools in China from exploiting their local advantage and producing graduates who could easily move and mediate between the two cultures. This also came to the fore in the curriculum, which strictly followed that of a German *Realschule*. Foreign languages included English and French, but not Mandarin. The detailed subject contents and exam questions in the schools' annual reports are more or less devoid of Asian themes, except for occasional references in geography lessons. The history curriculum worked its way from Western Antiquity to »Prussian and German History from 1740–1871.«³⁵ The second generation diaspora was to remain »pure,« both in race and in spirit. Again, pragmatic voices realized that this was not in line with the requirements of an integrating world economy. The *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, commenting on the school in Tsingtao, expressed dissatisfaction

34 Conrad (2006, 192); »[...] ein physisch und moralisch verkommenes Mischvolk [...]. [Der Chinese ist] uns fremd wie ein Marsbewohner, und [...] wenn er sich mit uns mischt, ziehen wir als Rasse den kürzeren«; see also *ibid.*, 168–228. For Chinese racism, however, see Osterhammel (2009, 1226–28).

35 Annual Reports, German School Shanghai, 1911/12 and 1913/14, courtesy German School Shanghai.

with its approach. The business newspaper found it »desirable that our youth should be made familiar with the country and its population in a more thorough way than has hitherto been the case. They should learn to overcome the prejudices against the native population which are widespread almost everywhere, and they should systematically be prepared for exchange with the population. This will be of utmost use later on once our pupils enter professional life.«³⁶ The two opposing views were guided by the same question: How can the German Empire make the best economic use of its second generation diaspora? Pedagogues in the Foreign Office found that the way ahead was to replicate as much »Germanness« as possible abroad in order to create long-term spiritual and intellectual attachment to the metropole. The teachers selected for service abroad had to subscribe to this principle. Some merchant circles abroad, in contrast, expressed a more pragmatic approach which accepted hybridity not only as a fact of diasporic life, but also as an asset in conducting international business and found schools should adapt accordingly.

German institutions in Shanghai were not only discursively linked to the metropole, but also to other diasporic locations, both within China and elsewhere. These translocal contacts were not always harmonious, revealing cracks in the image of an allegedly unified diaspora. The scramble for metropolitan resources, especially between Shanghai and the larger protectorate school in Tsingtao, could be a trigger for frictions. The *Berliner Tageblatt* complained that Reich contributions to the school building in Tsingtao amounted to 250,000 marks, plus regular annual contributions of 65,000. This was in contrast to Shanghai, where the school operated with considerably smaller sums. The *Reichstag* was asked to be more careful in its distribution of resources.³⁷ Direct frictions between the two

36 *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, 5 May 1905; »[...] erwünscht, dass die Jugend mit dem Lande und seiner Bevölkerung in gründlicherer Weise, als bisher, bekanntgemacht wird und die heute fast überall bestehenden Vorurteile gegen die einheimische Bevölkerung überwinden lernt und sich systematisch auf einen Verkehr mit ihr vorbereitet, der beim Eintritt der Schüler in das Erwerbsleben diesen später nur vom allergrößten Nutzen sein kann.«

37 *Berliner Tageblatt*, 25 Nov. 1907.

schools arose after Pastor Ruhmer (Shanghai) had visited Tsingtao and published his impressions in a missionary journal. With subtle criticism he described the millions which had gone into infrastructure and colonial buildings in the protectorate, including the school. His own school in Shanghai, in contrast, had to make do with fewer resources from Berlin and was a mostly financed by the local merchant community (Ruhmer 1907). The headmaster of the school in Tsingtao, Dr. Dönitz, wrote a confrontational reply that aimed to question the significance and quality of the Shanghai school, and Ruhmer's expertise in particular. Publication of Dönitz' text could only be prevented after Ruhmer's official correction.³⁸

Ruptures also arose across continents. *Das Echo*, a newspaper expressing the views of *Auslandsdeutsche*, published an article by Maximilian Hopf from Buenos Aires. After reading about Shanghai, he questioned whether the German community there spent its money efficiently, and stated that the school in Buenos Aires received less money per child from Berlin.³⁹ Taken together with earlier evidence on other locations, the sources on China confirm that diasporic conflicts were played out not only within migrant communities, but also at the translocal and transnational levels. Easy ways of gathering information about other communities across the world in combination with relatively fast communication channels facilitated transnational diaspora negotiation. Definitions of belonging were de-spatialized.

Conclusion

The examples analyzed in this article were drawn from very different world regions and revolved around equally disparate political, religious, social, and linguistic issues. Their common denominator was their contentious nature, triggering telling negotiations of belonging. Internal differences and frictions were woven into the fabric of many German diaspora communities around 1900. They allow for critical engagement

38 Consulate Shanghai to Foreign Office, 25 Mar. 1908, BAB R901/38908; Correction, 7 July 1908, R901/38909.

39 *Das Echo*, 11 Sept. 1902.

with wider issues. First, they question contemporaneous interpretations of the Imperial diaspora as a unified and *Heimat*-oriented block. Metropolitan discourse leaders projected fantasies of national unity into their distant countrymen and -women. Local sources, however, have shown that those religious, cultural, political, and economic rifts which were constitutive of the metropole were, in fact, replicated abroad. They were all part of the discursive construction of an Imperial diaspora which fed into conceptions of a »Greater German Empire.« Just as nations can be understood as discursively constructed entities (Wodak et al. 1999) or »imagined communities« (Anderson 2006), so can diasporas. This leads to a second theoretical point about the nature of diasporas. The article argues that internal ruptures are constitutive elements of diaspora construction and should be considered in concomitant theorizations. Tölölyan (2010, 29) rightly asserts from a constructivist standpoint that »populations are *made* into nations and dispersions into diasporas.« Internal conflicts can shed some light on the process of »making« a diaspora in Imperial Germany. Scholars increasingly appreciate that heterogeneity and ruptures are inherent characteristics of any diaspora (just as they are of any nation). Ruptures do not preclude the application of the term but should, in fact, be adequately discussed within pertinent analyses (Parreñas and Siu 2007). Third, the case studies highlight the close connection between diaspora and nation building. For elites who were keen to define the essence of what it meant to belong to a *Volk*-based state, emigrant communities constituted laboratories of national belonging. They stood at a perceived frontline of belonging, triggering the question of who belonged, or did not belong, to the national and transnational community. A final point is the methodological observation that a focus on conflicts can be a useful tool to investigate wider issues of this kind. They generate utterances that pinpoint critical fault-lines between different groups, interests, and positions pertaining to transnational belonging around 1900.

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