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Material Connections: German Schools, Things, and Soft Power in Argentina and Chile from the 1880s through the Interwar Period

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In Colombia today, high-quality work, or an object produced by superior craftsmanship, is often praised as "*calidad alemana*." That evaluation stems from the notion of "*Deutsche Qualitätsarbeit*": the high quality that is ostensibly inherent in German labor and its products.[1] It was precisely this distinction that spurred many nineteenth-century regimes in Latin America to seek German immigrants;[2] they were eager to harness German talents for local efforts at transforming landscapes and reshaping cities, industries, and populations.[3] As waves of German speakers responded, they came from a great variety of locations across Central Europe and Eastern Europe as families, groups, and individuals, following flows of other people to quite specific places: cities, suburbs, towns, villages, regions, and valleys. Once there, they took up a

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[1] Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2006), esp. ch. 6.

[2] That reputation was old and not limited to Latin America. See, for example, Roger Bartlett and Karen Schönwälder, eds., *The German Lands and Eastern Europe: Essays on the History of Their Social, Cultural and Political Relations* (London: Palgrave, 1999). For an overview, see Alexander Maxwell and Sacha E. Davis, "Germanness beyond Germany: Collective Identity in German Diaspora Communities," *German Studies Review* 39, 1 (2016): 1–15.

[3] For the classic statement, see Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

wide range of lives, some in self-assured German communities, which were nevertheless ethnically, confessionally, and even linguistically disparate.[4]

Across that diverse Latin American geography, German migrants fashioned German places through the production and consumption of German things. That should not surprise us. Over the last two decades, scholars working in a variety of contexts have fruitfully mined the interconnections between migration and material culture, identifying "some of the ways in which the intersecting itineraries of people and things are mutually constitutive," and demonstrating how transnational identities are often "articulated at the interface of public and private space through the consumption of migrating forms of clothing, furniture and other domestic artifacts."[5]

As Nancy Reagin has argued, the process of Germans "settling in" to new locations outside of Western Europe, and the materiality and aesthetics of the German communities created through that process, were by the end of the nineteenth century receiving considerable attention in popular German periodicals. Moreover, the "rediscovery" of so-called "language islands" in Eastern Europe and Southwest Africa during the interwar period was a common occurrence among German travelers to those regions, and their tales of these encounters became integral to national discussions about the character of Germany and Germanness.[6] To mark Germans abroad, Reagin explains, such observers looked to settlers' homes and their contents, and the character of their things "to identify the essential Germanness of these people," which was "thrown into relief by their non-German surroundings." Neatness, order, and the presence of distinctly German things were consistently contrasted with the "domestic disorder and dirt" attributed to Slavic and African homes, which, in turn, were characterized as irregular, poorly kept, and even "primitive" and "smoky."[7]

Similar contrasts and characterizations followed Germans globally; they were commonplace among observations of Germans in Latin America, and those too circulated in popular periodicals, travel narratives, and reports from German officials. Such reports have much to teach us about Germans' interactions with Latin America. They remind us, for example, that despite scholars' extensive attention to the authoritarian character of Imperial Germany (1871–1918) and its colonial and imperial interests, Germany had become an emigrant nation by the early twentieth century. As a consequence, softer forms of power

[4] For an introduction, see: Hartmut Fröschle, ed., *Die Deutschen in Lateinamerika: Schicksal und Leistung* (Tübingen: Erdmann, 1979).

[5] Paul Basu and Simon Coleman, "Migrant Worlds, Material Cultures," *Mobilities* 3, 3 (2008): 313–30, 317.

[6] Nancy R. Reagin, "German Brigadoon? Domesticity and Metropolitan Perceptions of Auslandsdeutschen in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe," in Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, eds., *The Heimat Abroad. The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 248–66.

[7] Ibid., 248.

—such as German migrants' familial, financial, and trade networks in other countries combined with their avid participation in those countries' efforts at building institutions and infrastructures, fashioning educational systems, and producing knowledge about national lands and peoples—played as large a role in Germans' global reach as the imperialist designs of the German nation-state.[8] Perhaps they were even more important.

There is much at stake in distinguishing between hard and soft forms of power and pointing out their conflation by historical actors and contemporary scholars. Marking that distinction is necessary if we want to understand the rise of German networks across Latin America and the motivations of the people who created them, as well as their functions. If we conflate harder and softer forms of power, if we confuse, as many contemporary observers did, the presence of Germans in Latin America with "a German presence," we reify those processes and undermine our ability to analyze particular historical situations and long-term trajectories. We also end up mischaracterizing Germans' interactions with the wider world.

My argument is that much of the soft power shared by Germans abroad came from the ways in which they "settled in" to new locations. Much like in Eastern Europe and Imperial Germany's African colonies, Germans' marked success at settling in to Latin American locations was facilitated by their consumption and production of German things. Thus my contention is that paying attention to the role of German things in this process of settling in will not only help us better understand the origins and character of Germans' soft power in many Latin American locations; it can also teach us a great deal about the notion of Germanness, or *Deutschtum*, as it was experienced, performed, and promulgated in Latin America, and by implication, in other places as well.

Germans' ability to settle in offered them distinct advantages. Most importantly, it led to hybrid German communities that were multilingual, highly literate, interconnected, and able to access an impressive amount of cultural capital because of their affiliation with German networks that became increasingly strong in Latin America after the 1880s. As the German nation-state, founded in 1871, grew in economic and military strength during the last decade of that century, it is clear that relationships between it and Germans in Latin America developed that benefitted Imperial Germany. Yet the point that merits repeating is that the German nation-state was not present at the origins of this process of settling in; it did not drive the creation and development of the cultural and economic networks that benefited Germans on both sides of the Atlantic; nor was it behind the concomitant growth of Germans'

[8] For recent work on German hard power in Latin America, see Juan Alberto Cedillo, *Los Nazis en Mexico* (Mexico, D.F.: Random House, 2010); Gerhard Drekonja-Kornat, *Nationalsozialismus und Lateinamerika: Neue Kontroversen* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2006); and Víctor Farías, *Los Nazis en Chile* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2003).

soft power in Latin America from the 1880s through the interwar period. Many colonial and national lobbies in Imperial Germany wished it were so, and many non-German observers argued that it must be the case when remarking on how much Imperial Germany benefitted from the efforts of Germans abroad and underscoring the moments during which it facilitated those efforts.[9] Despite those observations, however, Germany's political leaders during this period were unable to control or direct the efforts and networks of Germans abroad because, quite simply, they were not theirs to direct. Those networks, as well as the soft power increased by them, were the joint production of many actors in multiple nation-states.

The kinds of networks and soft power produced by Germans settling in were particularly extensive and long lasting in Latin America. It would be impossible within the space of this essay to engage the entire continent or all aspects of Germans' interconnections across it. Thus I have chosen to use examples from Argentina and Chile to make my arguments, for two central reasons: German networks were especially thick and well developed in those states, and both states used German immigrants and migrants to good effect as they established infrastructures, institutions, and ties to international trade. In both states, that included pedagogical institutions as well as networks of schools—German schools and later state schools. German schools, which sat at the center of the German communities in these states, provide us with outstanding information about the characters of these communities, and so they offer us an excellent site for analyzing the process of settling in.

In order to develop my argument about soft power and settling in, I begin this essay with a brief portrait of the conflation of Germans' successes in Latin America with the German nation-state's quest for world power. Assertions that Germans abroad were always already agents of the German nation-state were ubiquitous by 1900 and they persisted into the interwar period even after Imperial Germany's collapse.[10] Those assertions have not held up to analysis, and I follow that portrait with a discussion of the advantages of de-centering the nation-state as we examine Germans' actions abroad. I propose that we re-conceptualize Germans abroad as part of an emigrant nation grounded by German places in many non-German lands and tied together by a collection of polycentric diasporic networks. From there, the essay explains how and why German schools offer us a particularly useful window into German communities abroad and their ties to transnational networks, before turning to specific examples from Argentina and Chile. This is not meant be a comparative essay. Rather it draws first on examples from Argentina, where emissaries of the German nation-state during both the Imperial period and the Weimar

[9] Stefan Rinke, *Im Sog der Katastrophe: Lateinamerika und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2015).
[10] Ibid.

Republic (1919–1933) tried their hardest to channel and shape notions of "Germanness" and thereby to harden the soft forms of German power in that country. I then shift to Chile, where such efforts were less pointed and where we can more easily observe disparate Germans settling in and building German-Chilean communities with multidirectional loyalties and a clear sense of their place in a broader German cultural nation.

CONFLATING HARD AND SOFT POWER

The conflation of Germans' cultural influence and economic successes in Latin America with the German nation-state's goals as a world power has a long history. Its emergence did not coincide with Germans first settling in to Latin American locations. American, British, and French observers first began to conflate the two as Imperial Germany grew in economic, military, and political power. German colonialist and nationalist lobbies certainly aided that propaganda when they made wishful claims about their emigrants' loyalties to the homeland and agitated for more overt control of markets in Latin America.[11] But in reality they had little impact on the actions of Germans abroad. Directly before and during World War I, British laments over German cultural influence became fuel for their warnings to Latin American regimes about a putative "German peril." Imperial Germany, they asserted, intended to capitalize on "its" inroads into Latin America with military might. Although that never happened, these arguments continued throughout the interwar period and reverberated deeply in popular imagination and scholarly analyses.

As the United States eclipsed Great Britain as the leading economic power in Latin America after World War I, there was no shortage of commentary in popular American journals and magazines such as *Foreign Affairs* and *Harper's* that sought to cast the presence of well-integrated, influential, and highly interconnected Germans, their businesses, and their communities in Latin America as a unitary "German presence" that served the interests of the German nation-state. Typical of this genre, and particularly noteworthy, is a 1925 essay by the *Saturday Evening Post*'s Financial Editor Isaac F. Marcosson, "The German in South America." Although it appeared only two years after the economic devastation wrought by the Treaty of Versailles had made German currency worthless, Marcosson warned his readers, "the Germans are becoming our strongest trade rivals" in Latin America.[12]

There was ample evidence of German power. Like most authors of such warnings, Marcosson pointedly identified the most successful German businesses in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay for his readers. Those companies dominated their locations for many reasons, not the least of

[11] Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*; Rinke, *Im Sog der Katastrophe.*

[12] Isaac F. Marcosson, "The German in South America," *Saturday Evening Post* 1925: 36–37, 78, 80–86, here 36.

which, he explained, was the popularity of the label "made in Germany." German things, he wrote, had long been renowned in Latin America. Even many British and American agents abroad treated German things as "the highest quality" things. They were also widely available and easy to obtain. In cities such as Lima, Marcosson noted, "everywhere you see *Aleman*—German—bazars and German names on signs." German shopkeepers were bilingual, their clientele international, and their products highly sought after and quickly delivered. Moreover, he continued, such Germans not only populated and influenced many Latin American spaces but they had also built many Latin American places. His central example was Valdivia, a thriving port city in Chile. When Germans first arrived there in the mid-nineteenth century, he explained, Valdivia "was a collection of mud houses." Yet those erstwhile settlers were "undaunted," and "with the thrift and industry which is their inheritance," they not only transformed the collection of huts into a thriving port but did the same with other cities up and down the coast.[13] Those same "Teutonic" characteristics, Marcosson was certain, allowed the German farmers who supplied those ports with products from the Chilean interior to become "the most successful in South America." Other Europeans also lived in Valdivia and along the coast, "the Germans, however, practically control business and production" and their influence "has spread throughout the republic."

Still, he termed Argentina "the point of strongest German economic contact in South America, and the domain where her art of penetration has reached the finest stage of development."[14] In part, his explanation for German success in Latin America lay in what he termed "Teutonic" characteristics: their "energy, imitation, and most of all ability to adapt merchandise to local needs." Those characteristics gave Germans decided advantages, and those advantages were multiplied because, unlike the Yankees, "the German took root." Typically, he (Marcosson's "German" was unquestionably a man) arrived as a young man, learned Spanish, married into local families, and took on local citizenship. Thus cultural influence went hand in hand with economic success. Those moves additionally tied him to local networks, and they enhanced his international reputation. At the same time, the lone German or German company benefited from German shipping, which rivaled the British before the war and continued to offer him global connections after it. Too, his finances were secured by German banking, which "had branches in every important South American center" and guaranteed his capitalization. Finally, he benefitted from a vibrant associational structure, good schools, and the admiration of local elites. As Marcosson points out, in both Argentina and Chile, Germans filled the ranks of academics, scientists, and teachers. They shaped the militaries and built much of the foundational industry and infrastructure.

[13] Ibid., 82.
[14] Ibid.

Marcosson's characterizations were not unique, and they were repeated over and again in North American assessments from the mid-1920s through World War II.[15] So too was his central explanation for his observations: German cultural and economic influence could only be understood as a product of the nation-state's political vision. Thus "the German in South America," the cipher Marcosson creates out of the hundreds of thousands of disparate Germans and their descendants living there, was, in his telling, always first and foremost a state actor. In order "to analyze and to understand what the German had done and is doing in South America," he argued, "we must first deal with [the German regime's] desire for *Weltmacht*—world power."[16]

Through the *Weltmacht* lens, German trade financed the growth of the nation-state's interests, and German successes followed in Latin America because that state "adopted the true policy for permanent business penetration." In his mind, the three southernmost states of Brazil, which had the largest concentration of German emigrants outside the United States, were before the war "really outposts of the Hohenzollern empire." Even after the war, after the defeat and the destruction of Imperial Germany, after the loss of its navy, its colonies, and its military might, it seemed logical to Marcosson to argue that although "the German became part and parcel of the national life, whether it was Chile, Brazil, Uruguay or Argentina, he remained in most cases a loyal German, even after he had assumed citizenship in the country of his adoption."[17] We now know that those evaluations were wrong,[18] but they nevertheless remain highly influential.

EMIGRANT NATION: CULTURAL, POLYCENTRIC, AND "SETTLED IN"

Some thirteen million Italians left the peninsula between 1880 and 1915 in the largest out-migration in European history. By the century's turn, as Mark Cohate explains, the Italian state worked to accommodate that exodus by recasting itself as a "global nation." To make up for its modest colonial territories, it capitalized on the presence of Italians beyond its borders, who in 1911 made up 14 percent of all Italians.[19] Those efforts did not escape the attentions of German officials. Nancy Green has argued that similar interests drove a transformation of German citizenship law during this period, which she

[15] See, *inter alia*, Richard F. Behrendt, "Germans in Latin America," *Inter-American*, Apr. 1943: 18–23, 37; Carlton Beals, "Swastika over the Andes: German Penetration in Latin America," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1938: 176–86.

[16] Marcosson, "German in South America," 36.

[17] Ibid., 78.

[18] Jürgen Müller, *Nationalsozialismus in Lateinamerika: Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP in Argentinien, Brasilien, Chile und Mexico, 1931–1945* (Stuttgart: Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1997).

[19] Mark I. Cohate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

believes was altered to allow the German nation-state to tie itself to the millions of Germans who had gone abroad. From the foundation of Imperial Germany in 1871, those who left without intent of return faced disenfranchisement, and the nation-state faced the loss of those people and their connections. The 1913 citizenship law changed that: it formally bound German citizens who went abroad to the German state through the codification of *jus sanguinis*, which Green argues was "not simply an ethnicizing concept of citizenship but also a powerful way of constructing the nation even across space."[20]

Yet, as Stefan Rinke reminds us, the process that led to those legal changes in Imperial Germany, which were retained by the Weimar Republic, was driven as much by Germans abroad as by the German nation-state,[21] which in many instances lagged far behind their efforts. Meanwhile, in their competition with other Europeans for influence in places such as Argentina, Germans in Latin America were more likely to harness the German nation-state for their own purposes rather than the other way around.[22] It is precisely those insights that should push us to think past the kinds of colonial questions pursued by Daniel Walther in *Creating Germans Abroad*, which centered on the process of extending notions of German *Heimat* or homeland to Namibia during and after German rule.[23] That is because these processes were at work far beyond the state's colonial possessions. At the same time, it should also move us beyond the notions of formal and informal imperialism that have animated so many studies of German actions in Central and South America.[24] Instead, Rinke's insights into the independent activity and multidirectional loyalty of German communities in Latin America should encourage us to pursue the kinds of global, diasporic networks that Stefan Manz has identified taking shape during the late nineteenth century and into the interwar period, in order to better understand Germans' interconnections with Latin America and its various peoples and nation-states. Even if this "age of entanglements" was a period in which nationalist politics bound to nation-states were at their height,

[20] Nancy L. Green, "The Politics of Exit: Reversing the Immigration Paradigm," *Journal of Modern History* 77, 2 (2005): 263–89, 276.

[21] Stefan Rinke, *"Der letzte freie Kontinent": Deutsch Lateinamerikapolitik im Zeichen transnationaler Beziehungen, 1918–1933*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1996).

[22] H. Glenn Penny, "Latin American Connections: Recent Work on German Interactions with Latin America," *Central European History* 46, 2 (2013): 362–94. Cf. J. P. Daughton, "When Argentina Was 'French': Rethinking Cultural Politics and European Imperialism in Belle-Epoque Buenos Aires," *Journal of Modern History* 80, 4 (2008): 831–64.

[23] Daniel Joseph Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and National Identity in Namibia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 64–85, 130–52.

[24] The classic text in English is Thomas Schoonover, *Germany in Central America: Competitive Imperialism, 1821–1929* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998). For the German, see Jürgen Kloosterhuis, *"Friedliche Imperialisten" Deutsche Auslandsvereine und auswärtige Kulturpolitik, 1906–1918*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1994). For a recent example in Spanish, see Matilde González-Izás, *Modernización capitalista, racismo y violencia: Guatemala (1750–1930)* (Mexico, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 2014).

those politics were never salient among the vast majority of German emigrants who took up residence and citizenship in Latin American states.[25]

The critical distinction between the kinds of German cultural nationalism that contributed to the avid creation of German places in Latin American spaces and the nationalist politics tied to the German nation-state becomes apparent when we approach the people Rodgers Brubaker has termed "ethno-political entrepreneurs" with suspicion.[26] Multiple studies of Germans in Brazil, Poland, Romania, Russia, and other parts of the world have made it clear that such self-appointed spokesmen are not to be trusted.[27] The fact is, while apostles of Germanness were widespread in Latin America and elsewhere during the interwar period, they were not needed to encourage Germans to celebrate their Germanness abroad or to fashion German places in Latin America. Nor were they able to dictate their meanings and character. In part, that is because, as Kris Manjapra has argued, Germanness during the period 1880 to 1945 was "an errant identity," which "created potentials not only for colonial interactions but also for ambivalent relations and entanglements with groups outside Europe and North America."[28] It was also something that emerged eclectically, often organically, as German speakers settled in to a great variety of communities, established churches, homes, and schools, and repeatedly created what Celia Applegate has called "a sense of place."[29]

That process of place-making was integral to the development of soft power enjoyed by Germans in Latin America. Representations of German places identified by Applegate, "which bring together multiplicity and familiarity," were never limited to Europe and the German nation-state's brief colonial possessions (1884–1918). As Marcosson and similar authors lamented, such places became ubiquitous in Argentina, Chile, and other Latin American nations by the turn of the nineteenth century, and they proliferated throughout the interwar period. Moreover, they emerged without the German nation-state's directions, and Germans and non-Germans alike recognized them immediately. They flourished because, as Applegate indicates, there was ample room in the

[25] Stefan Manz, *Constructing a German Diaspora: The 'Greater German Empire', 1871–1914* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014); and H. Glenn Penny and Stefan Rinke, "Germans Abroad: Respatializing Historical Narrative," *Geschichte & Gesellschaft* 41 (2015): 173–96. For Brazil, see Frederik Schulze, *Auswanderung als nationalistisches Projekt: 'Deutschtum' und Kolonialdiskurse im südlichen Brasilien (1824–1941)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2016).

[26] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups," *Archives of European Sociology* 43, 2 (2002): 163–89.

[27] See, *inter alia*, Schulze, *Auswanderung als nationalistisches Projekt*; Winson Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Andrew Demshuk, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945–1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[28] Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[29] Celia Applegate, "Senses of Place," in Helmut Walser Smith, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49–70.

German imagination for this multiplicity of places and the cultural hybridity that accompanied them. Yet that imagination extended much further than she describes: beyond the Alps, across the Atlantic, and, as Marcosson argued, up both coasts of the Southern Cone and into other parts of Central and South America as well. Furthermore, while some German officials and many self-appointed spokesmen sought to harness those places to their own purposes, few succeeded, because they were not their creations. Rather, they were joint productions of the very multiplicity of Germans who had gone abroad, whose purposes sometimes overlapped with, but were never dictated or controlled by, those who remained at home. They also flourished because they were recognized and encouraged by host societies, who saw virtue in having those German places in their midst.[30]

A central contention of this essay is that we can best track the emergence and interconnection of these places by looking at things. Jointly reading books, using identical objects, and wearing similar clothes all build inter-subjectivities. They create community.[31] The influx of German things into Latin America was certainly part of the larger flow of European objects traced by Arnold J. Bauer and others, and Latin America's upper classes also harnessed German things in their efforts to perform their "modernity."[32] Yet German things did much more than add to those elites' choices: in the migratory worlds of Germans who settled across Latin America, German objects played critical roles in delineating a wide variety of fluid German places—German homes, neighborhoods, villages, towns, even landscapes. Their consumption and production marked people and communities as well, articulating their place in a spectrum of Germanness and inscribing the variations in that notion and shifts in its characterizations across space and time. Marcosson, American, British, and French officials, and scholars focused only on hard power have failed to grasp this essential point.[33] Thus this essay is not only about immigrants and things streaming into Latin America around the turn of the century; it is about the importance of studying their interconnections.

[30] Penny and Rinke, "Germans Abroad," 182. See also Miguel Giusti and Horst Nitschack, eds., *Encuentros y Desencuentros: Estudios sobre la Recepción de la Cultura Alemana en América Latina* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru, 1993); and Andrea Krebs Kaulen, Sor Úrsula Tapia Guerrero, and Peter Schmid Anwandter, *Los alemanes y la comunidad chileno-alemana en la historia de Chile* (Santiago: Titular, 2001).

[31] Leora Auslander, "Beyond Words," *American Historical Review* 110, 4 (2005): 1015–45, 1017–18.

[32] Arnold J. Bauer, *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 8, 13, 129–64.

[33] This is true even for many who write about soft power; for example, Frank Trommler, *Kulturmacht ohne Kompass*: *Deutsche auswärtige Kulturbeziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014).

GERMAN SCHOOLS ABROAD

More than any other institution, German schools became sites where the production and consumption of German things was concentrated and multilayered, and where the consistencies and great varieties of Germanness that arrived and evolved in Latin America gained their clearest articulation. Wherever Germans settled in significant numbers they quickly founded schools,[34] and the creation and maintenance of German schools was perhaps the key consistency across discrete German communities that emerged in Latin America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[35] The literacy these schools promoted, the content of their study plans, the social experience of attending them as children and maintaining them as adults tied these eclectic, hybridic communities together and linked them to similar communities around the world.[36] It also set them apart from the majority of the people in their host societies in Latin America, where literacy rates were consistently low, as well as from the millions of largely illiterate immigrants from Italy and other parts of southern Europe, who far outnumbered the mixed array of German speakers.[37]

German sojourners, German migrants, new and old hyphenated citizens (German-Argentines, German-Chileans, etc.), and many non-German elites, all valued these schools because they offered rigorous, bilingual curriculums, and many came to award internationally coveted degrees endorsed by the German Ministry of Education.[38] Here too, the reputation of German work and things was attractive, encompassing the teachers, their lesson plans, and the environment they created in their classrooms and around their institutions, as well as the schools' degrees.

The attraction of these schools, however, was not limited to their pedagogy and ability to bestow credentials. The cultural, economic, political, and social interconnections they fostered were of great value to nation-states. Growing numbers of these schools gained the attention of the German national government after the turn of the century, and through the combined efforts of the dispersed German communities and their German consuls, many received some direct support from the German Foreign Office.[39] By the same token,

[34] For a general discussion, see Harry Werner, ed., *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Westkreuz-Verlag, 1988); and Peter Nasagari, ed., *Deutsche Schulen im Ausland*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Westkreuz-Verlag, 1989).

[35] Penny, "Latin American Connections," 379–81.

[36] On the global character of German schools abroad, see Manz, *Constructing a German Diaspora*, ch. 6.

[37] Cohate, *Emigrant Nation*, 108, 118–19.

[38] For an introduction to German schools, see Gert Geißler, *Schulgeschichte in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen bis in die Gegenwart 2. Auflage* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013).

[39] Bundesarchiv Lichterfelder-West (henceforth BA), R/901/38178–202 (1867–1912). That support, important as it was, never made up more than a fraction of the costs of any given school.

political leaders in Argentina, Chile, and other states embraced these schools as models and hired German pedagogues to shape their educational systems, and they, along with their counterparts in other Latin American states, recognized the economic benefits at the base of these interconnections.[40]

However, the governments of those nation-states did not drive these trends but rather followed them. The vast majority of these schools emerged independently, supported by the efforts of their local communities and funded overwhelmingly by tuitions, dues association members paid to school boards, fundraisers, and donations. Only after 1900 did enthusiastic nongovernmental organizations begin championing efforts toward their centralization. The Allgemeine Deutsche Schulverein (German School Association) was the most important here. This organization emerged in 1881 in response to both Magyarization policies that undercut German schools in Hungary and the Bismarckian regime's disinterest in the fates of German communities outside of the new nation-state's borders.[41] Its founders argued that the best way to preserve German culture abroad was to support German schools, and they worked vigorously over the following decades, expanding their membership through chapters spread across Imperial Germany and extending their interest in schools far beyond Hungary and Eastern Europe. The creation of a chapter in Hamburg in 1904, for example, led to a concerted push to support the centralization and reorganization of German schools in Brazil as well as efforts to supply them and other such schools in Latin America with professional teachers.[42] In 1908, the organization redefined itself as the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA) (Association for Germans Abroad) and expanded its attentions, and by the 1920s it had over two million members affiliated with thousands of chapters spread across the Weimar Republic.[43]

That association was only part of the story. By the turn of the century, a variety of individuals, groups, associations, businesses, and even city and state governments in Imperial Germany were taking ever-greater interest in German communities abroad. Combined, these varied actors, working with their counterparts around the world, lobbied the German national government to support those communities as well. Their arguments were always framed in terms of two goals: to support German cultural development wherever it occurred, and to increase and improve economic interconnections and relations

[40] Fröschle, *Die Deutschen in Lateinamerika*.

[41] Jonathan Kwan, "Transylvanian Saxon Politics, Hungarian State Building and the Case of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein (1881–1882)," *English Historical Review* 77 (2012): 592–624.

[42] See, for example, César Paiva, *Die Deutschsprachigen Schulen in Rio Grande do Sul und die Nationalisierungspolitik* (PhD diss., Hamburg, 1984).

[43] Gerhard Weidenfeller, *VDA: Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland. Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein (1881–1918). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus und Imperialismus im Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1976).

between Imperial Germany and other regions and states around the world.[44] While many Germans both at home and abroad embraced the first goal out of a sense of cultural nationalism, it was the second that led to an increasing flow of capital to support German schools and their communities. It took decades to convince the German government to join this movement, but eventually, between 1899 and 1914, the fund it allocated to support German schools abroad grew from 150,000 to over 1.5 million Reichsmark.[45] The Weimar Republic redoubled those efforts during the interwar period, so that by 1928 the majority of the budget allocated to the Cultural Bureau of the German Foreign Office was being directed into those schools, and hundreds of German teachers were rotating in and out of them.[46]

The argument that finally gained the German government's attention was not only that this support would keep the people who embraced German culture connected to Germans within the nation-state, but that those vibrant connections would also facilitate the development and expansion of trade with the regions in which Germans lived. That, in turn, would guarantee markets in those regions for German goods, and the general assumption was that the bigger and stronger the German communities became abroad, the better the markets would be.[47] Trade, in short, would follow culture and language. In addition, many of the highest quality schools, especially those in capital cities such as Santiago de Chile and port cities like Rosario in Argentina, helped to build cultural, economic, and political connections with local elites. Wherever those high-quality German schools appeared, families among local elites sent their children to them, and Germans living in those locations as well as business and political elites in Germany recognized the benefits of this: incorporating the children of indigenous elites into the German schools was a savvy, long-term investment in future trade relations.[48] In sum, lending support to German schools abroad was an easy means to cultivating soft power, and benefiting from it.

GERMAN SCHOOLS AND GERMAN THINGS

On 18 October 1913, the *Rosariner Zeitung*, the German-language newspaper for the city of Rosario in the province of Santa Fe in Argentina, printed a special issue commemorating German life in and around their city on the hundredth anniversary of Napoleon's defeat at the "battle of the nations" outside of

[44] Reagin, "German Brigadoon?" 257.

[45] BA R/901/38178–202 (1867–1912).

[46] Michael Goebel, "Decentering the German Spirit: The Weimar Republic's Cultural Relations with Latin America," *Journal of Contemporary History* 44 (2009): 221–45, 233.

[47] For a typical articulation, see Deutscher Ambassador in Chile to Bülow, 1 Feb. 1904, BA R/901/38849. For a public statement of the same, see Gustav Lenz, "Die deutschen Schulen in Chile," *Das Echo* 1103, 22 Dec. 1903.

[48] That was true in many parts of the world, not just Latin America. For an overview, see Manz, *Constructing a German Diaspora*, app. III.

Leipzig.[49] The cover boasted a poster-sized rendering in gold of the Völkerschlacht Denkmal (Monument to the Battle of Nations) in Leipzig, one of Germany's most celebrated national monuments. Through the use of runes and images of ancient Teutonic warriors carved into its sandstone walls, the monument ties the glory of German resistance against the French, cast as the "struggle for freedom," to the myths of the German past and the accomplishments of the German present. Etched on the front of the stone edifice in old German script, and prominent in the gilded representation commissioned by the *Rosariner Zeitung*, is the poignant pronouncement: "Gott mit uns" (God with us).

The "us" set at the center of this rendering was necessarily inclusive. It was meant to accommodate the kinds of communities that counted as German in this region of Argentina, and by implication across Argentina and in many other parts of the world.[50] While the special issue included a lavishly illustrated history of the battle of Leipzig, the context in which it appeared is most instructive. That tale of past German glory was nestled between current renditions of great German success: an advertisement for "Cervecería Santa Fe," the province's "best brewery" with its modern bottling facility and "high-quality" pilsner, short histories of Santa Fe's "German colonies," and an introduction to its many schools. The editors underscored that while Germans (including German speakers from Austria, Imperial Germany, Russia, and Switzerland) were not the largest European group in the territory (Spanish and Italians far outnumbered them) their "abilities" in trade and industry had made them exceptionally important. Those abilities stemmed from their communities, and thus the issue, while replete with advertisements for German businesses and goods, was devoted to the history of Santa Fe's German churches and schools—that is, to the institutions that held the communities together, set them apart, and made their successful trade and industry possible.

This was followed by a mix of essays on the German Evangelical communities and churches in Rosario and Esperanza (the nearby Swiss settlement), the German association and its club (which brought them all together), the German hospital, the German men's choirs of Rosario and Esperanza, the German Overseas Bank, and Rosario's breweries. Between those stories were portraits of Dr. Manuel J. Ménchaca, the governor of the province of Santa Fe, and Emperor Wilhelm II, the ruler of Imperial Germany, followed by a smaller photograph of Rodolfo Schmidt, credited as being "one of the most well-known people in the German colonies": he not only represented the city's merchants in the city council, but he was also the chair of Rosario's school board. The editors also included a photograph of the Austrian, German, and Russian consuls

[49] *Rosariner Zeitung*, 18 Oct. 1913, Archive of the German Foreign Office, Berlin (henceforth PAAA), RZ 508 R 62367.

[50] Manz, *Constructing a German Diaspora*, 4. See also Penny and Rinke, "Germans Abroad."

who helped tie these communities and their businesses to their former homelands. The great majority of the special issue, however, was devoted to essays on the history and character of the German schools and the associations that created them, managed them, and secured them funding. The largest and wealthiest school in Rosario, founded by the Rosario School Association in 1892, was simply named the "First German School." The association founded a second school in 1900, the Deutsch-Argentinische Schule Rosario, for the children of workers and others who could not travel within the city to the first school. The twelve other schools in the neighboring communities each received an essay that sketched out its size and history, named the important members of its staff and school board, and underscored its German character.

Such reports were not limited to the local newspaper, and they traveled across the international networks that linked German schools abroad. *Die Deutsche Schule im Auslande* (German schools abroad) was the most obvious conduit, and the journal often published abridged annual reports produced by German schools. In 1907, for instance, the director of Rosario's First German School submitted a report that counted 207 children attending the previous year. It listed teachers' arrivals and departures and discussed conferences they held to scrutinize teaching methods and debate the study plans being used by German schools in Argentina. They also reported on the children's many fieldtrips to German industries in the port city as well as a school trip to Quinta Alvear, which was upset by rain. The Christmas bazaar (which always raised significant funds) and the holiday skits put on by the children gained a good deal of attention, as did a number of new classrooms, some set up for chemistry and physics labs. The director also reported that during the second half of the school year the faculty was delighted to receive school supplies they had requested from Germany, and that on 28 July 1906 the school board had organized an exhibition that showed the "beauty, utility, and richness" of those materials for all in the community to see. That exhibit highlighted the comprehensiveness of the chemistry and natural history collections and the new maps and images. They also made a point of lauding the gymnastics equipment they had been desperately seeking, and which they had received as a gift from the German Ambassador von Waldthausen in Buenos Aires. It was being used in good German spirit in the new gymnasium. They also acknowledged receiving a large thermometer, a hygrometer, and a barometer from Mr. Schellhas, a football from Mr. Paul Fischer, more German books for their library from the German periodical *Echo* in Berlin, and "a stuffed bird" from Mr. Altgelt and Mr. Keßler. They received 10,000 marks from the German Foreign Office that year, and 300 marks each from the Hamburg-America shipping line, the Hamburg South America Steam Ship Association, and the Hansa-Line. They stressed, too, that they were currently renovating the school so that it would be the "pride" of not only the local

German community but the entire La Plata region; a bazaar would be held at year's end to help cover the costs.[51]

In his work on the global construction of a German diaspora, Stefan Manz has argued that *Die Deutsche Schule im Auslande* was extremely important in that it "gave teachers the opportunity to compare their own experience with that of colleagues in very different geographical locations and cultural contexts, and thereby contributed to a common group identity which was not bound by state borders." It also allowed teachers abroad to be "well integrated into a global stream of communication which not only conveyed professional information but also a sense of global diasporic connectedness across borders and oceans, both with the *Heimat* [homeland] and with each other."[52]

Manz is certainly correct on both counts, but the journal did even more. Rosario was Argentina's second port city, and while it gained the attentions of the German ambassador it was never as well attended to as Buenos Aires, and nor were its German schools. In that sense, this periodical was a means for the school's director and board to promote what they had achieved, by underscoring not only the size of their student body and quality of their staff but also the wealth of German things one could find in their school: the latest scientific equipment, an ever-expanding library of German books, bigger rooms filled with updated maps and illustrations direct from Germany, and the finest sporting equipment, delivered by the German ambassador himself. What they had was a complete and recognizable German place, demarcated by German things.

One might wonder who would care to read about the donation of a stuffed bird or a football, but the authors understood: as with any institution dependent on patrons, those who donate enjoy seeing their names in print, and those names might inspire others to follow suit. Also, the directors of other schools would see this report. They would compare it with reports of their own and similar institutions, and learn about how they might acquire similar things and fashion similarly German places while settling in to their own non-German spaces.

If the directors and teachers in these schools did not receive such coveted items through donations, they might buy them directly. Many obviously did, and thus such yearly reports were accompanied in *Die Deutsche Schule im Auslande* by an array of advertisements for things that might help German teachers and their students settle in: books of all kinds ranging from fairy tales to dictionaries, encyclopedias, and German grammar books for non-native speakers; "complete sets of school supplies for teaching female crafts" from Jsidora Dreverhoff in Dresden, which came "highly recommended" by the

[51] "Jahresbericht des Deutschen Schulvereins zu Rosario de Santa Fe," *Die Deutsche Schule im Auslande* (1907): 204–9.

[52] Manz, *Constructing a German Diaspora*, 243–44.

Saxon Ministry of Education and Culture; microscopes from F. W. Schleck in Berlin for schools that had not received chemistry sets as donations; complete natural history collections and models, and anatomical and botanical collections; and even school desks of all types from P. Johannes Müller in Charlottenburg. One could order art supplies of every kind from Wwe. Grave & Sons in Hannover, or one might simply turn to the Höpfel Brothers in Berlin, who boasted a gold medal for their products from an exposition in Brussels. The Höpfel Brothers could get schools anything. For those with a penchant for maintaining German hygiene outside the fatherland, Hermann Matthias in Berlin offered mops "used at many German schools abroad," which were endorsed by the Royal Prussian Ministry of the Interior. Meanwhile, Eric Brandes in Dresden catered to more personal concerns: his firm advertised bathtubs fit for 1.75 meter-long bodies, which would allow the German teacher abroad to "bathe as if at home"—packing and shipping included.

HYBRID "GERMAN" PLACES IN ARGENTINE SPACES

In addition to the general needs of the schools and their students, teachers and parents had to take into consideration the specific demands of any given student body and the local communities from which they came. Indeed, the debates over German study plans that took place in Argentina as the twentieth century began were driven by the recognition that any effort at standardization was bound to be upset by the specific needs of each school's population. The Rosario school's director, Reinhold Gabert, made this quite clear in a fifty-three-page study plan for his school, published with great success.[53] It opens with the statement that the Rosario school needed to offer "approximately the same level of educational material as a corresponding school in the homeland." However, he cautioned, the school board had to also bear in mind that these children had to be "raised and educated like Argentinians, because they will live and work as Argentinians, their future lies here." Therefore, alongside the German language, the Spanish language had to be given equal weight. The need for further foreign languages would also increase the total amount of material that had to be covered in the plan, and that plan had to also take into account the climate in which the classes were being conducted, the makeup of the student body, and the degree to which the students were exposed to other languages and cultures at home, in the street, and in their spare time. Each school with its particular student body and community required its own plan, one that would ensure a proper balance between the conditions in the school, the challenges posed by the local environment, and the demands of a German education.

Given that Argentina had over sixty-five German schools by this time and would have hundreds by the 1930s, the efforts by many in Buenos Aires to

[53] Robert Gabert, "Lehrplan für die Deutsche Schule in Rosario de Sta. Fé," BA R/901/38672.

ensure consistency across Argentina's German schools were terribly fraught.[54] In many cases it was difficult even to identify and categorize all the Germans in the territory, a task often attempted by German ambassadors to Buenos Aires. In 1905, for example, when Ambassador von Waldthausen first arrived in Argentina, he undertook a trip around the La Plata region to assess the extent of the German community.[55] He made a point of visiting some thirty-one schools and reported that his reception exceeded his "highest expectations." He was overwhelmed by "the patriotism and love of Germany" in these communities, and described his experience as "a long series of festivities," during which he was greeted with conviviality, flowers, patriotic songs, and poems in German and Spanish from students expressing a devotion to both homelands.

These students made a fine impression on him, regardless of whether their communities were composed of Austrian Germans, Swiss Germans, Russian Germans, German Americans (from North America or another Latin American state), people who hailed from Imperial Germany, or some mix of these and other Europeans, and ultimately, he encountered them all. For example, in Villa Maria, a Russian-German Catholic village, he noticed Russian as well as German flags, while the nearby Protestant Russian-German village of Alder displayed only German and Argentine flags. Residents of both villages greeted him enthusiastically, he wrote, and both were composed of people whose ancestors had left southern Germany for the Russian Volga 140 years earlier, and "since that time these colonists in Russia and Argentina have maintained their German culture unadulterated and their children continue to speak today the very same dialect spoken by their forefathers in earlier days in southern Germany."[56]

From 1911 through 1913, von Waldthausen's successor Ambassador von Busche made similar trips. He recorded comparable encounters, but his impressions were less optimistic.[57] For example, Busche, too, was enticed by the many Russian-German settlements in Entre Rios. "The majority" of these people, he explained, "do not want to hear that they are Russian, rather they identify themselves as Germans." Like his predecessor, he supported that claim by stressing the orderly (if old-fashioned) character of their farms and villages, and by remarking on that as he was welcomed in their communities. He saw many German flags flying from their buildings and was moved by "the enthusiasm with which they sang German songs." Busche observed that these farms and villages compared favorably with the nearby German-Jewish settlements created by Baron von Hirsch, which, he said, were poorly organized and plagued by weeds. The regional government had begun pressing to

[54] "Das deutsche Schulwesen in Argentinien," *Das Echo* 1397 (23), 10 June 1909.
[55] Waldthausen to Reichskanzler Bülow, 16 Dec. 1905, BA R/901/38644, pp. 112–22.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Busche to Reichkanzler Bethman-Hollweg, 7 Sept. 1911, BA R/901/38646, pp. 102–5.

assimilate these communities by moving their children into state schools, and Busche lobbied with the German Foreign Office for more funds, teachers, and school supplies for rural schools.[58] "If the schools in the Russian-German colonies were to fail," he wrote, "then the Germanness, that those people preserved for over a century in Russia, would quickly disappear."[59] That, he stressed, would be a significant loss: These were large, rural communities that produced families averaging ten to twelve children and so they were growing quickly with each generation. It was imperative to support them directly, he argued, to maintain their character and capitalize on their growth.

THE FLUIDITY OF GERMANNESS

Busche was not the only German official concerned with channeling and shaping "Germanness" in Argentina, and in fact it was a widespread preoccupation. Perhaps best-known for pursing this agenda was Wilhelm Keiper, who lived in Argentina from 1904 to 1938. He was the first director of the Instituto Nacional del Profesorado Secundario, assisting the Argentinian government in its efforts to revamp their teacher training. He was also the school advisor to the German ambassador and the go-to person regarding school examinations and centralization efforts, and for nine years he directed the Belgrano-Schule (Belgrano School), one of Argentina's elite German schools in a neighborhood of Buenos Aires. For years he was also the director of the city's German Scientific Association. During these decades he worked closely with the German Foreign Office to improve and expand German schools in Argentina as part of its *Deutschtumspolitik*—its effort to promote, but also channel and shape, the Germanness of the eclectic German-Argentinean communities.[60] In the end, *Deutschtumspolitik* failed.

The challenge in this effort, Keiper wrote, was not only that Germans came in so many varieties and from so many places—Alsace, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, North America, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, other areas of Central Europe, and other Latin American countries—but also that all of these groups changed once they settled in Argentina.[61] Therefore, Keiper argued, the very notion of "the German" had to be regarded as a "free and fluid concept," impossible to clearly demarcate. It could only be precisely discussed, he explained, in terms of "tribal origins" (*Stamm*) and "tribal membership." Yet

[58] Busche to Reichkanzler Bethmann-Hollweg, 2 May 1912, BA R/901/38646, pp. 144–49; and Busche to Reichkanzler Bethmann-Hollweg, 12 Aug. 1913, PAAA RZ 508 R 62367. On the German-Jewish settlements, see *inter alia*, Ernst Schwarz and Johan C. Te Velde, "Jewish Agricultural Settlement in Argentina: The ICA Experiment," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 19 (1939): 185–203.

[59] Busche to Reichkanzler Bethmann-Hollweg, 12 Feb. 1912, BA R/901/38646, pp. 140–41.

[60] Rinke characterizies Keiper as "the most important contact person" between the German schools and the German Foreign Office; "*Der letzte freie Kontinent*," 356.

[61] Wilhelm Keiper, *Das Deutschtum in Argentinien* (unpub. MS, Berlin, 1943), in Ibero-Amerikanischen Institut Berlin, B 10/1660.

he asserted that precisely identifying those particular orientations "will always be hopeless" because of their very fluidity. After these eclectic populations arrived in Argentina, they melded with the landscape. They settled in groups, interacted with other groups and new environments, and developed particular characteristics that were variations on the themes of Germanness, themes that Keiper maintained were as fluid as culture itself.[62]

Keiper contended that Latin American spaces delineated what was possible. He wrote that, regardless of one's background and the "cultural artifacts" one brings into a foreign territory, "as soon as one places a foot in the new land" it begins to work its "inevitable natural power" upon him, "quietly and unnoticed." It transforms "his physical and mental being," adapting him, "remodeling" him. "The manner in which he protects himself against those forces, or concedes to them," Keiper said, determines that individual's place among Germans abroad. This also "determines the character and worth of any group of Germans abroad."[63]

Beyond this, each unique German-American place worked in its own, particular way on newcomers, and thus "the" German Argentinian was much different than the German Brazilian or the German Chilean. The German Argentinian, Keiper claimed, had "a particular character" derived from a land he characterized as continually reshaped by wave after wave of unprecedented immigration, which had been utterly transforming the cities and rural areas for decades.

Keiper did see consistencies in all that fluidity, but they too were emergent. He held that the varieties of Germans who were part of Argentina's cultural mixing had contributed greatly, "in a German way," to the nation-state. He observed that their Germanness was most evident during festivities, when the varieties of Germans came together for the ubiquitous Christmas celebrations in German schools and clubs, and during national celebrations when they appeared in native dress. But even that dress had been shaped by disparate histories; as Celia Applegate has taught us to expect, the costumes stemmed from particular regions in Europe and so marked differences as much as they heightened unity. The unity that Keiper felt was emerging was best captured by the collective singing, dancing, and use of "high German" during these festivities, rather than the dialects still spoken in German-Argentinean homes.[64]

Given these circumstances, the greatest hope for nurturing the Germanness of these Argentinians lay in the constantly renewed German neighborhoods of the big cities or in settings of rural isolation such as those chosen by so many groups of Russian Germans. In the city, Keiper pointed out, one had ongoing access to the best German schools, and the German-language

[62] Ibid., 36–40.
[63] Ibid., 1.
[64] Ibid., 221.

theater, newspapers, and libraries. He might have mentioned also the many German associations there, where German culture and German things were circulating globally and Germanness was continually performed and renewed.[65] In the rural settings, as Nancy Reagin has argued, the home made the difference. Keiper termed the rural household "the natural place of cultivation for personal and family culture." In a foreign territory, he wrote, "where a German home exists and is run in a German manner … a piece of German homeland and culture has been transplanted." There one could find "a refuge of German comfort" in which "nothing foreign can invade, if the proper household spirit rules."[66]

Such a spirit was readily apparent to the educated observer, and it was often evidenced by the abundance of German things. This was clearest among the Volga Germans who so enticed ambassadors Busche and Waldthausen. In their settlements, Keiper wrote, one encountered "whitewashed houses with green shutters, white curtains, and potted geraniums, friendly gardens with fruit trees and flowers, usually a stately church in a roman or baroque style, and everywhere cleanliness and maintenance." On the street one saw "four-wheel wagons with metal shod wheels and strong horses attached to them," rather than the typical two-wheel carts of other Argentineans. On the wagons usually sat "good-natured, solidly-built" people in folk attire; the men with fur hats "even in summer," and the women with "colorful scarves." In such settings, he wrote, "one believes to have encountered people from eastern Germany or eastern Pomerania or western Prussia." Their "parlors and kitchens make the same impressions: cleanly scrubbed floors strewn with sand, whitewashed walls with colorful pictures—among the Catholics religious images." He praised as well the "old fashioned household tools," many made of copper or tin, and the freshly turned beds, all of which brought forth a sense of a "good, old farming culture," one that was "taken to Russia in the eighteenth century," and remained "loyally cared for and hardly changed."[67]

Other Germans, Keiper noted, made Argentina their own by writing about it, by using the German language to capture the country in German books, much as Waldthausen's student performers had done with their German poems.[68] That said, the most consistent success for communities had come with the schools, which offered a correction for those families that could not afford the high culture of the cities or maintain the rigorous spirit Keiper and others observed in many Russian-German homes.

[65] For a broader discussion, see Franka Bindernagel, *Migration und Erinnerung: Öffentliche Erinnerungskultur deutschsprachiger Migrant/innen in Buenos Aires, 1910–1932* (PhD diss., Berlin, 2014).
[66] Keiper, *Das Deutschtum in Argentinien*, 269.
[67] Ibid., 276.
[68] Ibid., 278–79.

FACTIONS OF GERMANNESS

Much that one encountered in Buenos Aires was German; the telegraph and telephone systems, the electrical plants, the streetcars, and even many of the automobiles were the products of German firms. There were many other things as well. The several German-language newspapers, divided along political lines, included the monarchist *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung*, the liberal *Argentinisches Tageblatt*, and the socialist *Vorwärts*.[69] The class and political antagonisms one found in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century were also apparent among the tens of thousands of Germans in this industrial city, and that only grew worse during the interwar period when over a hundred thousand new German speakers poured into the city seeking employment as workers. There were also confessional divisions and many other factions.[70] Thus those elites who ran the businesses and took up leading positions in the various German associations, those people who worked hard to gain leadership positions as the guardians of Germanness in the city and the country—the people Keiper looked to for support—were not always able to convince other Germans in Buenos Aires (much less Argentina as a whole) of either the legitimacy or morality of their leadership.[71] As a result, there never was uniformity in Argentina's German schools despite the decades of work by Keiper and others to create it.

In the large schools, such as the Belgrano School where Keiper took over as director in 1922, were found the children of the city's German elites. Well-educated and financially secure, they managed to import European middle-class values into their schools and homes, and to tie these elite schools firmly to the German pedagogical system. From early on, even before the First World War, the Belgrano School Board sought to establish a school on a par with higher schools in Germany, one they felt could prepare the children of leading German merchants and industrialists to pursue similar careers in the city and to facilitate (or so the board argued to the German Foreign Office) the trade they would later undertake with Germany as they negotiated contracts with German firms and sought German products for their Argentine industries.[72] As this school developed, the good financing from the parents, combined with the fact that 90 percent of the students were native German speakers (including 263 of the 310 Argentinian children enrolled) allowed

[69] Georg Ismar, *Der Pressekrieg: Argentinisches Tageblatt und Deutsche La Plata Zeitung 1933–1945* (Berlin: WVB, 2006).

[70] For immigration numbers, see Ronald C. Newton, *German Buenos Aries, 1900–1933: Social Change and Cultural Crisis* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 78–82; and Anne Saint Sauveur-Henn, *Un siècle d'émigration allemande vers l'Argentine 1853–1945* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1995).

[71] Newton, *German Buenos Aries*, 26, 67, 124.

[72] Belgrano School Board to Waldthausen, 18 Apr. 1907, BA R/901/38654, pp. 83–86.

this school to be, in Keiper's estimation, the one with "the greatest potential" in Argentina."[73]

As Keiper arrived to take over the school, he was greeted with a shipment of new school supplies from the Kurt Berger Export Firm in Leipzig, ordered by the former director, Reinhold Gabert. It included an extensive collection of gymnastic equipment, ranging from springboards and pommel horses to coconut mats and barbells.[74] Soon after, the school published an elegant history of the institution (a wise piece of propaganda), and Keiper made a plea to the German Foreign Office to have the school recognized as a higher German school.

In his plea Keiper underscored the character of the new building, the new gymnastic equipment, and the new, professionally trained teachers they had secured from Germany, a high number of whom held advanced degrees. He also reminded the German Foreign Office that many of the children who attended this school during the war had wanted to obtain higher degrees without returning to Germany. In response, they had arranged for them to take the high-level exams, the first in all of Latin America. Keiper oversaw them, the German ambassador sent them to Berlin, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior confirmed them, and the school awarded the degrees to their students. Now, Keiper and the school board wanted to give these examinations annually. The point, he argued, was to prepare these "hyphenated" Argentineans, "in the best sense of the word," to contribute the fruits of a German education to the competition facing the Argentine state.[75] The Foreign Office was convinced. This was a thoroughly German school, a completely German place, in a non-German land with critical economic importance for German trade.

Over the next decade, Keiper's efforts led to a consolidation of schools in Buenos Aires and the transformation of the Belgrano School into the Goethe School (named after the famous author and cultural icon Johann Wolfgang von Goethe). As a result, he was able to claim in the school's thirty-third report, published in 1930, that Buenos Aires now had a collection of schools that would allow the city's students to seek a variety of German degrees from primary through secondary schooling without leaving the city. He was very pleased; he had created a unified system, in which the Goethe school became regarded as the ultimate institution for "an education in German culture and at the same time a preparation for life in Argentina."[76]

A dark cloud hanging over Keiper's report, however, was how exceptional the Goethe school and Buenos Aires had remained. For its upper-middle-class

[73] Keiper to the German Foreign Office, 4 Apr. 1922, PAAA RZ 508 R62473.
[74] Berger to German Foreign Office, 11 Nov. 1922, PAAA RZ 508 R 62473.
[75] Keiper to Gesandt Pauli, 17 May 1923, PAAA RZ 508 R 62473.
[76] *33. Bericht der Deutschen Schulvereinigung* (Belgrano und Germania), 31 Mar. 1930, Buenos Aires, 18.

character was fundamentally different from what one encountered in the hundreds of other German schools scattered across the smaller cities, towns, and villages of the La Plata region. Much like the homes of those Russian Germans Keiper and the German ambassadors so admired, the local schools in those rural communities also strove to be essentially German. Yet they were *bodenständig* (down home) rather than *bürgerlich* (bourgeois), and while they shared a work ethic and a commitment to German character similar to that promulgated in Buenos Aires, they were necessarily filled with different German things. They were not as well funded as the metropolitan schools, many offered only primary education taught by overburdened teachers, and in many cases they defined German character differently. Thus Keiper's victory, such as it was, was fleeting. The directors of the other schools had no more interest in his plans for centralization than did the leaders of these disparate communities. Their interests lay with different things.[77]

THE PRODUCTION OF GERMAN THINGS

According to Keiper, Chile and German Chileans were different than Argentina and German Argentineans. Chile also had groups of German traders and merchants in its big cities, most notably in the capital of Santiago, and in Valparaiso, the key port city on South America's Pacific coast. Yet southern Chile, with its chief cities of Concepcíon, Osorno, and Valdivia was an area where groups of southern Germans had begun settling in isolated regions in the middle of the nineteenth century. There they retained a vibrant *Deutschtum* (German culture) supported by their churches and schools, far from the auspices of the Chilean state. Over time, as the German nation-state took shape and trade volumes increased, as southern Chile was linked to the north via roads to the sea, railways, and eventually highways, and as the descendants of those early settlers also spread to the north, that isolation disappeared and the vibrant Germanness in the territory appeared threatened. Despite those trends, the comparatively uniform German character of these regions persisted.[78]

The southern German settlements, or colonies, began as subsistence economies created under the auspices of the Chilean state in an effort to develop the landscape. The German settlers were not completely isolated, but they were a prosperous and distinct minority. Many arrived with capital, and as a result Valdivia and to a lesser degree the other port towns soon developed an industrial character. After 1870, as roads linked the areas around lake Llanquihue to the ocean, those subsistence economies were transformed into an export economy,

[77] For further discussion, see Benjamin Bryce, "Making Ethnic Space: Education, Religion, and the German Language, 1880–1930" (PhD diss., York University, 2013).

[78] Keiper, *Das Deutschtum in Argentinien*, 528. For a broad discussion of Germans in Chile, see Jean-Pierre Blancpain, *Les Allemands au Chili, 1816–1945* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1974).

which grew considerably as a railroad was established to the north and later extended as far south as Puerto Montt. By that time, southern Chile had become one of the most flourishing agricultural regions in the state.[79] Throughout those transformations, German influence in the area remained, as George Young put it, "decidedly apparent."[80] Even as he completed his book on the history of Germans in Chile, in 1973, he remarked that one could still hear German in the streets of Osorno, Puerto Montt, Temuco, and Valdivia. The architecture in these areas, particularly the houses, testified to the history of German settlement, and it was still possible to gain an "entire primary and secondary education … in German schools where even the very language of instruction is German!" Chile, he wrote, "is the only country in both Americas … where that can happen today."[81]

Young credits this longevity to the isolation of the German settlements and the efforts of German officials in Berlin, Santiago, and Valparaiso who nurtured Germanness in Chile. Yet in this he was mistaken, since the Germans themselves had done it while settling in. Although the Germans in the south suffered from a strong confessional division between Catholics and Protestants, they all supported their schools and their connections to German-speaking Europe. They also had a vibrant press, and they created many of the same social clubs that Germans founded wherever they went, especially choirs, fraternal organizations, and gymnastics clubs.[82] The key point is that they reproduced German civic culture in Chile with little help from German officials.

Here, too, the schools emerged organically. The settlers created them along with their churches, clubs, fields, houses, and roads. All of these things were German things, based on models the settlers brought with them from Germany. The schools flourished in part because the Chilean state actively encouraged their creation and helped support them financially. As Gustav Lenz wrote in *Die Deutsche Schule in Auslande* in 1903, German schools received stipends from both the Chilean and German governments. The Chilean state often provided the schools with funds in exchange for their educating numbers of non-German Chileans. It also took German schools as a model for its public schools, hired many German teachers to work in them, and employed German pedagogues to reshape their pedagogical institutions.[83] Already in 1903 there were thirty-two German schools in the

[79] George F. W. Young, *The Germans in Chile: Immigration and Colonization, 1849–1914* (New York: Center for Immigration Studies, 1974), 116.
[80] Ibid., 144.
[81] Ibid., 153.
[82] Kaulen, *Los alemanes*.
[83] Professor Dr. Gustav Lenz (Darmstadt), "Die Deutsche Schulen in Chile," *Die Deutsche Schule in Auslande* 2, 11 (1903): 499–504. For the broader context, see Carlos Rodrigo Sanhueza Cerda, *Geografía en acción. Práctica disciplinaria de Hans Steffen en Chile (1889–1913)* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 2014).

country, and some, such as those in Osorno, Valdivia, and Valparaiso, dated back to the 1850s. At the time Lenz wrote his essay, Valdivia had the largest German school outside of Germany, boasting 444 students, twenty-two teachers, and lesson plans based on a Prussian model.

Much as in Argentina, Germans could be found among Chile's leading traders, merchants, and industrialists, particularly in the south, where, as so many North Americans lamented, they often owned huge percentages of the businesses and industries in the towns and cities. Those enterprises looked first and foremost toward Germany when they engaged in international trade, and so the schools, which helped these communities maintain their Germanness, were crucial for the production of German things.

Furthermore, Chile benefited from the extensive trade that developed with Germany through its German-Chilean citizens, so much so that it stayed aloof from the major conflicts that severed similar ties between Germany and other Latin American countries, particularly World War II.[84] It was Chile's unwillingness to take part in that war that accounts for the persistence of the schools there into the postwar period. Unlike in so many other Latin American countries, German schools in Chile were never shut down, and interconnections between German Chileans and Germans in Europe persisted across the radical political ruptures of the twentieth century, from the demise of Imperial Germany during World War I to the creation and increasing geopolitical importance of West Germany during the postwar era.[85]

Much as in Argentina, German ambassadors who arrived in Santiago took trips to gain a sense of the German communities under their auspices. Even as Lenz was penning his essay in 1903, the German ambassador von Reichenau spent November and December traveling through southern Chile, and returned with the conviction that the German schools were the glue that held these communities together, and the institutions that did the most to preserve their German character. The schools, he explained in his letters to the German Foreign Office, "were not only of moral value for us, through their protection of German language and manners. Rather they also offer a clear material profit through the preservation of old and the creation of new economic relationships." People "who attended the German schools," he explained, "direct their attention during their professional lives to the German market," and for that reason, Concepcíon, Santiago, and Valparaiso needed to have schools that were similar to the German Realschule. The children of wealthy merchants

[84] See, for example, Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[85] Georg Dufner, *Partner im Kalten Krieg: Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Chile* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2014). On schools in particular, see Kerstin Hein, *Hybride Identitäten: Bastelbiografien im Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Lateinamerika und Europa* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2006).

lived in those cities, and they needed to be trained to compete in international markets with goods produced by German Chileans and imported from Germany. The schools, he argued, were not only "the nerve center and backbone of Germanness in Chile, they were also a crucial factor in our economic success here."[86]

The German Foreign Office agreed with von Reichenau's evaluation because it confirmed what other observers consistently reported. Just a year later, for example, the commander of the SMS *Falke*, a warship that visited the area in 1904, reported to the emperor that the farmers around lake Llanquihue "could not be more ur-German [essentially German]." Much like the Russian Germans observed on the Argentine pampas, these people had reproduced their homelands in South America. All around their homes they recreated the most essential of German things: clean walkways, tidy farms, flourishing gardens and orchards, tools and transport, as well as churches and schools. Unlike the Russian Germans in Argentina, however, they did not appear frozen in time. They were engaged in active trade, producing agricultural goods for world markets, and buying more things from Germany with their profits. As the commander remarked, "German goods were to be found all over the territory."[87]

THE CONSUMPTION OF GERMANNESS AND GERMAN THINGS

When German officials ventured into these southern towns, with their ports and industries, there was always talk of trade, but there was also an attention to the details—the wooden houses one might expect in southern Germany but not in Chile, the meeting halls that seemed so "*heimisch*" (native to Germany), the comfortable associational culture, the conviviality of the beer halls, and the care and attention placed on the schools. Some reports read almost like fairy tales. In 1913, for example, in Ambassador Eckert's report on his venture from Santiago to the German colony of Contulmo he said he found it nestled in an area that reminded him of the Black Forest in Southern Germany. This colony of some two hundred Germans, he wrote, was established in 1884. Since then, it had been engaged for decades in "fantastic cultural work," which left him with a "curious and satisfying impression." As he rode out of the rainforest and into the valley, he recalled, he was greeted by "a patch of earth, transformed by German order and culture," brimming with "well maintained paths, gardens, and orchards." The residents greeted him with enthusiasm. They took him to the church, and then to the school, where one of its pupils, "a child of Chilean background," greeted him in German and presented him with flowers. That experience, he confided, confirmed to him how deep

[86] Reichenau to Reichskanzler Bülow, 1 Feb. 1903, BA R/901/38854.
[87] Korvettenkapitän und Kommandant SMS Falke Behncke to the Kaiser, 30 Dec. 1904, BA R/901/38854.

"the inner strength of Germanness is in Chile and how worthy it is of support."[88] What it must remind us, however, is that such German places emerged without such support.

As in other places, German immigrants to Chile became loyal citizens of their adopted state while remaining proud members of a German *Kulturgemeinshaft* (cultural community). That community, they believed, was bound together by certain virtues: its members were loyal, orderly, peaceful, reliable, and perhaps most of all, hard-working. That pride in their German qualities and their particularly German contributions to the Chilean state was recorded in countless writings, such as *Deutsche Arbeit in Chile* (German work in Chile), a book issued by the German Scientific Association of Santiago in honor of Chile's one hundredth anniversary, which detailed Germans' many contributions to the Chilean state.[89]

That conviction also ran through the annual reports from the German schools. As Chile moved into the 1930s, the German communities across the south were flourishing centers for the consumption and production of German and German-Chilean things. The 1938 *Festschrift* in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the German *Realschule* (middle school) in Concepcíon captures this perfectly.[90] By that time, Concepcíon was the third-largest city in Chile with the second-largest industry. It had a population of some eighty thousand people, of whom about fifteen hundred were Germans, and half of those retained German citizenship. That relatively small group dominated industry and trade, boasting thirty-four industrial firms and fifty-two trading houses. The German club was opened in 1872 and the school association was founded in 1887. The *Festschrift* lauded that history and championed the efforts of the early settlers and the people who had founded and maintained the school over the ensuing fifty years. Yet much like the newspaper produced in Rosario two decades earlier, with its magnificent image of the Völkerschlacht Denkmal on the cover, the advertisements that could be found on almost every other page of the *Festschrift* testified to the proliferation of German things in this hybrid space.

In Concepcíon, for example, one could visit: Schutz, the "*Grösstes Modewäregeschäft Süd-Chiles*" (the largest fashion warehouse in southern Chile), which retained its own purchasing house in Berlin. Schutz offered "everything for men, women, and children in domestic and foreign fabrics," including "the highest quality corsets and bras," all of which were touted as "*Siempre lo mejor*" (always the best). There were several such stores advertised

[88] Eckert to Reichskanzler Bethmann-Hollweg, 27 Nov. 1913, BA R/901/38854.

[89] *Deutsche Arbeit in Chile: Festschrift des Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Vereins zu Santiago. Zur Centenarfeier der Republik Chile* (Verhandlungen des Vereins, Band V Heft 3–6) (Santiago de Chile, 1910).

[90] *Festschrift zur 50-Jahrefeier der Deutsche Realschule Concepcíon-Chile.* Concepción, Chile: Soc. Imprint y Litographer "Concepción," 1938).

in a mixture of German and Spanish, including Casa Westermeyer, which had stores in four Chilean cities, and where one could discover "*Modewaren Neuheiten*" or "the newest fashions." You could also visit Lederhaus Joseph Hoffstetter for leather clothing, saddles, shoes, and to purchase fine leather for women's purses. For electrical supplies large and small one could go directly to Siemens, the same place one would go in a German city in Europe. It remains an international leader in electronics.[91] For high-quality German soaps, there was Stück e Hijos. Lämmermann Brewery offered residents their special beers—the "Malta Blanca and Malta Negra" were favorites of adults—but they also produced "Limonade" for children. For heavier appetites, people could visit Zhender Brothers "Deutsche Restaurant" or Emporio Aleman: Fabrica de Cecinas, "for the finest 'wurst' products." For a treat, you might go to Café Vienés, a pastry shop with "an excellent selection of chocolates, candies and gifts" from Vienna.

Amidst the notices for Concepcíon's German restaurants and shops were advertisements for countless German import houses and for Banco Alemán Transatlántico, a subsidiary of the Deutsche Überseebank, which had offices in five Chilean cities. There were also notices for German-Chilean firms that catered to homes and other businesses. Among them José Brünnery & Cía, which had fifty years of experience producing and procuring furniture for bedrooms, dining rooms, and parlors as well as everything for banks, hospitals, hotels, and schools. They had fifty machines in operation and over two hundred workers. Kehl y Cía offered residents crystal and porcelain, Popp & Ungerer sold radios and telephones, and Julio Plesch y Cía marketed high quality hardware, including German stoves and ovens from Kueppersbusch. SKF Kugellager sold heavy machinery, whereas Lanz supplied the region with agricultural machinery from Gildemeister & Co.

The most notable of the German thing on display in the *Festschrift* was not for sale: while celebrating this community's creation and maintenance of its school, it also dedicated an essay to the creation of the Bismarck tower, an archetypal German nationalist monument. The community had erected it in 1920–1921 and had expanded it in 1932. Every year the school's teachers and students, along with other members of the German community, marched to the tower on 1 April for a festival in honor of the birthday of the former chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. Every year they gathered together at this edifice, producing, consuming, and thus perpetuating their Germanness by performing it around this quintessentially German thing.

CONCLUSIONS

It might seem odd to end an essay that advocates for de-centering the nation-state with a discussion of a Bismarck tower in Chile. After all, much scholarly

[91] At www.siemens.com/entry/cl/es/ (accessed 27 Jan. 2017).

work has demonstrated that similar towers created with local contributions across Germany were easily coopted into state-centered projects of patriotic mobilization. There is also no question that some of the Germans who met around this tower in Chile would have been eager to embrace such a project as well. The vast majority, however, never did, and that is the critical point. Despite the links this edifice evoked with Imperial Germany (long after its demise) and thus with militarist, state-based nationalism, too much focus on that possibility, too much assumption about its meanings, can obscure a more poignant fact, which is that the Germanness being performed during those meetings was Chilean-German, the same hybrid affinity articulated through the mix of "German" things produced and consumed in and around German-Chilean schools.

For this reason, the integration of a Bismarck tower into the collection of objects that grounded notions of being German in Concepcion should not surprise or mislead us any more than the recognition that the hyper-nationalist Volkerschlacht Denkmal could be harnessed in the pages of a Rosario newspaper in 1913 to tie together German speaking immigrants from Austria, Imperial Germany, Russia, and Switzerland. Those historical moments are quite similar to a 1897 event when thousands of German Americans met for a week in New Ulm, Minnesota to rally around an exact copy of the famous Hermann Denkmal in Germany's Teutoburg forest. These nationalist-patriotic monuments were easily coopted into the promotion of inclusive, multivalent German affinities that were cultural and local. It does not always work the other way around.

In *Banal Nationalism*, Michael Billig reminds us that nationalism is consistently performed and reinforced in mundane ways. He writes that the metonymic image that should draw our attention is not flag waving, but instead the flag hanging unnoticed in the public building.[92] That valuable insight is worth bearing in mind, but so too is the point that the performance of cultural nationalism is not always already an "ideological means by which Nation-States are reproduced,"[93] particularly not when that sense of national affinity predated the nation-state in question and existed so easily outside its borders. For while German flags always hung quietly in the German schools discussed in this essay, they did so along with other flags, most notably those of Argentina and Chile, but sometimes also Austria and Switzerland. And that is the point: the loyalties captured in these schools and their communities were multidirectional loyalties, which retained modes of interaction and affiliation that predated the founding of the German nation-state. That state's emergence offered Germans who lived outside of it new forms of affiliation and interconnections, but none of them occluded the modes of affinity and sense of

[92] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Gage Publications, 1995), 6–8.
[93] Ibid.

belonging that preceded them. Similarly, while the succession of regimes that governed the German nation-state could seek to influence and instrumentalize populations of Germans living outside of it, and each gained its adherents among Germans abroad, none of these political regimes succeeded in gaining control over those populations. That is why Keiper and other German ethnopolitical entrepreneurs were ultimately so frustrated; the varieties of Germanness could not be effectively channeled and shaped from Buenos Aires or Santiago any more than from Berlin. That is also why Marcosson and other European and North American observers were frustrated as well—German importance and influence in Latin America could not be easily undermined by the conquest of the German nation-state because the latter did not create or drive the former.

Abstract: From the late nineteenth century through the interwar period, the production and consumption of German things played critical roles in delineating and connecting a wide variety of German places in Latin America. Such places became ubiquitous in Chile and Argentina. They flourished because there was ample room in the German imagination for the multiplicity of German places and the cultural hybridity that accompanied them to extend beyond Imperial Germany's national boundaries and colonial possessions. They also flourished because host societies found virtue in having those German places in their states. This essay uses German schools in Argentina and Chile as a window into the emergence of such German places and the soft power that accompanied them. Scholars often overlook that power when they focus on colonial questions or formal and informal imperialism in Latin America. More than any other institution, German schools became sites where the production and consumption of German things were concentrated and multilayered, and where the consistencies and great varieties of Germanness that arrived and evolved in Latin America gained their clearest articulation. Because those schools were both centers of communities and nodes in a global pedagogical network that thrived during the interwar period, they provide us with great insight into a nexus of motivations that created German places in Latin America. Life around these schools also underscores the importance of studying immigrants and their things together.

Key words: Argentina, Chile, cultural hybridity, Germany, Latin America, material culture, migration, networks, schools, soft power