

earnings in consequence of accidents, for example) were a justification for strikes that would resonate with a broader public.

Christine Krüger's research project was conceived in the context of a collaborative research center based in Marburg and Gießen, which seeks to put the framework of modern security studies to historical empirical tests. In view of this, her account offers some particularly valuable insights. Its nuanced approach to the topic of urban labor conflict demonstrates that securitization is often only partial, and that various groups are unlikely to share perceptions of security and security threats even at times of intense conflict. The argument that securitization processes can only be fully understood if they are complemented by an investigation of how images of (in)security shape the boundaries of social groups is an insight that surely goes well beyond labor conflict and these two urban case studies.

What also emerges from Krüger's account is that "Sicherheit" covers a number of terms in English that may or may not be entirely identical: in addition to security, words that appear are safety (from industrial accidents) or certainty (of income), to mention only two. The question of how security as an analytical term relates to historical semantics is another interesting, if mostly implicit point this book raises.

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An Imperial Homeland: Forging German Identity in Southwest Africa

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No longer a marginal matter, the subject of German overseas colonialism boasts its own rich, voluminous scholarship, along with an important place in the field of modern German history. Recent works on the colonial era (formally 1884-1919) have examined, *inter alia*, advertising, commodities, policing, warfare, law, and genocide. Adam Blackler's book reflects this still-growing body of study, but the book also makes memorable contributions of its own. Arguing that entanglements in Southwest Africa had "an especially consequential effect" (5) on the self-understanding of Germans in the metropole, *An Imperial Homeland* explores a range of issues: colonial fantasies, missionary activity, African resistance to German rule, German citizenship law, and masculinity. In the process, Blackler displays an impressively broad command of an intimidating array of secondary literature. He also makes several exciting claims sure to elicit debate.

One strength of *An Imperial Homeland* is its primary-source research, which makes fine use of archives in a range of locations. Another virtue is Blackler's commitment to exploring themes of blackness in the German Empire and to featuring African responses to German colonial violence. In the vein of scholarship by Michelle Moyd, Tiffany Florvil, and Kira Thurman, Blackler aims to center African voices in a way that avoids portrayal of Africans as passive victims of European processes. To this end, he focuses his fourth chapter on the figures of Samuel Maherero and Hendrik Witbooi, whose leadership he covers with admirable verve. One must note that, skillfully told as their story is here, it is not new or changed

by the information Blackler presents. It is thus doubtful that bringing the story into a discussion of German colonialism “reorients” the field (12).

Nor is it evident, at least in Blackler’s account, how these two men “challenged the colonial government in ways that even the most pessimistic, anti-imperial citizens could not believe were possible” (110). I do not know which anti-imperial citizens Blackler has in mind. His claim likely would have benefited from additional scrutiny – as would a separate remark that “far more than all other figures, Hendrik Witbooi and Samuel Maherero unmasked the realities of colonial life for both metropolitans and settlers after 1884” (13). The kind of scale of significance Blackler posits – which I assume he included in pursuit of the overarching thesis – demands consideration of other potential actors. Among the latter would surely figure Matthias Erzberger, who became famous in the early 1900s precisely as he unmasked the grim, and corrupt, realities of German colonial life.

Because Blackler displays remarkable facility with secondary sources in some areas, his engagement seems wanting in others. Loose references to nationalism present a distinct problem. Blackler states that “Germans increasingly regarded the expansionary potential of centralized statecraft as necessary components of Germandom over the course of the nineteenth century” (11). But one wonders which Germans he means. His description may fit the Rhenish missionaries in Southwest Africa; it is surely incongruous with the experience of Mack Walker’s legendary hometownsmen, or with the Guelph Party in the 1860s and 1870s, to cite two cases. Just as a much greater differentiation in the “German” relationship with nationalism seems desirable here, so, too, further awareness of German cultural history seems needed elsewhere. In his conclusion, Blackler opines that “colonial encounters shattered the illusion of German cultural superiority” (214). This message apparently did not reach a few important figures, among them Thomas Mann and Max Weber, by August 1914.

The scope of the book’s arguments is often stunning, as is its ambitious agenda. Both qualities deserve commendation. Partly as a result, however, readers may wish the book had rigorously tackled relevant alternative arguments about German colonial culture and identity. George Steinmetz’s *The Devil’s Handwriting* (2007), John Phillip Short’s *Magic Lantern Empire* (2012), and Nils Ole Oermann’s *Mission, Church and State Relations in South West Africa under German Rule (1884-1915)* (1998) share a lot of space with some individual components of *An Imperial Homeland*. Because the preexisting works are known to researchers of German overseas imperialism, addressing them substantively is incumbent upon a new book dealing with German identity in, and about, overseas colonial sites. Frustratingly, though, Blackler treats and cites some of the most pertinent historiography just a handful of times – as if it were incidental to his own work, and usually fragmentarily or via endnotes. This approach constitutes a missed opportunity.

Finally, there is the issue of *Heimat*. Blackler rightly acknowledges Celia Applegate and Alon Confino’s seminal books. He also concedes that *Heimat* is an amorphous concept. Unfortunately, he neither provides his own working definition of *Heimat* nor adopts an existing one, despite making an explicit argument about the need to expand the parameters of *Heimat*. He also positions Applegate and Confino in a sort of caricature, describing them in one instance as assuming “German identity [evolved] in a cultural or spatial vacuum” (81). To say that such a description is inadequate is an understatement. Careful readers of the leading studies about *Heimat* are highly unlikely to share in Blackler’s thesis that “the evolution of *Heimat* between the start of the Vormärz and the conclusion of World War I was principally the result of colonial encounters” (5). Here again, *An Imperial Homeland*’s decision to posit a scale of significance – without providing any criteria for evaluation or rebuttal of multiple data points – seems needlessly incautious. Surely, when evaluating principal causes of “the evolution of *Heimat*,” one needs to consider many more episodes and forces in the long nineteenth century than just the protectorate of Southwest Africa and its people.