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In 1905, Mohandas Gandhi paid homage to Joseph Chailley, the founding father of the International Colonial Institute. Gandhi's appreciation for Chailley exposed the complex interconnectedness of the colonial world around 1900. The Indian Opinion, a journal Gandhi published in South Africa, bestowed honor upon the Frenchman Chailley, who had recently spent several months in the Dutch Indies and was about to coauthor a book with British colonial administrators. To give the imperial interconnectedness an institution, Chailley had established the International Colonial Institute (ICI) in Brussels, as early as 1893. By 1905, this institute had grown to become the most important think tank for colonial rule, continuing with 136 (white) members. As it styled itself as reformist, this institute raised hopes among colonial subjects around the world. Gandhi's Indian Opinion saw in Chailley's writings on India "an unbiased testimony of a stranger," and an adequate description of British colonial mismanagement: "He finds himself in a vast agricultural country, where there is great poverty and where commerce and trade are entirely local and therefore without real importance. He notices an absence of industrial activity, he discovers some people, perhaps owning fortunes, but – there is no capital." Fighting against the underdevelopment of colonies was the declared aim of the ICI. Its members claimed to develop colonies through cooperation among international experts who would get the most out of the colonized population and the colonial economy. Gandhi was not alone in falling for this delusion, which actually served to legitimize and perpetuate colonial domination.²

Fifteen years later, Asians and Africans had rather mixed feelings about the cross-border schemes that the ICI designed. In 1919, Chailley initiated an Anglo-French economic conference on West Africa. The newspaper *The Gold Coast Nation*, which gave the Ghanaian coastal elite a voice, reported on this "four day conference of most authoritative Anglo-French Colonial officials": the conference intended to coordinate the activities of European shipping

¹ Indian Opinion (October 6, 1905), 5.

² On Indian internationalism in the empire, see Gorman, *The Emergence*, 109–148.



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lines, standardize bills of lading, and align customs regulations. On top of that, it had contemplated building an "inter-colonial railway system" across Africa. Among West African entrepreneurs, these initiatives instilled little hope and raised much fear.

The *Gold Coast Nation* expected the practical cooperation between colonizers to be part of a revived international agreement to partition Africa, by which the "Acts of Berlin and Brussels may be renewed." The Acts of Berlin (1885) and Brussels (1890) had sealed the deal between European powers to colonize Africa. They indeed became the legal basis for a renewed partition of Africa under the auspices of the League of Nations in 1919. Thus, while observing the imperial atavism of the new League of Nations, the colonized populations equally monitored the activities of the ICI. The *Gold Coast Nation* expected immediate effects not only through the diplomats who met in Paris in 1919 but also by more hands-on members of the ICI, which dated from 1893.

Among Asians and Africans under colonial rule, the question emerged, whether the ICI represented the interests of the European metropoles or whether it might be a third actor in the dualist drama between colonizers and colonized. In 1921, the *Nigerian Pioneer* reported that the institute's secretary-general, Camille Janssen, presented more precise plans of cooperation across colonies:

At a Congress of the International Colonial Institute ... M. Janssen submitted a report on railway construction in Africa. He said it devolved on the Institute to fix the great African trunk lines and dwelt especially on the Trans-Soudan and the Trans-Equatorial railways, which might connect the Belgian and French Congo. He contended that Beira and Lourenco Marques should be linked up with Lobito Bay and Mossamedes. The French railway system should be joined up to the South African system via the Belgian Congo.

The *Nigerian Pioneer* was a paper published by African entrepreneurs loyal to the British rulers in Nigeria. The economic cross-border schemes of the ICI attracted their interest.⁵ They asked themselves whether these "transcolonial" projects might alter the relation between colonizers and colonized.

This book is about the internationalist colonial lobby that rallied around the International Colonial Institute and laid the groundwork for the structural and discursive dependence of the colonial world in the twentieth century. The enormous influence of the around 700 colonial internationalists who joined the ICI between 1893 and 1982 is still unknown today.⁶ Gandhi and the West

³ The Gold Coast Nation (July 6, 1919), 3.

⁴ Pedersen, The Guardians, 108.

⁵ The Nigerian Pioneer (June 3, 1921), 6.

⁶ UCL Fonds Wigny Carrière C4, Report Voyage aux États-Unis, Speech Manuscript INCIDI, 3.



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African journalists knew at least two by name: Joseph Chailley, a Frenchman, who had established the ICI in 1893, and the Belgian Camille Janssen, who became the ICI's long-serving secretary-general. Together with six other founders, Chailley and Janssen turned the ICI into the most important international organization and the biggest think tank for colonial policy prior to World War I. In 1913, the ICI listed 136 members from twelve countries. Among them figured colonialist icons such as the German colonial minister Bernhard Dernburg, the French general-resident in Morocco Hubert Lyautey, the British governor-general of Nigeria Frederick Lugard, the Belgian railwaybuilder Albert Thys, the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies Dirk Fock, and the Spanish colonial reformer Antonio Fabié. During the 1920s, the ICI supplied the League of Nations with colonial experts. In the 1930s, its members joined hands with fascists to design a new Eurafrican empire. In 1949, the ICI changed its name to Institute of Differing Civilizations (INCIDI), and accepted the membership of non-Europeans. Under this name, it continued to exist until 1982.8

I argue in this book that colonial internationalists reshaped colonial policy by designing it as a transnational and governmental project. Transnationalism and governmentality were two sides of the same coin. They belittled the importance of the (nation-)state and its direct administration for colonial rule. We can define transnationalism as practices not primarily driven by nationalism and that go beyond the nation-state without necessarily overcoming it. Governmentality, as Foucault construed it, is government with the help of expert knowledge, attributions, categorizations, discourses, definitions, and, most importantly, the active cooperation of those who are governed. Although Foucault found governmentality predominantly within liberal societies whose members voluntarily governed themselves, the colonized might equally have been autonomous individuals, even if the threat of violence frequently forced them to participate in the system of colonial governmentality. 10

State government and unofficial transnational governmentality were not mutually exclusive, and their combination was indeed an attribute of empire.

 $^{^7}$ On the League between nationalism and internationalism, see Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou, "Making Sense of the League," 420–444.

⁸ Pétit, "Éditorial," 7–8.

⁹ Foucault, "Governmentality," 87–104. Among the early studies applying Foucault to colonial contexts, see Comaroff, *Revelation and Revolution*; Dimier, *Le gouvernement*, 75–108. On discourses, see Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, esp. 1–18. For a discussion of the merits of the Foucauldian perspectives, see Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, esp. 3–9.

Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1533–1535; Seth, "Foucault in India," 43–57; Pesek, "Foucault Hardly Came to Africa," 41–59. See also Comaroff, "Governmentality, Materiality, Legality, Modernity," 107–134.



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Unlike nation-states, empire-states made it easier for nongovernmental agencies such as the ICI to govern, especially in "transnational" spaces and remote colonial territories that partly escaped the control of nation-states. ¹¹ Thus, ICI members operated both within conventional state structures and in transnational spaces of governmentality. Governmentality, as historians of the Subaltern Studies Group remarked, could be highly concrete and express itself in state intervention and police surveillance. More frequently, however, it took indirect and transnational forms such as in medical discourses about deficient indigenous hygiene that helped to legitimize colonial domination. ¹² Colonial experts established the ICI in 1893 to develop such transnational technologies of governmentality. ¹³

The ICI was unique because its members developed their own notion of transnational governmentality long before Foucault gave it a name. Hence, this book does not take governmentality at face value but analyzes the way colonial experts themselves imagined, used, and designed schemes of transnational governmentality in the colonies. Ruling through international experts who appropriated and manipulated indigenous discourses for their own cause, the ICI suggested, would be more efficient than involving naive bureaucrats from the metropole.¹⁴ While racial bias led ICI members to believe that indirect governmentality was too abstract to be noticed among the colonized population, the latter actually understood the hypocritical shift to transnational governmentality very well. After all, the ICI promoted transnational governmentality to obscure the violent nature and brutal excesses of colonial rule. The colonized population saw through allegedly hidden power structures and contested them. Partha Chatterjee remarked that anti-colonialists of the twentieth century rejected participative governmentality and requested sovereignty, which promised full independence instead of restricted self-determination. 15 Nevertheless, members of the ICI developed technologies of transnational governmentality during their annual meetings and often implemented them in colonies. Going under the name of functional governance, the ICI's transnational governmentality would make a career in the League of Nations and the UN development agencies after World War II.¹⁶

The term "transnational governmentality" describes all forms of unofficial government without or outside the material and ideological infrastructure of

¹¹ Mann, From Empires to NGOs, 2.

¹² Arnold, "Touching the Body," 55–90.

For the most nuanced analysis regarding cooperation in colonial hygiene after 1945, see Pearson, *The Colonial Politics of Global Health*, 67.

The scale of colonial governmentality was unheard of, even though strategies of ruling through discourses existed in the nineteenth century. See Kalpagam, "Colonial Governmentality and the Public Sphere in India," 418–440.

¹⁵ Chatterjee, "Governmentality in the East."

¹⁶ Mazower, Governing the World; Karns and Mingst, International Organizations, 40–41.



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the nation-state. The absence of nation-states in schemes of the ICI's transnational governmentality does not mean they were irrelevant. The ICI was far from systematically rejecting the nation-state or launching a transnational conspiracy to overcome it. On the contrary, transnational processes are so interesting because they were exceptional. Nation-states, manifesting themselves in collective participation, a bureaucratic apparatus, and a strong narrative of homogeneity, shaped the mindsets and activities of ICI members between 1890 and 1960 and few of them could afford to renounce its advantages. One core question of this book, therefore, is when, why, and to what extent self-declared colonial internationalists were able and willing to renounce their nation-state.

What did it mean to be a colonial internationalist? Declaring oneself an internationalist allowed ICI members to remain good patriots, since nationalism and inter-nationalism were complementary and not mutually exclusive. 17 Yet that did not necessarily make internationalists diplomats, thinking of themselves as intergovernmental brokers. Rather, declaring oneself internationalist was a conscious choice through which an individual or a group became part of a progressive movement.¹⁸ In the 1890s, internationalism was indeed a label political or scholarly groups used to declare themselves progressive, be they socialists, liberals, utilitarians, colonialists, or medical experts. Since internationalism was rarely an end in itself, it mostly served as a means to make activities such as colonialism sound worldly. 19 For its declarative character, the term "international" must raise suspicions. ICI members used internationalism to portray colonialism as progressive and reformable, a claim that this book disproves.

While internationalism was a theoretical construct and a political choice, "transnational" describes the social and economic practice of "unpolitical" but not unintentional interaction across borders. 20 Contemporaries did not use the word "transnational," which gives us the opportunity to turn it into an analytical concept that describes interaction across state borders and national systems, mostly happening below the diplomatic level without a predominantly politicized purpose. 21 Unlike internationalism, transnationalism can be more than the sum of its parts and transcend nationalism and the nation-state or even make it irrelevant. Both internationalism and

¹⁷ Sluga, Internationalism, 12.

Also called utopia by some. See Clavin and Sluga, Rethinking the History, 8; Gorman, The Emergence, 3.

Herren, Hintertüren, 169–173; Mazower, No Entchanted Palace, 31.

²⁰ There are, however, political projects of a transnational civil society: Iriye, Global Community, 7.

²¹ Irye, Global and Transnational History, 9; Budde et al., Transnationale Geschichte. See also the definition in Paulmann and Geyer, The Mechanics of Internationalism, 3; Clavin and Sluga, Rethinking, 4.



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transnationalism used to be Eurocentric, though, and therefore difficult to apply to the colonized world. 22

To be sure, between 1890 and 1960, nation-states were equally empires and the expression "transimperial governmentality" would have had its merits.²³ Yet ICI members avoided the words empire and imperial between 1890 and 1960 because they were not regarded as progressive. They preferred to label themselves colonialists instead of imperialists. What is more, prior to World War II, empire-state infrastructure in the colonies was highly deficient.²⁴ It would thus make little sense to analyze transimperial governmentality and ask why colonial internationalists did not use the official imperial state infrastructure that did not even exist. No doubt, "empire" provides us with a powerful notion of a space linking up colonies and metropoles to produce inequality and restricted agency alike. The transimperial has lately become allencompassing, applying to continental empires and colonial empires, imperial formations and formal empires, Non-European and European empires, and so on. 25 What is more, the term "transimperial" increasingly designates the crossborder activities among subaltern groups and anti-imperialists. Since the colonized had been denied participation in the international community for ages, their activity has now been labeled transimperial.²⁶ While this book is about empires and touches on all those transimperial processes, it looks more specifically at colonial and transcolonial processes.

A more promising analysis has to include the self-perceptions of colonial internationalists who used different networks and labels in different situations. They potentially labeled themselves internationalists, nationalists, "pure" colonialists, utilitarians, reformers, functionalists, and Eurafricanists, always depending on the context. Often, they used the infrastructure of their own nation-states, but equally networks and funding of other nations and international organizations and companies, while establishing their own "transcolonial" infrastructure.

By establishing the ICI, colonial internationalists intended to build a purely "colonial" and "transcolonial" infrastructure that emancipated itself from the metropoles' focus on state and nation. By denying the importance of nation-states for good practices of colonization, the ICI members designed such an autonomous colonial sphere.²⁷ "Transcolonial" referred predominantly to

 $^{^{22}\,}$ Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," 431; Conrad and Osterhammel, Kaiserreich, 14.

²³ Ross, Ecology and Power, 256; Gissibl, The Nature, 15-16.

²⁴ Greenwood, Beyond the State, 9.

²⁵ Hedinger, "Transimperial History"; Stoler et al., *Imperial Formations*; Burbank and Cooper, *Empires*.

Manela, The Wilsonian Moment; Goebel, Anti-Imperial Metropolis; Weiss, Framing a Radical African Atlantic. On their reclaimed internationalism, see Goswami, "Imaginary Futures"; Salter, World War One.

 $^{^{\}rm 27}$ Stockwell, The British End, 5–6; Van Laak, Imperiale Infrastruktur, 34.



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knowledge circulation and technology transfers between different colonies, to which the state in the metropole were irrelevant and often an impediment.

Again, ICI members did not use the term "transcolonial" and spoke only sporadically about "inter-colonial" activities. Yet they developed an explicit esprit de corps and claimed to work in a transcolonial sphere "sui generis" (Chapter 2). Observing this autonomy, the British Colonial Office doubted whether "the title 'international'" applied to the ICI at all, because "its members are [exclusively] chosen from the countries which have colonies." But the ICI was not a mere broker between colonies, empires, and nations. The ICI was involved in a transcolonial practice. It is one purpose of this book to uncover this transcolonial dimension and evaluate its autonomy from the nationalist history. It is important to know that transnational governmentality was not necessarily the precondition for the emergence of a transcolonial sphere. Both were mutually constitutive but also existed separately from each other.

Members of the ICI believed that transcolonial autonomy gave them access to the colonized to use them as tools for transcolonial governmentality, whereas the colonized themselves became important protagonists and experts who used transcolonial networks for their own purposes. Both sides contributed to developing technologies of colonial governmentality. Among those technologies were transcolonial development schemes, cooperation in sanitation policies, technology transfers between colonies, the use of pseudo-authentic indigenous concepts and laws to motivate them for work, stimuli for self-discipline by introducing salaries and credit banks, incentives for labor migration across colonial borders, internationalization of the colonial administration, the use of indigenous administrators and their representation on the local and international level, cooperative welfare schemes, and the partnership with local farmers and craft guilds. The chapters in this book take a closer look at what effect these technologies of transcolonial governmentality had.

Hence, four analytical concepts are necessary to think through colonial internationalism: the international, the transnational, the intercolonial, and the transcolonial. Internationalism is the label our protagonists chose for themselves and describes the *ideal* of cooperation among nationals from different countries.²⁹ Transnationalism is a word they did not know or use but provides us with an unencumbered analytical term to describe the social *practice* of cooperation and transfers across borders in the Global North.

²⁸ CO 323 984 7: Colonial Office to Foreign Office, [1931].

²⁹ Ideally, the cooperation among the "civilized" world. See Mazower, No Enchanted Palace, 28–65; Koskenniemi, The Gentle Civilizer of Nations, 98–177; Anghie, Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law, 32–195; Bell, Victorian Visions of Global Order, 10. See also Clavin and Sluga, Internationalisms, 8–10, Armitage, Modern International Thought, 41–44.



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While both of these concepts refer to the nation, the protagonists occasionally described their collaboration overseas as "intercolonial," with no reference to the nation or the empire at all. Thus, they imagined an autonomous colonial sphere in which the nation was absent, if not irrelevant. In parallel to the discrimination between the international ideal and the transnational practice, we can distinguish between the *ideal* of intercolonial cooperation and the social *practice* of transcolonial transfers.³⁰ Thus, the four concepts under discussion are the contemporary ideals of international and intercolonial cooperation and today's analytical terms of transnational and transcolonial transfers, which allow us to frame the practice of transfers.

The ICI's ideal of internationalism was certainly compatible with the metropole's national sovereignty, as was the practice of transcolonial transfers with imperial integrity. Most imperial governments believed that transcolonial transfers made their own empire even stronger and more competitive. While representatives of small nations with large empires such as Belgium displayed particular interest in the ICI, governments of great powers equally hoped to benefit from its denationalized knowledge production.³¹ All of the colonial powers ultimately funded the ICI and supported its schemes of colonial autonomy because it promised a universally applicable best practice of colonial governmentality. The ICI styled itself a learned society dedicated to a denationalized and colonial science, and its members thought of colonial science as an applied method rather than an armchair theory. Comparison and transfer were the most important operators of this method. While transcolonial emulation and technology transfers were ultimately less successful than imperial governments imagined, it mattered that they thought of them as progressive. Thus, the idea that transnational and transcolonial cooperation was more progressive than nationalist insularity was born.

This book assumes that the label internationalism was more important than nationalism for the longevity of colonial projects, because only transnational cooperation held out the prospect of profitability and legitimacy against allegations of inefficiency and illegitimacy. When Chailley established the ICI in 1893, he was responding to colonies being unprofitable for both the colonizers and the colonized. Indeed, in the 1890s, the enthusiasm of conquest gave way to increased criticism from European governments and colonial subjects alike. The ICI's promise to reform colonial administration convinced the critics that the inherent contradictions and poor results of colonialism could be overcome by a transnational, systematic, scientific, and governmental

³⁰ On intercolonial cooperation, see Streets-Salter, *World War One*, 11. Most historians seem to assume that transnational history is a new perspective on Western history. See Patel, "An Emperor," 3–5. Only rarely, they explicitly apply the term to North-South relationships. See, for example, Lorcin and Shepard, *French Mediterraneans*, 1–3.

³¹ On "small nations," see Schayegh, "The Expanding Overlap," 782-802.



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effort to improve colonial administration. Along these lines, Chailley's critical report on British India cited by Gandhi's *Indian Opinion* made believe that the ICI was a reformist institution, and its members were progressive experts.³² Chailley proclaimed that colonies would only pay off if these experts cooperated with each other and with the colonized population. This book reveals how conservative their reforming zeal was.

Against this background, the combination of internationalism and reformism - representing the spatial and the temporal side of progress provided the ICI with a narrative to justify colonial domination. This book challenges this narrative of progress, which portrayed colonialism as a cybernetic system able to cure itself of nationalism through reformist internationalization. As we will see, ICI members suggested that internationalism was more humane than nationalism and benefited the colonized population. They confined excesses to the era of colonial conquest, when overly emotionalized nationalists had violently occupied land without any rational purpose. Internationalists, instead, claimed to govern colonies based on principles of rationality, mutuality, and humanity. In this narrative, nationalist colonialism seemed to benefit the honor of the metropole, while internationalist colonialism seemed to benefit humankind. By establishing this narrative, propagandists of colonial internationalism added a temporal axis to the spatial one: over time, colonialism allegedly emancipated itself from its nationalist origins and became internationalist and benevolent.

Among historians, the debate concerning whether internationalizing colonial rule in 1919 perpetuated prewar colonialism or anticipated independence remained inconclusive.³³ Scholars who believe progress ruled the world often embraced the narrative of improvement through internationalization.³⁴ Some concluded that the violent conquests of the 1880s gave way to a more humane and liberal atmosphere in 1919, when the League of Nations internationalized former German and Ottoman colonies, reformed their administration, and granted their inhabitants a say. Historians were unaware, however, that ICI members had infiltrated the League of Nations' Permanent Mandate Commission and used their position to silence the inhabitants of the mandates, which actually differed little from traditional prewar colonies.³⁵ The analysis of the ICI between the 1890s and the 1950s reveals that internationalism and reformism, as well as humanitarianism, were inherent to colonialism from the beginning of imperial expansion and not a progressive element at all.³⁶ The year

³² Mentioned in the footnotes in Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*, 316.

³³ Martin and Toye, Arguing about Empire, 16–18; Pedersen, The Guardians, 4.

³⁴ Daughton, "Behind the Imperial Curtain," 506–507; Laqua, *Internationalism*; Richard, "Between the League of Nations and Europe," 97–116.

³⁵ Bandeira Jerónimo, "A League of Empires," 87–126.

³⁶ Hoffmann, Human Rights, 7–8.



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1919 certainly became a "moment" of raised expectations among the colonized for more autonomy and their own nation-states. ³⁷ By that date, however, the ICI had long designed strategies of autonomy and self-government to delegitimize those who asked for immediate independence. Therefore, judging by the ICI's persistent schemes of reformist governmentality, the world wars were not necessarily a significant stage in a linear history of progress toward independence.

A critical analysis of the ICI's long-term history reveals how little historical change mattered in modifying its members' colonial configurations: colonial internationalism existed long before 1919 and continued to shape the postindependence era after the 1950s. 38 Analyzing the ICI between the 1890s and the 1960s shows that the allegedly different consecutive epochs of colonialism resembled each other. The liberal imperialism of free trade of the nineteenth century was compatible with seemingly protectionist development projects of the early twentieth century.³⁹ The League of Nations' "humanitarian" colonialism of the 1920s unresistingly merged into the fascist project of a Eurafrican empire in the 1930s. At an international colonial congress organized by ICI members and Italian fascists in 1938, the participants promoted the liberal and progressive anthropology of Bronislaw Malinowski, which had the reputation of overcoming racist stereotypes. After 1945, ICI members perpetuated elements of governmental systems developed by the free traders who founded the ICI in 1893 and by fascist colonial internationalists. Analyzing the ICI helps us to understand that governmental strategies hardly changed, no matter whether republicans, liberals, nationalists, internationalists, or fascists ruled the colonial world.40

In equal measure, the ICI stood for the persistence of transnational governmentality from the period of conquest to the independence era. The ICI's transnational governmentality partly assumed the shape of functional governance, an allegedly depoliticized government through an international technocracy. Theories of functional governance stated that public international agencies and private companies should join forces to solve social and economic "world problems" through transnational cooperation, without relying too much on selfish states who were ineffectual in tackling problems of the Global South, for example. The main theorist of functional governance, David Mitrany, had learned his trade in Hamburg's Colonial Institute, a training school for colonial administrators established by ICI members in

³⁷ Manela, Wilsonian Moment, 6.

³⁸ Fogarty, *Race and War in France*, 10–14; Gerwarth and Manela, *Empires at War*, 1–16; Leonhard, *Der Überforderte Frieden*, 1275–1277.

 $^{^{\}rm 39}$ They were interventionist free traders as described by Slobodian, Globalists, 1–26.

Hetherington and Sluga, "Liberal and Illiberal Internationalisms," 2; Fitzpatrick, Liberal Imperialism in Europe, 1–24; Alcalde, "Transnational Consensus," 243–252.