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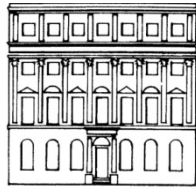# London

BULLETIN

Ulrike Lindner:
Imperialism and Globalization: Entanglements and Interactions between the British and German Colonial Empires in Africa before the First World War

ARTICLE

IMPERIALISM AND GLOBALIZATION: ENTANGLEMENTS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND GERMAN COLONIAL EMPIRES IN AFRICA BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Ulrike Lindner

I. *Introduction*

This article addresses the tensions between increasing technical and economic globalization and a tendency towards excessive national rivalry in the period of high imperialism, that is, during the final decades before the First World War. In particular, it focuses on one extremely important aspect of this tension, namely, the colonial commitments of two European powers who were neighbours in Africa. In recent years, much has been written about the conjunction of processes of globalization and the growth of nationalist tendencies at this time, especially in studies of the German Kaiserreich.[1] Interactions between the neighbouring colonies of European empires, however, have hardly been looked at in this context. Yet an analysis of relations between the colonial powers and their mutual perceptions can crucially contribute to a better understanding of this tension, and of the period of high imperialism as a whole.

To a large extent, the period under investigation here was shaped by growing rivalries and increasing diplomatic tension between the

[1] Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich, 2006); see also id. and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Das Kaiserreich transnational* (Göttingen 2004).

European nations, and especially between Germany and Britain. Britain increasingly saw German naval policy as a threat, while German radical nationals in turn perceived 'perfidious Albion' as their main antagonist, blocking Germany's ambitions to become a world power.[2] Their quarrels and rivalries have often been the topic of historical analyses, and traditional diplomatic history has seen these as the dominant characteristic of this period.[3]

However, the years from the 1880s to the beginning of the First World War also witnessed a large spurt in globalization, resulting in a world which was interconnected in many ways. This period is seen as a time of 'great acceleration', as Christopher Bayly puts it in his book *The Birth of the Modern World*.[4] Technical and economic globalization also reached Africa. There, international connections often developed as the European powers cooperated on such matters as laying telegraph lines and establishing steamer connections in Africa. Germany was initially obliged to connect to the already established

[2] On German naval policy, see Volker R. Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan* (Düsseldorf, 1971) and Wilhelm Deist, *Marine und Marinepolitik im kaiserlichen Deutschland 1871–1914* (Düsseldorf, 1972). On the contemporary perception of Germany as a threat to Britain see e.g. Ellis Barker, 'Anglo-German Differences and Sir Edward Grey', *Fortnightly Review* (1912), 447–62. The German extreme nationalist view of the British is discussed in Peter Walkenhorst, *Nation – Volk – Rasse: Radikaler Nationalismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1890–1914* (Göttingen, 2007). On radical nationalism in Germany in general see Geoff Eley, *Wilhelminismus, Nationalismus, Faschismus: Zur historischen Kontinuität in Deutschland* (Münster, 1996).

[3] See esp. Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914* (London, 1980), 441–63. See also Zara Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (London, 1977), 42–78; Klaus Hildebrand, 'Zwischen Allianz und Antagonismus: Das Problem bilateraler Normalität in den britisch-deutschen Beziehungen des 19. Jahrhunderts 1870–1914', in Heinz Dollinger, Horst Gründer, and Alwin Hanschmidt (eds.), *Weltpolitik. Europagedanke. Regionalismus: Festschrift für Heinz Gollwitzer* (Munich, 1982), 305–31; Gustav Schmidt, 'Der deutsch-englische Gegensatz im Zeitalter des Imperialismus', in Henning Köhler (ed.), *Deutschland und der Westen: Vorträge und Diskussionsbeiträge des Symposiums zu Ehren von Gordon A. Craig* (Berlin, 1984), 59–81; and Jean Stengers, 'British and German Imperial Rivalry: A Conclusion', in Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, 1967), 337–50.

[4] Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, 2004).

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British telegraph network in South and East Africa, and in the years that followed, the newly built telegraph networks in the interior of the German and British colonies were connected in many places.[5] In particular, the speed at which information travelled changed. Whereas letters had previously taken months, messages could now be sent home quickly by telegraph, and the steamer lines made it possible for goods and people to be transported ever more quickly. This was true not only of connections between the motherland and the colony, but also of those linking the colonies of different European empires.[6]

Similarly, economic globalization did not stop at the colonies. Companies established themselves in the colonies of various European nations, and trading networks were extended. Streams of indentured labour, which were shifted around between the colonies of the British Empire in particular, were another phenomenon. Entrepreneurs in the German colonies, only recently incorporated into the imperial context, also wanted to profit from this movement of labour.[7]

The various aspects of technical and economic globalization made it possible for the European powers and their colonies to take a close interest in each other. It also enabled an increased transfer of knowledge, and faster cooperation between the colonies. It is, of course, critical to note here that, in contrast to what we think of as globalization today, developments then involved first and foremost an expansion of European empires. European or Western technologies resulted in a new world formation which, even if it created global interconnections such as the migration of Chinese and Indian indentured

[5] Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London, 2001), 6; Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World,* 20; Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Petersson, *Geschichte der Globalisierung* (Munich, 2003), 64–5, 67. On British telegraph connections in general see Paul M. Kennedy, 'Imperial Cable Communications and Strategy, 1870–1914', *English Historical Review*, 86 (1971), 728–52.

[6] Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur: Deutsche Planungen für eine Erschließung Afrikas* (Paderborn, 2004), 35–40 and 91–3. For the consequences of faster communications, see also Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 461.

[7] See Ulrike Lindner, 'Transnational Movements between Colonial Empires: Migrant Workers from the British Cape Colony in the German Diamond Town Lüderitzbucht', *European Review of History*, 16 (2009), 679–96.

labourers to Africa, always displayed considerable differences in levels of power. At the same time, closer links between the imperial powers, both in Europe and overseas, precipitated attempts at cultural demarcation and gave rise to an emphasis on the individual national styles of imperial and colonial powers. The two processes—interconnection and demarcation—were in most cases closely intertwined.

I will argue here that the concepts of colonial rule and the concrete interaction between the colonial rulers of Africa quite clearly embodied the growing trend towards connection and cooperation, and were much less influenced by antagonisms than relations in Europe, especially during the last years before the First World War.[8] In Africa, the colonial rulers could always focus on common challenges thrown up by their dealings with the Other, the colonized Africans, and the establishment of colonial rule in unknown African countries.

Traditional diplomatic history has usually interpreted the differences between the discourses of colonial policy and antagonistic foreign policy by suggesting that before 1914 the colonial periphery was insignificant as it was unable to have any impact on growing European rivalries.[9] From a less Eurocentric perspective influenced more strongly by global history, however, overlapping developments can be discerned. Global interconnectedness and understanding could simultaneously be found in demarcation processes and rivalry between the European imperial nations, although sometimes in different contexts and in different geographical locations.[10] This perspective responds to Jürgen Osterhammel's call to see the nineteenth century not just as leading up to the First World War, but to allow space for approaches other than the paradigm of European rivalry.[11]

[8] Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', in id. and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), 3–42, 13.

[9] See e.g. Michael Fröhlich, *Von der Konfrontation zur Koexistenz: Die deutsch-englischen Kolonialbeziehungen in Afrika zwischen 1884 und 1914* (Bochum, 1990), 327–8; and Kennedy, *Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism*, 415.

[10] For a perspective that presents the world around 1900 as created by a variety of non-Eurocentric developments see e.g. Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, esp. 451–87.

[11] Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2009), 578–9.

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On the following pages, I will concentrate on the tensions between rivalries and the trend towards globalization in the colonial world of Africa.[12] I shall begin with some general remarks about aspects of colonial cooperation in Africa, which was considerably advanced by the globalization spurt before the First World War. Then, taking as examples the Herero and Nama war in German South-West Africa and the growing influence of Indian and Chinese indentured labour in German and British southern Africa, I will show how much globalization on the one hand and demarcation processes on the other influenced the imperial world before the First World War, and how strongly the different trends were connected with each other. The encounters and mutual perceptions between the two colonizers and between the colonies are analysed as an entangled history,[13] which I understand primarily as a concept bridging classical comparative history and an investigation of transfer processes.[14]

II. *Trends Toward Cooperation among the Colonizers in Africa*

The mutual perceptions of the two colonizing powers involved a considerable degree of envy, as well as efforts to demarcate national colonial styles, which in many respects revived the old stereotype of

[12] The present article is based on the research conducted for my *Habilitation* thesis, entitled 'Colonial Encounters: Germany and Great Britain as Imperial Powers in Africa before the First World War'. In this study, I investigate colonial practices, their mutual reception, and interactions between neighbouring colonizing European powers. Geographically, the thesis deals with neighbouring colonies in East Africa and South Africa, specifically, German and British East Africa and German South-West Africa and the Cape Colony.
[13] Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung: Der Ansatz der Histoire Croisée und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft,* 28 (2002), 607–36; and Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), 17–22.
[14] Hartmut Kaelble, 'Die interdisziplinären Debatten über Vergleich und Transfer', in id. and Jürgen Schriewer (eds.), *Vergleich und Transfer: Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), 477.

British–German relations, including that of the pioneer and late-comer.[15] This was quite obvious among the German colonial officials, settlers, and colonial agitators. While the British, with their empire spanning the globe, provided a model of experienced colonial rule, there was always a desire among the Germans to develop their own, presumably superior, colonial style, separate from that of the British colonial power. The British side almost always used the German example to present themselves as the more experienced, better colonial rulers in comparison with the Germans.[16] Here, the transnational element played an important part in sharpening the identity of the colonizer. Such efforts at national demarcation can be found during the whole period before 1914, sometimes more in the foreground, sometimes less.

During their final years as neighbours in Africa between 1907 and 1914—after the wars in the German colonies and before the start of the First World War—a considerable shift can be observed. Another important element came to the fore. The common aspects of the European mission in Africa were now emphasized by both sides, and the exchange of colonial knowledge and skills between the two powers was foregrounded. This was closely linked to the growing interconnectedness of the colonies within the framework of technical globalization around 1900, which made this sort of transfer of knowledge possible in the first place.[17]

The aspect of cooperation played a central part under German Colonial Secretary Bernhard Dernburg, who was in office from 1906 to 1910. He himself admitted, retrospectively, that whenever he had had difficulties with a colonial problem, he had found a solution by

[15] See e.g. Hartmut Berghoff and Dieter Ziegler, *Pionier und Nachzügler? Vergleichende Studien zur Geschichte Großbritanniens und Deutschland im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung: Festschrift für Sidney Pollard zum 70. Geburtstag* (Bochum, 1995).

[16] For the German side see e.g. Paul Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft: Kulturpolitische Grundsätze für die Rassen- und Missionsfragen* (Berlin, 1909), 30–1; Max von Brandt, *Die englische Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialverwaltung* (Halle, 1906). For British critiques of German colonialism see e.g. Fröhlich, *Von der Konfrontation zur Koexistenz*, 233–66.

[17] See Ulrike Lindner, 'Colonialism as a European Project in Africa before 1914? British and German Concepts of Colonial Rule in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Comparativ*, 19 (2009), 88–106, 103–5.

studying British methods.[18] Dernburg, who was an admirer of British colonization, had travelled in the various British colonies in Africa and had modelled his reform programmes on British colonial policy.[19] He regarded cooperation between neighbouring colonial rulers as essential for the successful colonization of Africa, as he once stressed in a talk he gave in London in 1909:

> Most parts of Africa now under British and German dominion have not been acquired by force of arms, but more or less by a common understanding of the European nations and by a more or less complete consent of the governed indigenous races. . . . The truth of this contention had happily been recognized by the two nations in a number of practical terms.[20]

The two imperial powers also wanted to learn from each other. Even if the relationship between Britain and Germany was undoubtedly asymmetrical in the colonial context, during the final years before the First World War this factor featured more strongly in the British view of the African colonies. An article published in the *Bulletin of the Royal Colonial Institute* in 1912 stated programmatically that the Germans would always be willing to learn from the British, and that the British should do this as well and begin to learn from the Germans in colonial matters.[21] In January 1914 Professor Julius Bonn, a German colo-

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[18] *The Times*, 23 June 1914.

[19] Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (hereafter BAB) R 1001/6938, *passim*; and R 1001/6882/1 (Dernburg to Imperial Governor of German Dependencies, 17 Nov. 1906), fos. 36–7 for Dernburg's suggestion of a ten-year reform programme in the German colonies, sent to the governors of the German dependencies, which incorporates several ideas drawn from the English colonies. See also BAB R 1001/6938 (Dernburg on questions regarding 'native' policy. Speech of 18 Feb. 1908), where England is portrayed as a role model for its development of an economically rational colonial policy. Pointing to the English example, Dernburg demands better treatment for the indigenous populations of the colonies.

[20] Quoted from *The Times*, 6 Nov. 1909.

[21] Louis Hamilton, 'The German Colonies 1910–1911', *United Empire*, 3 (1912), 970. On this attitude, which prevailed under the Liberal government in particular, see Ronald Hyam, *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office 1905–1908: The Watershed of the Empire Commonwealth* (London, 1968), 429.

nial expert, delivered a lecture about German colonialism at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Society in London,[22] which was very positively received by the British press. In Germany, the English colonial writer and former Governor of Uganda, Sir Harry Johnston, also emphasized the cooperation between the two nations in the African colonies in his lecture to the German Colonial Society (Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft):

> At present I am not aware of any conflicts of interest between our two great nations in the black parts of the earth; no chicanery, no rivalry of the sort that unhappily manifested itself earlier, while these possessions were being acquired, should become apparent. We have both learned to walk hand in hand in our great battles with rebellious nature, in tasks such as combating tropical diseases and other problems.[23]

This form of exchange can also be observed at the highest level of the colonial administration. German Colonial Secretary Wilhelm Solf visited British Nigeria while travelling in West Africa in 1913. Thereafter, he maintained a close correspondence with Governor Frederick Lugard, inventor of the concept of indirect rule, a form of colonial rule that was seen in Britain at the time as being non-invasive, cheap, and mild. He had published a great deal on the theory and practice of colonialism in Africa, and Solf was very interested in Lugard's ideas. They exchanged their last letters in June 1914. Solf wrote to Lugard that he had profited very much from the information he had received and that he would try to put some of the measures that Lugard had taken up in Nigeria into practice in the German colony of Cameroon.[24]

It was very clear that the two colonial politicians not only valued a polite correspondence, but that they aspired to an intense mutual reception of colonial knowledge. The goal was always to strengthen their own position as imperial rulers but, in the view of contemporaries as well, this was only possible by means of cooperation. This

[22] Julius Bonn, 'German Colonial Policy', *United Empire*, 5 (1914), 126.

[23] 'Interkoloniales Verständnis: Eine Wertschätzung deutscher Leistungen von englischer Seite', *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 7 May 1910.

[24] Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BAK), N 1053/41 (Solf to Lugard, 16 June 1914).

constant mutual observation and desire to learn from each other seems to me to point to a further phenomenon, one which Ann Laura Stoler has aptly named the 'Politics of Imperial Comparisons': 'Claiming exceptionalism and investing in strategic comparison are fundamental elements of an imperial formation's commanding grammar.'[25] It also implies that the constant perception of, and comparison with, other imperial powers always served to legitimate the self, and to justify the constant exceptional regulations that every empire used.

In my opinion these tendencies go far beyond the forms of 'governmental internationalism' examined by Madeleine Herren for the period before the First World War. Whereas Herren related 'governmental internationalism' mostly to exchanges in technical and scientific fields, which were dominated by experts rather than by politicians, and which were considered of little strategic importance, I would agree with Ann Stoler that the exchange and comparison with other empires should be regarded as an original imperial strategy of great significance.[26] Thus the close interconnection and increased exchange of information which were only made possible by globalization were always closely intertwined with attempts at demarcation. On the whole, they represented an integral part of imperial policy.

III. *Globalization Tendencies versus Imperial Rivalry and National Demarcation: Two Examples*

1. *Cooperation during the Herero and Nama War*

In addition to mutual observation and the exchange of knowledge, we can also find specific examples of military and commercial cooperation in the colonies. The German war against the Herero and Nama (1904–7) in German South-West Africa, including the genocide

[25] Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan, 'Introduction: Refiguring Imperial Terrains', in eaed. and Peter C. Perdue (eds.), *Imperial Formations* (Santa Fe, N. Mex., 2007), 12.

[26] Madeleine Herren, 'Governmental Internationalism and the Beginning of a New World Order in the Late Nineteenth Century', in Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann (eds.), *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War* (Oxford, 2000), 121–44.

of the Herero, has already been broadly investigated. Interaction and cooperation between Germans and their British neighbours during the war, however, has attracted hardly any attention so far. An examination of this aspect, first, provides a new view of the war and, secondly, permits a discussion of the tensions between national demarcation and increasing interconnectedness furthered by globalization.

The behaviour of the German troops in the war was minutely observed by the British. The Foreign Office, the Cape administration, and the British public all criticized the Germans' brutal treatment of the indigenous population in general and African women and prisoners of war in particular. British observers mostly blamed the inexperience of the Germans for the radicalization and escalation of the war into genocide.[27] At the same time, they presented their own colonial rule as exemplary, with British circumspection and more flexible rule allegedly allowing such conflicts to be avoided. Nonetheless, during this long war, the most diverse forms of interaction occurred between the two colonial powers, making it clear that the war was an integral part of a large number of complex relationships between the colonies and the two metropoles.

Here I shall first discuss military cooperation. During the war, the British officers Colonel Trench and later Major Wade were attached to General von Trotha's headquarters, from where they reported technical details about the conduct of the war. They filed forty reports, each about twenty pages long, which were telegraphed to the War Office in London.[28] The British side could be so quickly informed about the German colonial war only because the German colonies were connected to the British telegraph system in Africa. At the end of the war, in 1907, the last important Nama leader, Morenga, whose guerrilla tactics had repeatedly allowed him to evade capture by the German military, was finally killed in the Cape Colony in a joint operation undertaken by the German and British military acting together. Despite fundamental criticism of German methods, the

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[27] The National Archives, Kew, Public Record Office (hererafter TNA PRO) WO 106/265 (Gleichen, Military Attaché, British Embassy Berlin, 8 Apr. 1904): 'Briefly, the real source must be sought in the ignorance of the German regarding the main principles of colonial administration and dealing with the natives.'

[28] See TNA PRO WO 106/268 and 269, *passim.*

British aim was to achieve a close exchange of information about colonial warfare at imperial level, and to this end the British and Germans cooperated militarily against the African people. Wars and rebellions endangered the predominant position of the white population in Africa in general; cooperation was therefore necessary despite differing styles of rule.

Economic networks, too, covered a considerable area. Goods delivered from the Cape Colony supplied the German troops, and labourers and transport workers migrated from the British colony to seek work in the overheated war economy of the German colony. In fact, the government of the Cape Colony insisted that only supplies destined for the civilian population could be delivered to the German colony because they did not want to be drawn into the German war, preferring to distance themselves from the German colonial strategy. Thus the border was repeatedly closed to German transports.[29] Nonetheless, the bulk of supplies for the German troops came from the Cape Colony. As deliveries to the south of the German colony, which was hardly settled by civilians, increased hugely, it must have been clear to all those in positions of responsibility that these goods could only be destined for the German military. After all, the population in the south of the colony had not suddenly increased enormously. From December 1904, some of the deliveries were sent via Port Nolloth in the north west of the Cape Colony. From there, goods for the German troops were taken on carts drawn by oxen or donkeys straight across the German border on the Orange River. The German military hired civilians from the Cape Colony to accompany these transports. From 1905, there were always between 1,500 and 1,800 people working in this capacity, including many Boers and Britons

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[29] See Tilman Dedering, 'War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 39 (2006), 275–94, who shows that the Cape Colony's borders were closed on thirty occasions. Dedering also stresses the Cape Colony's critical attitude towards German colonies, but overlooks the economic interests involved and the Foreign Office's at times very different attitude towards the Germans. See also Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY, 2005), 131–51.

who were farmers in the Cape Colony, but were glad to be recruited for short periods because of the good pay.[30]

The war against the Nama in the south of the colony could never have been conducted without the supplies of munitions, food, horses, and people provided by the Cape Colony. In February 1906 alone, 1,400 horses arrived in the harbours of German South-West Africa from the Cape Colony.[31] As German South-West Africa produced hardly any food, all provisions had to be imported. Lüderitz Bay, which was located in the desert landscape of the south of the German colony and became an army base for German troops in the Nama war, had no water springs in the immediate vicinity. Therefore even water for the German troops had to be shipped in tankers from Cape Town to the desert-like areas of southern Namibia.[32] Thus very close economic ties were established between the two colonies.

The Cape Colony did exceedingly well out of the war economy, and for this reason there was little interest in stopping this type of support. After the Boer War (1899–1902), the colony found itself in recession, so the Cape government was keen to profit economically from the war in the German colony. However, externally, the appearance of a certain degree of neutrality was to be kept up, as a letter from the South African high commissioner to the colonial secretary in London makes clear:

> My ministers, I understand, desire thus to place on record their adherence to the position which was originally adopted that supplies are only allowed to go into German South-West Africa for civilian purposes but will shut their eyes to the real destination of the supplies and will not take any step to interfere with the existing arrangements unless it is desired by His Majesty's Government that they should do so.[33]

[30] TNA PRO WO 106/268 (Colonel Trench for favour of transmission to the War Office, 24 Oct. 1905).

[31] Ibid. (Colonel Trench for favour of transmission to War Office, 10 Feb. 1906).

[32] TNA PRO WO 106/269 (Major T. H. Wade, 12 Oct. 1906).

[33] TNA PRO FO 367/9 (Hely-Hutchinson to Elgin, telegram, 6 Mar. 1906), fo. 138.

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British policy thus wavered between supporting the Germans, and keeping a distance from the German war in order to make British colonial policy appear in a positive light and not to alarm their own African subjects.[34]

Despite the distinction between national colonial styles, however, common imperial interests predominated. In the eyes of the British too, the dominant position of the white European population in Africa could ultimately only be maintained by mutual support.[35] Cooperation and the transfer of knowledge seemed the obvious means of finding solutions to numerous problems on the African continent, and became an important element of imperial rule, at least until 1914. This contrasted with the rivalry of the two nations in Europe, which was increasing sharply just at this time.

2. *Indentured Workers in Southern Africa*

Everyday contact with the Other, the colonized peoples, was to a large extent dictated by working conditions in the African colonies. In all of these, Europeans depended on the cheap labour of Africans and other ethnic groups, in the plantations of East and West Africa as well as on the farms of South Africa and, in general, for all infra-structural projects such as building roads and railways. This applied especially to mining in the Union of South Africa and, in the last years before the First World War, to diamond mining in German

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[34] TNA PRO FO 64/1646 (Memorandum on Actions Taken by the Colonial Government Regarding Disturbances in German South-West Africa, Enclos-ure No. 2 in Secret Despatch of 25 Feb. 1905: 'Since April 1904 when rumours of a further rising in German South-West Africa reached me, it has been a somewhat difficult task, whilst dealing in a friendly manner with the Ger-man Government, at the same time to keep on a more or less friendly footing with the natives tribes, a part of whom live in the German territory and part of whom live east of longitude 20° in British territory.')

[35] Léon Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), 535: 'If it is to be worth the while of the European Powers to govern and exploit these territo-ries, they cannot afford to throw away a single ounce of energy in friction one with another. Considering the enormous distances and difficulties of trans-port, about which I have already said enough, it is fairly plain that it is only by co-operation instead of mutual jealousy that Africa can be made to pay its way in the very slightest degree.'

South-West Africa.[36] In addition to Africans, thousands of members of other ethnic groups lived in Africa, mostly working as indentured labour on plantations or in the mining industry.

The extent of the German colonial empire's involvement in these developments has hardly been investigated as yet. I think it points convincingly to the connectedness of the imperial in world in Africa before the First World War, and provides a good example of the tensions between policies of imperial demarcation and trends towards globalization.

The immigrant groups I refer to here, mainly Indians and Chinese, were classified by most of the racial categorizations in use during the age of high imperialism as occupying a median position between white and black.[37] These racial constructs, moreover, were never definitive, but were constantly changed and challenged. The Chinese, for example, were long regarded as members of a *Kultur-nation,* a nation with a highly developed civilization. In the eighteenth century they were looked upon with admiration, and it was not until the middle and end of the nineteenth century that, under the influence of new racial theories, they were classified as a lower Mongolian race that was clearly inferior to the white Caucasian race.[38] Contact with these ethnic groups represented a special chal-

[36] On mining in South Africa see Peter Richardson, 'Chinese Indentured Labour in the Transvaal Gold Mining Industry, 1904–1910', in Kay Saunders (ed.), *Indentured Labour in the British Empire, 1834–1920* (London, 1984), 260–91.

[37] See. e.g. Thieme, 'Die Halbweißen Frage in Samoa', *Berliner Tageblatt* (26 Mar. 1914), 1, as cited in Horst Gründer (ed.), *'. . . da und dort ein junges Deutschland zu gründen': Rassismus, Kolonien und kolonialer Gedanke vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1999), 295. See also Evelyn Wareham, *Race and Realpolitik: The Politics of Colonisation in German Samoa* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), 55; and Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London, 1995), 104.

[38] For the German discourse see Mechthild Leutner, 'Deutsche Vorstellungen über China und Chinesen und über die Rolle der Deutschen in China 1890–1945', in Heng-yü Kuo (ed.), *Von der Kolonialpolitik zur Kooperation: Studien zur Geschichte der deutsch-chinesischen Beziehungen* (Munich, 1986), 401–43, esp. 409–11. For the discourse on the Chinese in the Empire, see Jan Henning Böttger, ' "Es wird aber schwieriger sein, sich ihrer zu entledigen als es jetzt ist, sie vom Schutzgebiet fernzuhalten": Kolonialdiskursive Bedingungen rassenpolitischen Handelns am Beispiel der Einfuhr eines Chinesen nach

lenge to the racial concepts of the colonizers, especially for the German colonial administrators, who were not familiar with multi-ethnic societies at home or in other colonies. British colonial administrations, by contrast, had long been used to such multi-layered forms of colonial society in many regions around the world. They were not less racist in their approach to these ethnic groups, but had acquired a certain degree of experience in dealing with the problems that arose.

In contrast to the German colonial administration, German entre-preneurs, as representatives of an aspiring colonial nation, were keen to be involved in recruiting indentured labour. It had become normal to transport cheap labour on a global scale. Millions of Chinese and Indians were recruited as indentured workers — also called 'coolies' — and sent around the world, especially within the British Empire.[39] Labour was a commodity that could be drawn upon as required by the plantation and mining industries.[40]

Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1906)', in Frank Becker (ed.), *Rassenmischehen — Mischlinge — Rassentrennung* (Stuttgart, 2004), 126–7. For the British discourse, see Heinz Gollwitzer, *Die gelbe Gefahr: Geschichte eines Schlagworts. Studien zum imperialistischen Denken* (Göttingen, 1962), 47–67.

[39] Michael Mann, 'Die Mär von der freien Lohnarbeit: Menschenhandel und erzwungene Arbeit in der Neuzeit — ein einleitender Essay', *Comparativ*, 13 (2003), 13. See Saunders (ed.), *Indentured Labour* for indentured labour in the British Empire. See also Martin Legassick and Francine de Clercq, 'Capital-ism and Migrant Labour in Southern Africa: The Origins and Nature of the System', in Shula Marks (ed.), *International Labour Migration* (Hounslow, 1984), 140–60; Pieter Cornelis Emmer, 'The Meek Hindu: The Recruitment of Indian Indentured Labourers for Service Overseas, 1870–1916', in id. and Ernst van den Boogaart (eds.), *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labour before and after Slavery* (Dordrecht, 1986), 187–207. On indentured labour in general, see David Northrup *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge, 1995); and Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830–1920* (Oxford, 1974). On the distinctions between free, indentured, and slave labour, see Robert J. Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2001), 1–38.

[40] Aristide Zolberg refers to about 1 million Indian indentured labourers (in addition to many other migrants) who left the subcontinent between 1834 and 1916 and worked in Britain's Caribbean colonies. Thomas Metcalf men-tions a figure of 1.3 million. See Aristide R. Zolberg, 'Global Movements, Global Walls: Responses to Migration, 1885–1925', in Wang Gungwu (ed.),

Whenever there was a shortage of labour in the German colonies, voices were quick to call for cheap 'coolies' from India or China.[41] At the end of the 1880s, about 1,000 Chinese 'coolies' were, in fact, recruited for German East Africa, but from Singapore rather than China, which did not permit emigration to German East Africa.[42] Germany's Pacific colonies began recruiting Chinese labour around 1900, and by 1914 there were about 3,500 Chinese workers living there.[43] In German South-West Africa, on which I concentrate here, such endeavours began late because the economic structure of the colony—extensive livestock holdings, no labour-intensive tropical plantations, and little mining—meant that the labour of 'coolies' seemed dispensable. But the discovery of diamonds in 1908 and the forced development of the railways from 1905 on meant that the needs of businessmen in German South-West Africa changed. Both mining and railway companies wanted to participate in the global labour market, and from 1910 they attempted to recruit Indian and Chinese labour to 'import' into the German colony.[44]

German companies and the colonial administration of German South-West Africa were mainly influenced by conditions in neigh-

Global History and Migrations (Boulder, Colo., 1997), 288; and Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley, 2007), 136. See also Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire: Capital, Slavery, and Indian Indentured Labor Migration to the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 1998), *passim*; and Emmer, 'The Meek Hindu', 188–94, for Indian indentured labour in the Caribbean. After the end of the Opium War in 1860, when the Chinese governor was forced to lift barriers to emigration, a constantly growing network emerged which shipped Chinese labourers to America, Africa, Australia, various South East Asian colonies, and South Africa as 'coolies'. The Chinese emigration was probably the largest non-European migration movement of the end of the nineteenth century. Although there are no precise figures, it is assumed that between 1860 and 1920, around 15 million Chinese migrated to South East Asia alone. See Zolberg, 'Global Movements', 288–91.

[41] Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*, 168–73.

[42] Ibid. 213.

[43] Ibid. 215–17. For Germany's South Pacific colonies in general, see Hermann Joseph Hiery, *Das Deutsche Reich in der Südsee (1900–1921): Eine Annäherung an die Erfahrungen verschiedener Kulturen* (Göttingen, 1995); and id., *Die deutsche Südsee 1884–1914* (Paderborn, 2002).

[44] National Archive of Namibia (thereafter NAN) BLU 30 (Lüderitz Bay Chamber of Mining to Imperial Government, Windhoek, 2 May 1912).

bouring British South Africa. How conditions there were perceived had a considerable impact on German colonial policy, and so I shall briefly describe them here. The plantations and mining industry of British South Africa had always been based on itinerant and indentured labour. Africans from the whole southern part of the continent worked in the gold mines of Witwatersrand, which in 1909 employed a total of about 150,000 workers.[45] Indian and Chinese indentured labour was also employed in various regions of British South Africa. Indian 'coolies' went to Natal as early as 1860 to work on the sugar plantations and later on the tea plantations.[46] Many of the immigrant Indians stayed in the British colony after their contracts came to an end. They were not obliged to return home after the expiry of their contracts, and they often went on to work in other areas, including the coal and mining industries. Others became independent traders, or small farmers,[47] and were increasingly seen as competition by the European population. Various laws were passed to restrict their rights, and moves were made to disenfranchise them. Gandhi, in particular, who went to Durban in 1893, opposed discrimination against Indians. He organized protests against obligatory registration, which seriously restricted the freedom of movement for all Asians. The Indian population's quarrels with the colonial government and, from 1910, with the government of the Union of South Africa, cannot be discussed further here.[48] With respect to the transfer of knowledge and the increasing interconnectedness between the colonial empires, what is important is that the German consuls in the various British colonies, the German Colonial Office (Reichskolonialamt) in Berlin, and the government of German South-West Africa closely followed

[45] Legassick and de Clercq, 'Capitalism and Migrant Labour in Southern Africa', 141; Richardson, 'Chinese Indentured Labour', 262.

[46] Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, 138.

[47] N. Naicker, 'Indians in South Africa', in Anirudha Gupta (ed.), *Indians Abroad: Asia and Africa. Report of an International Seminar* (New Delhi, 1971), 276–7. See Emmer, 'The Meek Hindu', *passim*, for Indian indentured labour in general.

[48] On the Indian movement in Natal see Judith Brown (ed.), *Gandhi and South Africa: Principles and Politics* (Pietermaritzburg, 1994); and Surendra Bhana, *Indentured Indian Emigrants to Natal, 1860–1902* (New Delhi, 1991). For Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress, see Surendra Bhana, *Gandhi's Legacy: The Natal Indian Congress 1894–1994* (Pietermaritzburg, 1997).

discussions concerning the Indian immigrants.[49] The government of the German colony of South-West Africa paid special attention to the reports from Durban. The success of Gandhi's movement was seen as highly problematic by the German observers.[50]

If we look at the Chinese indentured workers in British South Africa we see that migration started considerably later. The South African gold industry had completely collapsed during the Boer War (1899–1902), and reconstruction only began after peace was concluded in 1902. The need for labour increased quickly, and could not immediately be met by African workers. Between 1904 and 1907, therefore, about 63,000 Chinese indentured labourers were recruited for the goldmines in the British colony of Transvaal.[51] In the Transvaal, the 'import' of Chinese labourers was controversially discussed. White workers and traders in particular feared the competition of the Chinese, and were doubtful about immigration.[52] The Chinese therefore had to submit to strict and in many respects inhuman regulations. The Transvaal administration wanted at all costs to prevent a group of Chinese people from settling permanently in the colony.[53]

The reception of the conflicts with Indian and Chinese migrants in British South Africa had a considerable impact on the strategies of German colonial policy. The administration of German South-West Africa perceived the problems in Britain's South African colonies as a deterrent, and increasingly regarded the immigration of 'foreign-

[49] See e.g. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter PA AA), R 14863, and *Die Südafrikanische Union*, iv (1910), *passim*.

[50] See e.g. the reports from the consulate of Durban, which were collected in Windhoek in a voluminous file entitled 'Eingeborenen-Verhältnisse in der südafrikanischen Union' (NAN ZBU 2059, *passim*). Detailed reports were collected on passive resistance, newly developed by Gandhi, and on the coal workers' strike. See transcript, consulate Durban to Auswärtiges Amt, 11 Nov. 1913 and 4 Dec. 1913, fos. 105–30.

[51] Peter Richardson, 'Coolies, Peasants and Proletarians: The Origins of Chinese Indentured Labour in South Africa, 1904–1907', in Marks (ed.), *International Labour Migration*, 167.

[52] NAN ZBU 2076, WIV R1 (transcript, German consulate Johannesburg to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, 16 Aug. 1912), fo. 43.

[53] BAB R 1001/8747 (Schnee, Colonial Advisory Board London to German Foreign Office, Colonial Section, 26 Mar. 1906), fos. 142–3.

ers' as a threat to its own colonial order. At the level of everyday colonial life in German South-West Africa, we can observe this phenomenon especially in the south of the German colony, in the harbour town of Swakopmund and the diamond town of Lüderitz Bay, where the boom in diamonds created a quickly growing and highly diverse society. Workers and entrepreneurs moved there from many places, especially from the British Cape Colony.[54]

In particular, German mine owners and businessmen localized in the southern region of the colony hoped that by 'importing' Indians and Chinese, they would get better and harder working labourers than they thought they could find among the country's indigenous population. African workers from the neighbouring Cape Colony, who also migrated to German South-West Africa in large numbers in order to work in the diamond fields and on the railways, were highly valued, but also considered to be relatively rebellious. The mine owners complained first about the higher wages that they had to pay the 'Cape boys', and secondly feared that they would organize and make more demands:

> In order not to become dependent on them [workers from the Cape] while having access to the necessary number of workers, we urgently need to find replacements from elsewhere. I therefore regard it as necessary to put into practice the plan, already articulated by the previous management, to obtain Chinese for the plant here. The Chinese have proved their value as mineworkers. They work hard and their demands in terms of wages and food are moderate.[55]

However, putting this plan into practice turned out to be difficult, as commercial interests were inconsistent with the ideas of the German colonial administration. Since 1910, the Lüderitz Bay Chamber of Mining had been trying to persuade the government that more immigration of indentured labour was required to fill existing labour

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54 For the development of Lüderitz Bay, see Lindner, 'Transnational Movements between Colonial Empires'.
55 NAN ZBU 2076, W IV R1 (Otavi Mining and Rail Association to Governor of German South-West Africa, 2 Dec. 1909).

shortages.[56] They applied for permission to 'import' about 1,000 Indian indentured workers. Thereupon the government of German South-West Africa imposed numerous conditions on the Chamber of Mining: the Indians were to be examined for illness at the place where they were recruited, and again before they landed in Africa; they were not permitted to move to the interior of the country; if Indians withdrew from their labour contracts, they had to be transported home at the Chamber of Mining's expense. The regulations were modelled closely on those that applied to Chinese indentured labourers in the Transvaal.[57] Again, we see forms of knowledge exchange between empires that were part of everyday colonial policies.

The German colonial government, too, wanted at all costs to prevent indentured labourers from settling permanently in the colony and complicating its racial structure by forming a further group between the African and the European population. The government of German South-West Africa already regarded the immigration of workers from the Cape Colony as a challenge; the immigration of other ethnic groups was seen as an even more sensitive matter. In principle, German colonial officials were highly suspicious of Asian immigration:

> All the colonies that put up legal barriers to the immigration of Asians justify them in the same way, namely, that because of their modest needs and low standard of living by comparison with Europeans, Asians, and in particular, Indians, Chinese, and Japanese are superior to the white race in the competitive struggle, and further, that to have a commercially strong Asian population in a colony that belongs to the white race will precipitate dangers and difficulties as they acquire political rights.[58]

[56] National Archives of the Republic of South Africa, Pretoria (hereafter NARS) NTS 201 3038/12/7473 (transcript, Consul Müller to Foreign Secretary, 23 Apr. 1912).

[57] NAN BLU 30 (Governor of German South-West Africa to District Office Lüderitz Bay, 20 Apr. 1912). For similar regulations in Transvaal, which the German Colonial Office took note of, see BAB R 1001/8747 (transcript, German Consulate General Shanghai to Chancellor von Bülow, 29 July 1904).

[58] BAB R 1001 /8731 (The Treatment of Asians in Foreign Colonies, 1912), fo. 1.

Article

With regard to the recruitment of Indians, an exception had already been made in 1910. A German company in South-West Africa, Tsuneb Mine, which had been mining copper and lead in Namibia since about 1900, had employed around 200 Indian 'coolies' as workers in the German colony in 1910. They had been recruited not in India, but in the Cape Colony, where the hiring of Indian workers whose contracts had expired was permitted. While this was known to the government, the details were not. The official responsible, district officer Blumhagen, merely noted in a letter to the government: 'One does not hear many favourable comments about their productivity.'[59]

The German colonial administration considered the situation in the diamond mining region of Lüderitz Bay to be particularly problematic. Many different population groups already lived there, and a British consul was on the spot to look after the affairs of Britons and African workers from British colonies.[60] Attempts by German mine owners to recruit Indian indentured labour were, in fact, noted by the British consul in Lüderitz Bay, Müller, who had been stationed there since 1909. He informed the British Foreign Office and the South African government in detail about the German plans, and expressed his own considerable misgivings:

> I have cabled in this connection as it may be considered advisable to inform the Indian Government as early as possible as to what is going on. Attention has frequently been drawn to the condition of natives in this country and Indian coolies according to existing laws come under the category of natives. In Samoa, where the labour difficulty is even greater, the German Government has been compelled to place the Chinese labourer on the same level as the white. The Chinese Government prohibited its subjects from going to Samoa on any other terms, owing to the complaints with regard to treatment, made by Chinese labourers, who had gone thither on contract. If

[59] NAN BLU 30 (Imperial Government of German South-West Africa to Imperial District Office Lüderitz Bay, 16 May 1912).
[60] NAN BLU 3 (transcript, enclosure to Blumhagen, Government of German South-West Africa to District Office Lüderitz Bay, 10 May 1912).

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coolies are permitted to come to this country the conditions
should be clearly understood beforehand.[61]

Nevertheless, despite these complications the German government
decided to grant the mine owners the permission they sought,
because it was itself dependent on the high profits of diamond min-
ing, and therefore wanted to oblige the entrepreneurs.[62] The immi-
gration of Indian indentured labour, however, had to be agreed with
the German Colonial Office in Berlin as well as with the British and
Indian governments. The German Colonial Office should really have
known that this venture had little chance of success.[63] By this time
Indian indentured labourers worked almost exclusively in British
colonies. The Indian government permitted emigration only where
particular standards were met, and German South-West Africa did
not want to guarantee these.[64]

Still, the German ambassador in London, Kühlmann, wrote to the
British Foreign Secretary in August 1912, requesting permission for
300 and later another 500 Indian indentured labourers to be taken to
German South-West Africa and employed in the diamond mines at
Lüderitz Bay. The German Chamber of Mining promised to provide
the Indians with adequate food and accommodation. However, they
were not permitted to travel to the interior of the colony and could
not conduct any independent business. The Chamber of Mining had
also undertaken to send the Indian workers back at the end of their
contracts.[65] The Indian government refused to grant the Germans
permission to recruit, as German South-West Africa demanded

[61] NARS NTS 201 3038/12/7473 (transcript, Consul Müller to Foreign
Secretary, 23 Apr. 1912).

[62] BAB R 1001/1232 (Governor of German South-West Africa to Imperial
Colonial Office Berlin, 20 Apr. 1912).

[63] In general, Berlin attempted to compile knowledge about Asian immi-
grants and to learn from the other colonial empire, as is shown by the
detailed report 'Treatment of Asians in Foreign Colonies' (1912), which was
based on official reports from the British colonies and on the *Handbook of
British Colonies*. See BAB R 1001/8731 (The Treatment of Asians in Foreign
Colonies, 1912), fos. 1–29.

[64] BAB R 1001/8747 (Schnee, Colonial Advisory Board to German Foreign
Office, Colonial Department, London, 26 Mar. 1906), fo. 142.

[65] NAN BCL 8 (transcript, Kühlman to Sir Edward Grey, 16 Aug. 1912).

immediate repatriation of the 'coolies'.[66] The mine owners now attempted to hire Indians in Natal and the Cape Colony to work in the German colony, as the recruiting of Indians who lived there and had no further contractual obligations to fulfil was subject to no further restrictions.[67] They had little success, however, as the German colony held few attractions for the Indians living there.[68] Altogether, only around 200 to 250 Indians from the Cape and Natal ever lived in the German colony as workers.

The Lüderitz Bay Chamber of Mining itself gave up trying to 'import' Chinese workers when it became known in German South-West Africa that from 1912, Chinese in the German colony of Samoa had to be treated as 'non-indigenous'.[69] This had been preceded by protracted negotiations between the German colonial administration and the Chinese government.[70] German South-West Africa would have had to apply the same classification in 1912, as the Chinese government would not have allowed Chinese indentured labourers to be treated as 'indigenous' in another German colony. Under no circumstances did the Chamber of Mining want to employ Chinese workers under similar conditions to Europeans, and therefore it abandoned the whole undertaking.

The example of Indian and British indentured labour allows us to observe the transfer of knowledge between colonial empires, and increasing commercial and technical cooperation within Africa. It also shows clearly how closely the colonies of various empires were involved in the global streams of labour migration. While businesses wanted to take advantage of the chances offered by globalized migration, the German colonial administration insisted on maintaining its own national colonial policy, which was associated with certain racist notions. Similar conflicting tendencies can be found in the British colonies, as we have seen in British South Africa. In general, we clearly see the conflicting paradigms of globalization and national demarcation in the colonial word of southern Africa.

[66] BAB R 1001/1232 (Crowe, Foreign Office, to Imperial German Embassy London, 25 Sept. 1912).

[67] NAN ZBU 2076 W IV R2 (Lüderitz Bay Chamber of Mining to Consulate Durban, 12 June 1912), fo. 49.   [68] Ibid.

[69] NAN ZBU 2076 W IV R1 (Lüderitz Bay Chamber of Mining to Government Windhoek, 25 Oct. 1912), fo. 48.

[70] Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*, 216.

IV. *Conclusion*

These episodes from the history of the neighbouring colonies of German South-West Africa and the Cape Colony demonstrate that—despite growing European rivalries—a considerable degree of interconnectedness was achieved between the colonies, between different colonial empires, and across continents. This was only made possible by technical globalization, which allowed not only information and goods, but also people, to become increasingly mobile.[71] These phenomena did not stop at the German and British colonies in Africa. The colonial powers were often forced to make use of existing technical connections. Germany's use of British telegraph cables is one example.

Even in a remote African colony, it was not possible to wage war without maintaining a complex network of interactions and relations with neighbouring colonies, and the neighbouring European colonizers. The total dependence of German troops on food and supplies from the Cape Colony placed German actions into a European imperial context. Moreover, it became clear that the war against the Herero and Nama was being closely watched by the British colonial power. Direct observation by British officers of Germany's conduct of the war served to expand their own knowledge of colonial warfare. The criticisms they expressed of Germany's inexperience and inflexibility were used to present themselves as the better colonial military force, and this also formed part of the public discussion in the motherland.

In the interactions around the indentured workers the German colonial administration and especially German entrepreneurs watched the British system of indentured labour closely and were keen to adopt similar strategies.

Both examples, the Herero and Nama war as well as the case of the 'coolies' in southern Africa, show forms of imperial comparison that were constitutive for the shaping of colonial policies and imperial identities. In these processes, cooperation and demarcation were often closely intertwined with each other.

We have also seen that in spite of many attempts at delimitation, the colonizers cooperated with each other in numerous situations in

[71] On the first wave of economic globalization before the First World War see Cornelius Torp, *Die Herausforderung der Globalisierung: Wirtschaft und Politik in Deutschland 1860–1914* (Göttingen, 2005), 27–50.

the age of high imperialism. European supremacy over the indigenous population in Africa was to be maintained without the expression of any doubt or criticism. Other considerations were subordinate to this rule. Major conflicts between increasing globalization and racial and national demarcation in the age of high imperialism could result in upheavals even within a colony. On the whole, however, globalization and the trend towards interconnectedness significantly promoted cooperation in the colonial world of Africa, and shaped the policy of the imperial rulers. Until the outbreak of the First World War, mutual support between the imperial powers clearly predominated. Thereafter, many cooperation processes were, of course, interrupted. Common imperial interests, however, were soon revived in many ways: for example, in the discipline of African studies in the 1920s, or in European policy towards Africa after the Second World War.

To sum up, this article has shown that it makes sense to look at colonial empires with the approach of an entangled history, and to focus on relations, connections, and mutual observations between colonies. On the one hand, this opens up whole new areas of research, such as interactions concerning indentured labour; on the other, topics which have already been thoroughly researched, such as the Herero and Nama war, are placed into a new perspective. Thus the approach taken here has brought us to a more differentiated understanding of the tensions of the imperial age. No longer dominated only by European rivalries and demarcation processes, the whole picture has become far more complex.

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