

Between Territoriality, Performance, and Transcultural Entanglement (1920–1939): A Typology of Transboundary Lives

Madeleine Herren

RESÜMEE

Der Beitrag nimmt Personen in den Blick, die in der Zwischenkriegszeit internationalen Organisationen zugeordnet waren und Kontakte zum Sekretariat des Völkerbunds pflegten. Diese höchst heterogene Gruppe ist der methodologische Ausgangspunkt für die kritische Analyse der Figur des Fremden; sie werden als politische Eliten, international tätige Experten, Internationalisten und global agierende Illusionisten charakterisiert. Die Karriereverläufe dieser auf den ersten Blick entweder unscheinbaren oder untypischen Biographien folgten spezifischen sozialen Mustern, die allerdings nur mit einer Methodologie sichtbar werden, die eindeutige kategoriale Zuschreibungen von Zugehörigkeit und Differenzierung vermeidet. Stattdessen ermöglicht eine am methodischen und analytischen Instrumentarium des *new cosmopolitanism* und der transkulturellen Geschichte geschulte historische Analyse einen neuen Zugang: Das Überschreiten von sozialen, kulturellen und politischen Grenzen wird als sozial konstitutiver und regelsetzender Akt sichtbar. In dieser Lesart erscheinen die jeweils unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen und die wechselnde Bedeutung von Territorialität, Performativität und transkultureller Verflechtung als Referenzpunkte, welche die sozialen und politischen Rahmenbedingungen transgressiver Biographien im Umfeld des Völkerbunds zu verstehen erlauben.

Between 1919 and 1946 the League of Nations became one of the hot spots of cosmopolitan internationalism. In the area around the League of Nations buildings in Geneva – one of the best and most expensive areas on the shore of the lake – a multicultural, cosmopolitan society celebrated a new form of intellectual openness. The same generation experienced the vulnerability of cosmopolitan lifestyles during the Great Depression, the rise of totalitarian systems, and the outbreak of World War II. To gain insight into the cosmopolitan biographies that developed under these fast-changing circumstances is a

methodologically challenging task: On the one hand the presentation of individual cases runs the risk of essentializing personal circumstances, on the other, taking the epistemic community as an ordering concept indeed provides a valuable insight into networks of persons acting in the same expert-related fields beyond the nation-state. However, the episteme not only underwent a dynamic process of change in the timeframe concerned, the approach itself produces new problems: First, whoever does not fit into expert networks is literally non-existent. Second, and even more importantly, epistemic communities conceptualize *insights*, while those belonging to various expert groups, or switching between them, or not belonging to any of the well-know groups cease to be under investigation. In this contribution, the methodological framework avoids grouping communities by topics. In lieu we have identified the employees of the League of Nations as a suitable group for the development of a qualitative typology of transboundary lives. The same group is part of the Lonsea database,¹ which is an ongoing research project at the University of Heidelberg. The database allows researchers to contextualize people on the payroll of the League in more sophisticated ways: Lonsea displays the League's collaborators, the international organizations under the umbrella of the League, and the places the international organizations chose for their secretariats. The database therefore combines information about persons-institutions-places on a global level. The persons presented in this contribution share a common characteristic, namely that they all figured on the League's payroll for longer or shorter period of time. The chosen individuals, however, are not representative from a statistical point of view with respect to the more than 9,600 persons the Lonsea database actually contains. Rather, qualitative research based on the personnel files of the League of Nations employees challenges the concept of the database, which combines the persons involved in international organizations, the organizations as institutional entities, and the places where the organizations had established their seats. With this contribution, investigation into the biographies of real people "translates" the database's presumptions. The aim is to critically flesh out the presumption that functions in international organizations help to understand the diversity of transboundary lives. The biographies of these people raise the methodological problem that specifying patterns should not eliminate their complexity. The biographies presented below range from persons with an open-minded lifestyle and cultivated curiosity to the miserable life of migrants facing statelessness and forced migration.² For the qualitative approach mentioned above, this contribution transcribes the database's *persons – institutions – places* approach into a schema for individuals, understanding their function in international organizations as an aspect of performance, their local interferences with global aims as territoriality, and the confrontation between cosmopolitan and national claims as fields of transcultural entanglements. Following this line of argumen-

1 For the presentation of Lonsea see Davide Rodogno, Shaloma Gauthier, and Francesca Piana, "What Does Transnational History Tell Us about a World with International Organizations?" in *Routledge Handbook of International Organization*, ed. Bob Reinalda (London: Routledge, 2013), 94ff.

2 All persons working for the League of Nations are mentioned in Lonsea, <http://www.lonsea.de> (accessed November 17, 2013).

tation, the difference between a cosmopolitan and an alien reveals a significant area of conflict since identity-building needs exclusion on the one hand and global coherence on the other, as well as the affirmation that knowledge about a person can be confirmed beyond borders.

This methodological approach uses the well-known figure of the travelling stranger as its starting point.³ However, a social history of those who lived dangerously close to the fringes of society is still needed.⁴ Although under the current circumstances of globalized living conditions an increasing interest in new cosmopolitanism should be expected, there is astonishingly little historical evidence beyond the concept. For instance, we know almost nothing about the lives of those who had to switch constantly between the roles of aliens and cosmopolitans. It is difficult to understand the limits set by contemporary social and political master narratives or to estimate the ambiguity of national control and the changing porosity of national borders beyond personal self-reflection.

The following discussion aims at establishing a historical methodology that understands cosmopolitanism as the result of the following three changing sources of legitimation: performance, territoriality, and transcultural/transnational entanglement. This approach presumes that the often mentioned positive aspect of cosmopolitanism⁵ develops if all three sources of legitimation coincide and interact positively, which is the case only in specific historical situations and is dependent on specific political and economic factors. All three aspects are used in conjunction as the basis for an analytical approach to the individual biographies that are described here as “transboundary lives”. This biographical concept makes reference to Etienne Balibar’s “polysemic nature of borders.”⁶ Border-crossing as a main element in someone’s life is therefore not a mere question of travelling. In the example presented here – people on the payroll of the League of Nations – more borders were crossed than just national ones.

After a discussion of new cosmopolitanism within the social sciences and humanities the two following sections will use the League of Nations’ personnel files to substantiate the epistemological value of the three-layered analytical setting. However, by using the evidence of a global imaginary of men and ‘new’ women in standardized business suits, can we actually reach beyond the biographies of those who belonged to the newly invented profession of international civil servants? The research design at least discloses

3 Rudolf Stichweh, *Der Fremde: Studien zu Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010). Published in the 1930s, contemporary studies pointed out that the travelling stranger can even act as an advertisement for the academic life: In the very first sentence of Margaret Mary Wood’s influential sociological study *The Stranger* she points to “the writer’s own experiences as a stranger.” See Margaret Mary Wood, *The Stranger: A Study in Social Relationships* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 7.

4 See Rosenberg’s chapter on “spectacular flows” in Emily Rosenberg, ed., *A World Connecting, 1870–1945* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2012). For the historicity of individuals located on the fringes see Tim Cresswell, *The Tramp in America* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001); Franziska Rogger and Madeleine Herren, *Insenziertes Leben. Die entzauberte Biographie des Selbstdarstellers Dr. Tomarkin* (Wien: Böhlau, 2012).

5 Cosmopolitanism as “new humanism,” a tool of European integration; as a positive curiosity towards other cultures; as the opening of perspective towards the world as explained, for example, by Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

6 Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, (London: Verso, 2002).

a new insight into the still rather unknown administrative history of the League of Nations, pointing out the problems in how to translate national procedures of governmental administration into an international context. In addition, the aspect of transcultural entanglement answers the crucial question of whether or not transboundary lives have the support of a larger community, and to whom this community belongs, whether other international organizations replace the missing social connectivity to families and nations, or whether different origins intertwine to form a new transcultural coherence. To answer this question the influence of Eurocentric historical research traditions needs to be re-examined. The empirical evidence of cosmopolitanism resulting from the three-layered historical coordinate plane first considers the Asian participants.

The subsequent section suggests a typology of border-crossing lives. Although limited to the source material mentioned above, transboundary lives gain specific profiles as elite cosmopolitans, experts creating global topics, cumulative internationalists, and global illusionists.

New Cosmopolitanism and Transcultural History: The Search for Theoretical Concepts and Analytical Tools

In dealing with a territoriality that is still nationally defined and at the same time with the growing significance of agencies beyond nations, international organizations provide an interesting example of how an increasing interest in transgressive elements has changed the epistemological aims of global history. While questions of definition and the separation between governmental and non-governmental international organizations have taken a backseat, research interest now emphasizes the multilayered function and spatiality of international organizations.⁷ Using the well-established and prolific concept of “multiple modernities” as one of the best current working examples, new publications on the United Nations have begun to identify a first, second, and third United Nations⁸: The first is the declared function of the UN as an organization of sovereign states; the second UN comprises the field of international civil servants; and the third takes into consideration NGO experts, non-governmental organizations, and other international actors connected to but not necessarily associated directly with the UN.

Besides the new post-Cold War topics mentioned above, new perspectives in social sciences need more than a mere reinterpretation of the past – they need a transcultural history. As will be explained in this paper, transcultural history has developed as part

7 Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009); Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, and Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural History* (Berlin: Springer, 2012).

8 See Thomas George Weiss and Richard Jolly, “The ‘Third’ United Nations,” *UN Intellectual History Project Briefing Note 3* (2009): 1–3, <http://www.unhistory.org/briefing/3ThirdUN.pdf> (accessed November 17, 2013); Thomas George Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis, and Richard Jolly, “The ‘Third’ United Nations,” *Global Governance* 15/1 (2009): 123–46.

of the debates on new cosmopolitanism with a strong focus on transgressing borders. Although transculturality does not equal transnationalism, transnational developments may surface as empirical evidence of a transcultural approach; therefore both concepts will be explored.

New cosmopolitanism emerges as a valuable source of innovative concepts in the historiography. As the sociologist Gerard Delanty explains, cosmopolitanism comprises different aspects of border-crossing: It serves as a theoretical framework for political philosophy related to global governance and world citizenship, and it justifies liberal multiculturalism, transnational movements, and global exchange processes.⁹ Above all, Delanty differentiates between the local and the global and introduces cosmopolitanism as a “third culture” where both interact: “Cosmopolitanism is a third level of culture in which diverse social actors – communities, nations, civilizations – can engage with the world.”¹⁰ The introduction of dynamic exchange processes between the local and global on the one hand, and an acknowledgment of exchange as more than an ephemeral moment on the other, transgresses the traditional understanding of cosmopolitanism in a way that is both innovative and useful for biographical research. This essay understands cosmopolitanism as an analytical concept, not as a description of citizens of the world who are protected by laws of hospitality and who are later provided with unalienable rights even outside of their religious, social, and national affiliations in the Kantian tradition.¹¹ As part of the research design, cosmopolitanism emerges as a result of temporary interferences and is therefore differentiated from the concept of developing universal rules as mentioned in recent debates.¹²

However, scientific debates on cosmopolitanism are helpful as a valuation of border-crossing concepts within the disciplines of social sciences, since behind these new approaches there is a self-reflective discourse on methodological nationalism and its replacement with a global, cosmopolitan research imagination.¹³ As an academic discipline closely connected with the invention and legitimation of the modern nation-state, history overcomes nineteenth-century historicism through a critical discussion of the concept of a cosmopolitan Europe, a debate that was initiated by Ulrich Beck and Anthony

9 Gerard Delanty, *The Cosmopolitan Imagination: The Renewal of Critical Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.

10 *Ibid.*, 11.

11 For the right to universal hospitality see Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Doolley and Michael Hughes, (London: Routledge, 2001); Gillian Brock, *Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

12 Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty eds., *Cosmopolitanism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). For a short introduction to the history of the concept see Pauline Kleingeld and Eric Brown, “Cosmopolitanism,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2006), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmopolitanism/> (accessed March 20, 2010). For the problem of cosmopolitanism as a Western concept see Delanty, *Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 20. He refers to the need to bring Asian cosmopolitan thinking into consideration.

13 Ulrich Beck, *Was ist Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globalismus – Antworten auf Globalisierung* (Frankfurt/ Main: Suhrkamp, 2007); Jane Kenway and Johannah Fahey eds., *Globalising the Research Imagination* (London: Routledge, 2008).

Giddens.¹⁴ These debates introduced a new shaping of the concepts of inclusion and exclusion, a new understanding of labelling differences,¹⁵ and – of particular importance for the historian – a growing interest in fuzzy, ambiguous, but interrelated transgressions.¹⁶ Following this line of thinking, key terms like “space” or “culture” are no longer understood as well-defined “containers,” but as dynamic and changing or multiplying concepts within a global context. In this regard, discussions on cosmopolitanism are especially helpful, and the ideal of a borderless world-state – or at least of globally accepted human rights – as the beginning of global citizenship¹⁷ is challenged by a discourse on new borders. The concept of the “polysemic nature of borders” introduced by Etienne Balibar¹⁸ helps to us to analyze the changing character of borders and transgression.

In the historiography the setting of borders is a crucial argument. The introduction of histories within national borders has had far reaching consequences for the development of the discipline. A new transcultural history is now beginning to elaborate on the question of who owns the analytical tools for different border settings. In the debates on new medievalism and – more important for this approach – discussions on empires as a cosmopolitan construct, historical interest highlights negotiation processes, the moments and places where different cultural traditions are intertwined.¹⁹ Focusing on borders is a promising method in this development since it encompasses the reformulation and creation of borders, described by Magdalena Nowicka as “(b)ordering.”²⁰ It includes the moment of sanctions and control, but also copes with changing rules on an individual level. The epistemological value of considering borders and thresholds in their broad definition as a social practice of differentiation is a key element in our understanding of transcultural history. At a glance, transcultural history focuses on incompatibilities, tensions, and disputes that develop whenever people, objects, concepts, or ideas transgress the ruling orders/borders of their respective time. Compared to nationally focused histories, instead of attaching the past to clearly defined entities such as eras, territories,

14 Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, “Nationalism has now become the enemy of Europe’s nations,” *The Guardian*, October 4, 2005, 28, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2005/oct/04/eu.world> (accessed March 20, 2010); Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, *Das kosmopolitische Europa: Gesellschaft und Politik in der Zweiten Moderne* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004); Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, “Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda,” *British Journal of Sociology* 57/1 (2006): 1–23; Anthony Giddens, *Europe in the Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

15 Stichweh, *Der Fremde*.

16 Actually, different concepts from various disciplines are seeking to overcome normative rigidity. In the historiography, transnationalism and different forms of entanglement develop into a rather transcultural historiography, reflecting Appadurai’s concept of border-crossing flows, Wagner’s concept of asymmetrical relations, and Welsch’s new framing of transculturality. See Madeleine Herren, Christiane Sibille, and Martin Rüesch, *Transcultural History*.

17 For this debate see Brock, *Global Justice*.

18 Etienne Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene* (London: Verso, 2002), 81ff.

19 Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919–1945* (London: Routledge, 2002); Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan Nationalism in the Victorian Empire: Ireland, India and the Politics of Alfred Webb* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Beck and Grande, *Das kosmopolitische Europa*.

20 Magdalena Nowicka, *Transnational Professionals and their Cosmopolitan Universes* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2006), 224.

nations, classes, or states, a transcultural approach brings forth topics that tend to have been neglected in historical research. Among these the biographical approach needs to develop a focus on transboundary lives that is not limited to cosmopolitans but is also able to critically discuss the pejorative naming of transgressive lifestyles as proselytism, impostors' mimicry, or piracy.

Methods: The Paradox of Performance, Territoriality, and Transcultural Entanglement

In the following methodological section of this paper, the research design will construct a three-dimensional grid made up of performance, territoriality, and transcultural entanglement. This tool aims at a social history of transboundary lives. The biographies of men and women²¹ on the League of Nations' payroll between 1920 and 1946 are interpreted along the three dimensions of the grid and serve as the empirical evidence with which we may test the epistemological value of analyzing transboundary lives.

This research design understands performance, territoriality, and transcultural entanglement as an indivisible historical coordinate plane, although each part gains a different and changing input dependent on its historical context. Only overlapping parts of all three aspects can create a cosmopolitan setting – the 'third culture' described by Delanty.

Performance addresses the question of how individuals can act in transboundary situations, which publics they presume, and whether or not the specific situation is mentioned as being beyond national or local communities.²² Imagining border-crossing alone might foster aspirants or impostors and end up in dangerous isolation, while a lack of an international stage and a low interest in acting as a cosmopolitan could fail to attract or even create a global public.²³ Besides performance, territoriality provides the second point of reference for this paper. As a concept that is still under-investigated,²⁴ the meaning of territoriality is not limited to specifying the sovereign's spatial power, although as a key element of sovereignty, territoriality determines the system of diplomatic representation and international law. In this paper, territoriality describes the transboundary scope of

21 For the specific gender aspects see Madeleine Herren, "Die Liaison. Gender und Globalisierung in der internationalen Politik," in *Politische Netzwerkerinnen. Internationale Zusammenarbeit von Frauen 1830–1960*, eds. Eva Schöck-Quinteros, Anja Schüler, and Annika Wilmers (Berlin, Trafo-Verlag, 2007), 183–204.

22 Performance studies discuss the global dimension. However, the concept focuses on recent developments, particularly the tensions between NGOs and the United Nations system. The suggestion is to historicize the approach. See Jon McKenzie, "Performance and Globalization," in *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*, eds. D. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2006), 33–45; Jürgen Martschukat, ed., *Geschichtswissenschaft und 'performative turn': Ritual, Inszenierung und Performanz vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit* (Köln: Böhlau, 2003).

23 Due to its small publicity budget, the League depended on persons addressing a global public and creating an international civil society.

24 For a theoretical overview see Stuart Elden, "Missing the Point: Globalization, Deterritorialization and the Space of the World," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, new series, 30/1 (2005): 8–19.

action in a spatial context and is related to its social consequences. The limitation of international relations to diplomacy and secret service overlooks the opportunities of international organizations and the benefits of Wilsonian liberalism as protection against the communist Internationale and as support of economic networks. While an international civil society can overstep territorial boundaries, a lack of territorial belonging became the most dangerous threat to transboundary lives, transforming cosmopolitans into stateless fugitives. Regarding the third aspect of the analytical grid, which we have identified as transcultural or transnational entanglement, an exclusive dependency might be too close to weak and legally unprotected international associations, although without their support the creation of home bases and social coherence in transboundary lives is endangered.

What insights can we gain in preferring a grid structure to the well-established master narrative notion? First of all, this approach provides insight into the biographical consequences of what a “third culture” is all about. Even more important, the daily confrontation between the conflicting fields of performance, territoriality, and transnational/transcultural entanglement might solve a crucial methodological problem: The League of Nations officials published frequently on the League’s work using a strong autobiographical voice.²⁵ Instead of analyzing these books as image cultivation, propaganda, or – worse – as a true mirror of the past, the grid reflects on this material as a performative action and response to territoriality and its target audience. The long shelf containing the League of Nations’ home stories is in the spirit of a well-established form of performance in international politics, namely the (auto)biographical accounts of monarchs and aristocratic diplomats. From Metternich to Napoléon, publications of this kind safeguarded the rulers’ monopoly of interpretation and underscored their role as the primary eyewitnesses and as the preferred sources of authentic information. However, after World War I foreign relations administrations began publishing their own records and introduced an information flow that privileged the territoriality of nation-states over personal performance, a development that was closely connected to the opening of the secret Czarist archives and the war–guilt question.²⁶ Beyond a critical investigation of the personal use of information, the question now is whether and how League officials sought to address an international public; and whether and how they acted in public as representatives of an international organization. Moreover, with reference to the need for performative actions in times of rising national propaganda, the question remains: Which forms of

25 It is one of the characteristics of the League of Nations that the most influential research was done by League officials themselves. Some published in the late 1930s and some after World War II, these publications provide interesting insight into a specific form of self-representation. Biased on two sides, the authors concentrate on the obvious failure of the League in the 1930s and use the example of the League as a failure to be overcome by the newly created United Nations. As an example see Francis Paul Walters, *A History of the League of Nations*, 2 vols., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952); Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1945) and the twenty monographs Arthur Sweetser wrote on the League of Nations.

26 Sacha Zala, *Geschichte unter der Schere politischer Zensur: amtliche Aktensammlungen im internationalen Vergleich* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001).

performance outside the written records construct the international “we”? Apparently, the situation called for imitating diplomatic behavior, especially since diplomacy provided a globally standardized habitus that was even available in published form – Sir Ernest Satow’s *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* written in 1917.²⁷ However, for reasons I will explain later, the League’s highly contested territoriality prevented a simple merging of diplomacy with what was called “international civil service”. In fact, as a professional profile cosmopolitanism had to replace transient formal acceptance, and therefore, to behave in a way that the global public would recognize as cosmopolitan was much more than just a personal decision. In the League’s secretariat an information section guided the public appearance and behavior of the League’s staff under almost paradoxical circumstances. Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer (an Austrian and former staff member) explained: “Propaganda was taboo. The newcomer to the Section was left much to himself regarding the methods he desired to employ in his public relations work. But there was one rule that was impressed upon him, namely, not to make propaganda under any circumstances, not even propaganda for the League.”²⁸ In this situation, performance was indeed crucial to the public appearance of the League. Performing at public events and presenting a cosmopolitan behavior to the world marked distance from national propaganda programmes. Whether this approach was successful or not was decided by its depiction in contemporary newspapers, which, in addition to the personnel files, form the most important source material for my argument. Within this cosmopolitan setting the League’s officials celebrated the new League of Nations building with well-documented gatherings; League of Nations artists and photographers recorded these performative actions for posterity.²⁹ The special setting for propaganda-avoiding-performance resulted in a rich photo archive which has collected images of the League’s staff members from the secretary-general all the way down to the messengers, translators, and chauffeurs.³⁰ Almost all the pictures blur national and even racial differences since national delegations avoided national costumes and performed an international style. The pictures of Asian delegations from Siam to India, and from Japan to China confirm this astonishingly well-defined aim at conformity. As we can see from the pictures, the male and the female cosmopolitan performed an international version of the short-haired, dynamic “new man” and “new women” by wearing gray business suits and dark dresses respectively. The question of how individuals managed the tensions between a pretended national au-

27 Sir Ernest Mason Satow (1843–1929) was a British diplomat who served in Asia (Japan and China). His book, renamed *Satow’s Guide in Diplomatic Practice*, remains essential reading for diplomats to this day. In 2009 Sir Ivor Roberts acted as editor of the sixth edition.

28 Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *International Secretariat*, 203.

29 These included, among others, the Austrian photographer Georg Fayer and the American artist Violet Oakley. Both concentrated on portrayals of League of Nations delegates and both made exhibitions with portrait shows. E.g. in October 1934, Oakley presented her *Geneva drawings* in Chicago. See E. Jewett, “Portrait show brings Geneva great to city,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 31, 1934, 15.

30 League of Nations Archives, Geneva and Indiana University Center for the Study of Global Change, Bloomington, *League of Nations Photo Archive*, 2002, <http://www.indiana.edu/~league/index.htm> (accessed November 17, 2013).

thenticity and a no less hybrid cosmopolitan unity reveals a perspective on shared beliefs and common concepts even outside of the highly biased form of autobiographical self-declaration. In the personnel files, the staff's moving lists of household goods reveal what League officials expected from their employees and how they believed cosmopolitans should live and behave – cars and pianos played a major role in this.

The way that the League's staff developed cosmopolitan routines on a daily basis was based on downplaying the connection with formal international rights. There is a constant shift between allusions to the nineteenth-century mechanics of formal international relations and a programmatic inclusion of public spheres. The League's cosmopolitans followed the debates on new public diplomacy, the idea of a global community of states closely connected to the development of an international civil society that was gaining presence and visibility due to new media and communication technologies. The contemporary social and political situation after World War I offered the necessary stage for this; different global developments from democratization to increased mobility, from propaganda to the fast spread of news via radio ended in the naming of new spaces. In Geneva, the place where the public and diplomacy met even had a special name, it was called the “mixer hall”. It was a lobby containing a well-stocked bar that was located between council chamber and pressroom and reserved for the League's delegates and the press.³¹ However, this new form of global publicity challenged the established modes of control. In the nineteenth century, the states had monopolized the right to act internationally. After World War I, the number of states and the rights of peoples increased, but global voices of different origin also multiplied. At first glance, the result is a paradoxical collision of performance and territoriality expressed in a coincidence of cosmopolitan openness and an increasing need for credentials, passports, and legitimation.

Until now methodological historicism has rather supported the separation of all these different analytical levels; at best, the most common narrative on the League separates political failure from the efforts made by Wilsonian idealists.³² Separate from the ideal of an open-minded, human rights-related *Weltbürger*, this research design elaborates on the closely related tensions between territoriality and performance.³³ Using people on the payroll of the League of Nations as the example instead of analyzing the national delegations,³⁴ the tensions between territoriality and performance increase the visibility of polysemantic borders. Moreover, transcultural entanglements played an underestimated

31 Anonymous, “League of Nations ‘Mixer Hall’ is where one hears all the ‘Corridor Comment,’” *The New York Times*, December 23, 1934, E 3.

32 Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919–1933*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Susan Pedersen, “Back to the League of Nations,” *American Historical Review* 112/4 (2007): 1091–117.

33 This approach therefore focuses on the coincidence of nation-state and border-crossing processes and does not combine cosmopolitan networks with a continuous attenuation of the nation-state. For this debate see Saskia Sassen, *Das Paradox des Nationalen: Territorium, Autorität und Rechte im globalen Zeitalter*, trans. N. Gramm (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2008).

34 There is a dearth of research on national delegations, especially on delegations from Asian states. For India see Karl Joseph Schmidt, “India's role in the League of Nations, 1919–1939” (PhD Thesis: Florida State University, 1994).

role since the League had to include the special expectations of Japan, its most important Asian member state. The connectivity of the League to Asia did not stop after Japan left the League and when Geneva started looking for a replacement in China and India.

Tensions between territorial sovereignty and performance started with the creation of the League. The combination of cosmopolitan concepts with the Western-shaped Westphalian system of states acting internationally lies behind the simple question: Who acts in the League's name? The rules of representation embedded in the covenant, of course, imitated the rules of international politics and diplomatic representation made for sovereign nation-states.³⁵ However, as Martin Hill, one of the League's officials, explained in 1947, "international officials do not act in the name of any particular state."³⁶ From this simple fact a series of difficult questions about the diplomatic immunity of League officials arose: Do they also have immunity from legal actions launched by the state of their own national origin? Since the League had its headquarters in Geneva but liaison offices in other centers like Delhi, should Swiss or Indians be exempted from their national taxes? Should immunity include all those on the payroll of the League from the secretary-general down to the caretaker?

The secretariat's proposal to issue special League of Nations passports demonstrated that they took the issue of diplomatic immunity seriously, but it met with immediate, almost unanimous resistance from the League's members. International civil servants appointed by the League relied on their national passports.³⁷ A shared official document, the manifest form of performing transboundary coherence, was excluded from its cosmopolitan use, and the League's officials could not override the territorial norm setting. The paradox of national credentials being the prerequisite for transboundary lives provoked cunning strategies within the logic of territoriality and the search for a cosmopolitan behaviour that were intended to stand in for the missing international passport. Since the League only used English and French as its official languages, I would even argue that its cosmopolitans performed transcultural behavior and appearance as the substitute for a common language.

The moving lists of household goods belonging to people working for the League confirm this trend by revealing rather surprising similarities. For instance, cars played a major role in the average cosmopolitan's household.³⁸ Having certain cars – fast, opulent converti-

35 Article 7 therefore simply transferred diplomatic privileges to the League's officials. The secretariat was thus regarded as extraterritorial space – a position not granted to the already existing international organizations. The so-called Public International Unions' offices remained under the control of the government where the organization had its seat.

36 Martin Hill, *Immunities and Privileges of International Officials: The Experience of the League of Nations* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1947), 9.

37 *Ibid.*, 84ff. The debate over appropriate credentials did not end. In the 1930s less powerful alternatives like *lettres de mission* facilitated the League officials' travels.

38 To give some examples, the Chinese physician Teefang Huang who started his work in the League of Nations' health section in 1931, listed, among other objects, one piano and one automobile Ford 17 CV ('Liste des objets de mobilier de première installation importés par M. le docteur Teefang F. Huang', File Teefang F. Huang, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 797–8). In 1930 the League asked Swiss customs authorities for a tax exemption in the case of Dr. Genzo Katho's car, a Citroen C 4 convertible. (File Genzo Katho, *League of Nations*

bles above all – became a clear characteristic of the public appearance of League officials; and this shared characteristic was not limited to employees of European origin or to those in the upper wage bracket.³⁹ Public perception confirmed the special performance of daily cosmopolitanism. The international press celebrated international officials as dynamic car drivers; traffic violations and car accidents tested the limits between local police and international Geneva and continued to cause problems or raise questions of immunity, even after temporal appointments ended, since these cars needed tax exemptions from the home countries.⁴⁰ When moving to Geneva, League of Nations officials had to fill in household items in tax exemption lists for importation and re-importation. In addition, in case of damages in transit insurance lists give even more information: This unspectacular insight into the daily life problems of League staff needs further investigation and mitigates the notion of travellers who recreated a home abroad with objects of cultural authenticity. In April 1930 Teefang Huang, a Chinese national, sent a copy of his household list to the secretariat for Swiss customs. He was coming from Nanking with a stopover in Shanghai. Along with his furniture and a car, Huang brought a piano to Geneva. Indeed, the sound of a piano introduced a standardized form of music that was adaptable to a variety of styles from European classical to jazz music. However, to understand the use of pianos as an expression of Eurocentrism misses the fact that the increasing piano production in Shanghai and Japan already troubled the European music scene before World War I.⁴¹

The League's administrative rules heightened the paradox of being national but acting as a cosmopolitan. For the League, all nations of the outside world were equidistant: The officials from Asia complained that the weight limits for household goods (which were transported at the League's cost) was always the same, regardless of whether the household came from Nanking or from nearby Paris.⁴² On arrival in Geneva, the quality and efficiency of work, the question of remuneration and wage increase, in short, the general personnel management, produced another paradoxical situation: The covenant was a modern document, which even gave women equal working opportunities, but its administration imitated the rules used for diplomats by again enforcing the notion of territoriality. For example, paid annual leaves needed a declaration from the employee's home country – for Jews, migrants, and political dissidents this could be a dangerous trap. National passports continued to define cosmopolitanism so that whoever lost his or her national citizenship could no longer belong to Geneva's cosmopolitan community.

Archives, Personnel Files, S 806). In September 1940, the Indian Bagirath Nath Kaul sent a list of his belongings to Geneva. Kaul was back in Amritsar and wanted his 1939 Chrysler Royal Sedan to be imported to India. ('B.N. Kaul to League of Nations, Amritsar 5.5.1940', File B.N. Kaul, *League of Nations Archives, Personnel Files, S 806*).

39 See for example, the file of Francis Godfrey Berthoud, one of the League's interpreters. *League of Nations Archives, Personnel Files, S 717–18*.

40 See the case of A.C. Chatterjee below.

41 Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

42 The Chinese physician Huang's complaint about the staff regulations allowing only 100 kilos of luggage for the future league official, 50 kilos for his wife and 30 kilos per child ('T. Huang to Under Secretary-General, undated (January 1930)', File Teefang F. Huang, *League of Nations Archives, Personnel Files, S 797–8*).

For the individuals concerned, the scope of action against political strategies of isolation was rather small. Officially, the League did nothing against these forms of territorial exclusion, although former Austrians after 1938 and former Polish citizens after 1939 were paid off with an additional annual salary. Individuals tried to override the rule of neutrality and the ban on individual political actions by lobbying international organizations related to the League for support.⁴³ This transboundary lobbying produced an additional form of paradox because in order to stay within the League the support of additional networks outside the League could be crucial. Having external partners and overriding national limits became a form of transboundary competence, which could be difficult to achieve among this heterogeneous community of car drivers and piano players.

Social fragmentation increased as a consequence of the growing importance of short-term appointments, which in turn concealed one of the League's structural problems: At a time when totalitarian states were investing heavily in their propaganda the League's own budget for publicity matters was rather weak. The Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations had been investing in libraries, book projects, and the exchange of researchers since 1919. The League followed a similar approach with an increase of its short-term fellows, a plan to transform young people from abroad into cosmopolitans during a three-month stay in Geneva before sending them back to their state of origin where they would hopefully mobilize support for the League. This strategy did not consider the cosmopolitans' own position and presumed against a strong territorial loyalty. The question of who could speak for the League faced significant difficulties since the League itself was searching for its own authentic national in following this approach, and whoever was choosing the fellows was able to give some consistency to the transboundary body.

Types of Transboundary Biographies within the League of Nations: Elite Cosmopolitans – Experts Creating Global Topics – Cumulative Internationalists – Global Illusionists

Elite Cosmopolitans

Cosmopolitan literature often underscores the elitist social structure of cosmopolitan milieus and their location in urban spaces.⁴⁴ Indeed, old elites like aristocrats made their way to Geneva sometimes as diplomats and sometimes as persons already well embedded in transboundary family networks. This phenomenon was not limited to Europe and worked in a similar way for Indians. A good example of this can be seen in the case of Amulayan Chandra Chatterjee (1881–1935) who began his career in Geneva in

43 Ruth Woodsmall, the president of the World's Young Women's Christian Association, and Emile Gouraud from the International Woman Suffrage Alliance spoke for Ranshofen-Wertheimer who needed a prolongation of his employment. Gouraud to Avenol, 20.01.1940, File Egon Wertheimer, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files S 905.

44 For example, Jon Binney and Julian Holloway eds., *Cosmopolitan Urbanism* (London: Routledge, 2006).

1929. A. C. Chatterjee preferred to sign the League's papers with his first name initials only, a habit which reminded people of his famous elder brother Attul C. Chatterjee. He was the Indian representative in several high profile functions within the League and one of its "spin doctors".⁴⁵ Attul and Amulayan came from a Raj family, and Amulayan's international career began with his appointment to the Associated Press of India.⁴⁶ He came from the Associated Press office in Bombay to the League's information section in Geneva and later continued in the political section where he lived the obscure life of a League official who was closely controlled by staff regulations and administration. This control increased when his wife was involved in a car accident, an incident that led to debates about whether Mme Chatterjee's immunities should be revoked. Tragically, Chatterjee died in another car accident in Calcutta in February 1935, and in the aftermath of his death we can again see how territorial questions shaped the cosmopolitan's memory: The transfer of his belongings from Geneva to India, which were once imported under the tax exemption rules for international officials to Switzerland, now required a high ranking decision in London before being cleared for re-importation to India.

Tensions between territoriality and performance also played a crucial role in Amulayan Chatterjee's professional life as a League official. Until the 1930s his work in Geneva had had a rather performative character. He organized information transfer from and to India, and as *The Times* put it, acted as a "resourceful social link between the Secretariat and visitors from India."⁴⁷ When Chatterjee had to organize a liaison office in India, the translation of a cosmopolitan information network into an institutional structure faced the complex and multilayered monolith of Indian territoriality. Since India was a full member of the League but not yet a sovereign state (it was under British rule at the time, albeit with a strong, dissident national movement, and princely states who played their own no less complex role) the question of who could speak in the name of the League was easier to answer in Geneva than in India. Over a period of two years Chatterjee reported to Geneva that people eligible for the liaison office were not available. The question then came under critical investigation by the Indian elite who lived in Geneva. The intermediary in this case was another prominent aristocrat working in the League's information section, Princess Gabrielle Radziwill. The Lithuanian aristocrat moved perfectly within the milieu of women's associations where, again, the presence of aristocratic women from India was evident.⁴⁸ Based on information culled from her high-ranking Indian informants, the princess wrote a confidential report heavily criticizing Chatterjee's fruitless activities. Radziwill had spoken to the Rani Lakshimbar Rajwade, Rani of Gwalior, and

45 A.C. Chatterjee began in the Indian civil service and made an impressive international career. He was Indian president of the ILO conference in 1927, High Commissioner of India 1925–1931, member of the Council of India, and member of the allocation of League expenses in 1933.

46 See London Times obituary: "Mr. A.C. Chatterjee: India and the League," *The Times*, February 8, 1935, 16. File A.C. Chatterjee, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files.

47 Ibid.

48 'Confidential, to M. Azcarate, sig. Gabrielle Radziwill, 28.6.1935,' *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Office, Bureau de Bombay, S 914.

to an activist from the All Indian Women's Conference. She contacted the wife of Hamid Ali, Khan of Rampur, and had access to the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, one of the founding members of the All Indian Women's Conference. These ladies belonged to the powerful Indian group in the network of the women's organization, which, although controlled by the Indian aristocracy, had close relations to the International Labor Organization (ILO). In a set of arguments intended to strengthen the elite's position of building an Indian nation-state, Radziwill strongly suggested combining both the liaison offices of the ILO and the League in India. She proposed that both should be transferred from Bombay to Delhi in order to be closer to the Indian national movement. Although the princess suggested that intellectuals not be considered for the organizing of the liaison office, she also reminded the secretariat to introduce more Muslims, again a question of highly political importance in India's nation-building process.

Radziwill and her Indian informants used the League's staff politics as a foundation on which to build international support for an Indian nation-state.⁴⁹ This was not an exclusively Indian characteristic, nor was it a characteristic of elitist cosmopolitanism. Although the presence of old elites in Geneva seems clear, their scope of actions had changed under the umbrella of the League. "(B)ordering processes" caused social opening and elites also had to share their influences.

It is therefore difficult to specify who the most important figure within the group of cosmopolitan elite was. However, Aga Khan III (1877–1957) doubtless had an important voice in the community and deeply influenced the League's staff policy.⁵⁰ His memoirs give us a good idea of an elite person's transboundary life at this time. Aga Khan's appearance in the General Assembly competed with his social duties as a racing stable owner and horse lover: He proudly mentioned being the only member of the League's assembly "called away to hear that his horse had won the St. Leger."⁵¹ It is remarkable to note how his autobiography reveals the collision of these intrinsically incompatible roles in the year 1935: He describes how he celebrated Bahram, the victorious horse, which was later offered for sale to the Fascist Italian government, and he recalls his speech as Indian delegate to the League's Assembly in which he criticized the League's failure to stop the Italian aggression against Ethiopia. He also mentions his Golden Jubilee as Ismailian Imam, which was celebrated in 1935 by weighing him in gold in Bombay.⁵²

This autobiographical self-representation raises the question of whether Aga Khan fits into our understanding of cosmopolitanism, and whether the League was just an additional insignificant corner of a playground still belonging to a wealthy elite or if it

49 This is not an Indian specialty, but a historical phenomenon, as explained by Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2007).

50 Aga Khan (Sultan Muhammad Shah), one of the most important figures in the transnational Muslim organization, in the Indian Muslim League, and the Caliphate movement in India, held the presidency of the League of Nations in 1937. With the League's administration, his importance increased when staff policy tried to include the Muslim networks. He wrote letters of reference e.g. for Iqbal Ali Shah.

51 Aga Khan, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan: World Enough and Time* (New York: Simon & Schuster 1954), 257.

52 *Ibid.*, 257.

was a safe haven for aristocrats who had to translate their former social status into the profession of multilingual, well-connected international civil servants. In both cases, the elite described changed under the influence of the League's specific international context. Muslim cosmopolitanism based on the foundation of (secular) international organizations substantially contributed to Aga Khan's powerful position within the League.⁵³ In addition, Princess Radziwill was not the only aristocrat who began her career at the League from other international associations.⁵⁴ However, both examples did not fit into the traditional diplomatic career pattern, and indeed the people in the League's leading positions – the secretary-general and his representative – came from diplomatic functions.

At first glance, diplomats resist the analytical approach presented here. Even though the press wanted to see dynamic, car-driving modern men and women who were transcending national and racial differences, the diplomats' territorially based professional profile still aimed at national representation. It is therefore of some interest to explore how the League's high-ranking diplomats transgressed the rules of traditional diplomacy in their public performance and how the performative aspect of self-representation increased. The high-ranking Japanese diplomats in Geneva are an impressive example of this development.⁵⁵

Until the withdrawal of Japan from the League, Japanese diplomats filled the position of the secretary-general's representative in the organization's hierarchy. In this position, Inazo Nitobe and his successor Yotaro Sugimura initiated a rapprochement to the Western public in unexpected activities that combined Japanese and Western culture to create a specific form of transcultural entanglement. Although Nitobe drafted a cultural foreign policy and translated Japanese literature, the international newspapers were particularly receptive to Sugimura, who performed martial arts in public and was a member of the Olympic Committee. His polite show-fights in the French Jiu Jitsu clubs excited their members, which included French socialist intellectuals and the international press.⁵⁶ Interestingly, when he had to leave his position in Geneva after the Japanese withdrawal from the League, the now obvious difference between national and international interests, between territoriality and performance, did not end in the expected elimination of performative activities. Sugimura even transgressed boundaries in the moment of his resignation, which was highly formalized according to diplomatic rules. On February

53 There is almost no research available about the representation of Muslim networks within the League, although this point was always mentioned in discussions about Indian applications.

54 Besides the women's movement, the national Red Cross had a similar effect. For women using international organizations and the League as a backdoor to power see Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

55 For Japanese diplomats in the League see Thomas W. Burkman, "Japan and the League of Nations: An Asian Power Encounters the 'European Club,'" *World Affairs* 158/1 (1995): 45–55; Harumi Befu and Sylvie Guichard-Anguis eds., *Globalizing Japan: Ethnography of the Japanese Presence in Asia, Europe, and America* (London: Routledge, 2001).

56 Thomas W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914–1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 118.

25, 1933, he wrote two different letters on the League's official letter paper to Secretary-General, Sir Eric Drummond. One, a short letter consisting of only few lines, announced his resignation using the accepted diplomatic forms. By contrast, in a second, three-page letter he wrote that he deeply regretted the political development, and he crossed borders when he compared Drummond's "réputation (...) mondiale" to his Japanese superiors in the diplomatic service: "Ni sous la direction du Vicomte Ishii, ni sous celle du Comte Uchida, je n'avais travaillé avec autant de zèle et de dévouement."⁵⁷ How do we avoid overestimating an individual case of personal friendship between Drummond and Sugimura? The League's postwar literature confirmed Sugimura's excellent reputation after he left Geneva. This is particularly remarkable since in 1935 Sugimura, who was then the Japanese ambassador to Italy, did not protest against the Italian occupation of Ethiopia and thus acted against the League's official policy.⁵⁸ In addition to possible personal reasons, the reasons for this behaviour from a career diplomat who had transformed himself into a highly respected member of a group of elite cosmopolitans may rest with the simple fact that he died in 1935. Nevertheless, analyzing Sugimura's activities within the declared analytical grid confirms the structural relevance behind all personal peculiarities. It is first of all the less obvious aspect of transcultural entanglement that responds well to the question of explanatory relevance. What emerges most clearly from Sugimura's transboundary life is his involvement in international organizations and transnational networks located in Japan, not just in Geneva. It is this complex and subliminal bond that is central to an adequate understanding of national foreign policy in the 1930s and even during the war. Although Sugimura left Geneva, Japanese relations with the League did not come to an end. Japan safeguarded the position of a mandatory power, but even more importantly, less obvious forms of transboundary connections were sustained to form a gap between the rhetoric of separation and the obvious social embodiment of border-crossing networks. Although much later than Sugimura, Tsuchida Kaneo, who had worked for the League since 1929 on Sugimura's suggestion, ended his contract in 1935. But in 1934 the secretariat accepted Kaneo's proposition to dissolve the League's office in Tokyo, with the aim of "conserver certains contacts établis au cours des dernières années."⁵⁹ Kaneo, the former head of the foreign service of the Kokusai Agency, proposed a discreet maintenance of the League's connection to the Japanese press and "pursuing the instructions, whatever they may be."⁶⁰ The awareness of transcultural entanglement gives access to these forms of discreet loyalties, often only documented in small memos with obscure allusions to an "unindemnified mission."⁶¹

57 'Sugimura to Sir Eric, Geneva, 25.2.1933'; File Sugimura, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 889.

58 E.g. Walters, *History of the League of Nations*, 496.

59 Section d'information, 'Note pour le Secrétaire général, 13.2.1934'; based on this information the secretariat decided the further employment. File Kaneo, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 895–6.

60 'Kaneo to Pelt, 9.2.1934'; File Kaneo, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 895–6.

61 File Kaneo, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 895–6.

Experts Creating Global Topics

Shortly after the war, the support of academics for an intellectual exchange programme under the umbrella of the League was extended to include destroyed, impoverished, and sometimes isolated⁶² European universities. The same idea of fostering international exchange found its expression in the opening of Wilsonian institutions, which were extravagant places with overwhelming architecture set in a breathtaking landscape: the International School of Geneva, the Cité Universitaire de Paris (1921), and the International House in New York (1923). In the 1920s, supported by Rockefeller and Carnegie endowment money, academics were on the move: They gave lectures at the League of Nations' summer school and were invited to the American University Union in Rome, Paris, and London. After World War I, a Near East College Association opened colleges in Constantinople, Beirut, and Smyrna among others. China sent students to the United States, mitigating the charge that the Tsing Hua scholarships, which had long been in existence, were reparation duties for the Boxer rebellion. Constructing these transboundary lives for academics stimulated global fantasies. Americans planned to send a "floating university" on a global trip. The Institute of International Education organized lecture itineraries within the United States in which European and Asian scholars participated.⁶³ The exchange of scholars, mentioned above, later transformed into the League of Nations' education and intellectual cooperation programme, and although indirectly connected to the League, the Geneva institutions played an important role in combining the consistently transnational character of research with a cosmopolitan approach. Obviously, all of these border-crossing scholars were pursuing a global career and could not and possibly even would not espouse a pacifist approach.

Transboundary academics not only had a remarkable intuition for theories about what made them special, they also had analytical tools at their disposal that gave border-crossing performance a normative value. Between the 1920s and the end of World War II, modern sociology created categories of analysis with regard to elites, to social engineering, to the understanding of how science should be carried out, and how academics turned into experts. In a process of self-description, social scientists constructed a global scientific community that tried to define their status as experts. Even though it was not directly involved, the League of Nations had opened up an immense job market, specifying fields where expert knowledge was needed on a global scale. Connecting the League as a global body to academics who were shaping their own transboundary lives as objects of investigation, created a powerful narrative of performative rules. Unsurprisingly, the development of habitus as a key term of performance goes back to Marcel Mauss and

62 Isolation of German and Austrian academics (exclusion from bibliographies, international conferences and professional organizations) stopped in 1925–26 in analogy to the Locarno treaties. See Frank Greenaway, *Science International: A History of the International Council of Scientific Unions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

63 Like, for example, the Indian philosopher S.N. Das Gupta, among others. For the overwhelming increase of international exchange programs after World War I see John Eugen Harley, *International Understanding: Agencies Educating for a New World* (Stanford: University Press, 1931).

Norbert Elias and their works in the 1930s. The interference between the League and a group of experts creating global topics seems obvious but it can have an almost immaterial quality that raises methodological problems. How can we prove that behind the myriad of different border-crossing expertises, personal networks developed within a global frame beyond all disciplinary differences? In fact, one of the most important publications claiming a monopoly of interpretation for social sciences, the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*,⁶⁴ had close connections to the League. Its editor, Erwin R. A. Seligman, was a Columbia professor and also one of the League of Nations' economic experts.

On a personal level, experts creating global topics and oscillating between academia and League of Nations institutions comprise the largest group of unspecific cosmopolitans who were crossing not only the borders of states and institutions but also the borders of their disciplines. Social scientists may be at the forefront of this group of League-related experts, but the same is also true for the rarely mentioned and silent milieu of banking. Harry Arthur Siepmann (1889–1963) influenced the League's staff policy without ever holding an official position within it. Siepmann entered the British treasury and encountered the League at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 as the personal assistant to Keynes. Although he worked for a private firm in the 1920s, during that time he attended the Genoa Conference in 1922, went for eighteen months to India as a specialist on railway questions and then to Budapest as a League of Nations advisor to the National Bank of Hungary, before joining the Bank of England, where he used his international connections for cooperation with foreign banks and exchange control.⁶⁵ Siepmann can be considered representative of a group of silent bankers. Although they worked with uncontestedly transgressive material, money, it is difficult to define them as cosmopolitans. Moreover, Siepmann translated poetry into English and his interest in different cultures may have had some influence on his interferences in the League's staff policy. He placed the Indian Nau Nihal Singh (1898) in the League's financial section, an action that produced a remarkable correspondence between India and Budapest, where Siepmann advised the Hungarian National Bank; India and London, where Sir Basil Blackett, the government of India's financial member was located; and India and Geneva, where Sir Arthur Salter, the director of the financial section, had to overrule internal differences and was later invited to be an advisor for the Indian government.⁶⁶

Although this web of influences may seem to indicate a new form of (British) cosmopolitan imperialism, it also raises the question of the political influence of experts: Do they follow a political concept? The question is of some importance, since both elements – transcultural/transnational entanglements and performance – played a major role within this group. Although territoriality might raise the question of whether or not there is a political position in this field, some of the experts were at least suspected

64 Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson eds., *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, 15 vols., (New York: Macmillan, 1930–35).

65 "Obituary: Mr. H.A. Siepmann: Expert on banking in Europe," *The Times*, September 17, 1963, 15.

66 File Nihal Singh, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 797–8.

of having one. Ludvic Rajchman, the leading figure in the League's health committee, was classified as a left-wing ideologist who made no effort to hide his anti-Japanese and pro-Chinese approach in the 1930s.⁶⁷ The League's personnel files show that on the one hand, the League insisted on the political impartiality of its international administration, and on the other, that the not yet clearly understood politics of networking were at work. Established officials, for example Rajchman, brought experts in through the backdoor route of short-term fellowships in Geneva, or as hired correspondents who shared their political expectations.⁶⁸ Using the analytical triangle of performance, transnational/transcultural entanglement, and territoriality in the case of global experts helps us to focus on the global impact of these experts, while territoriality critically questions the seemingly placeless utopian ideal of peaceful intellectual cooperation and academic universalism. Indeed, territoriality did influence experts but not as expected. Catastrophes and disasters shaped the irreplaceability of experts: Reconstruction after World War I, the famines in Russia, malaria in Italy, the flood and famines in China and India, and the worldwide economic depression increased both the demand for globally mobile specialists and the opportunity to demonstrate the League's practical functions. In this context, the health specialists' laboratory became the world, a short-term League appointment contributed to a global career,⁶⁹ and communication technologies spread news of this kind globally.

Cumulative Internationalists

In the League's milieu a new type of cosmopolitan developed, one whose legitimation came from a person's belonging to several international associations and organizations. Although widespread, due to methodological problems this type of cosmopolitan is difficult to describe: The League maintained a special relationship with international organizations and published a *Handbook of International Organizations* regularly.⁷⁰ But contacts between the League and the numerous international organizations, mostly located around or near the League's building in Geneva, developed within a confusing variety of groups and remained rather personal and informal. Oscillating between different organizations and topics and merging executive functions in different international organizations to form a professional profile, the figure of the "cumulative cosmopolitan" challenges the methodological possibilities of historiography. In this case, the proposed analytical grid convincingly unveils a professional profile that has been ignored until now.

67 Jürgen Osterhammel, "Technical Co-Operation between the League of Nations and China," *Modern Asian Studies* 13/4 (1979): 661–80.

68 In the health section Rajchman paid attention to only few regular members and to the possibility of inviting short-term fellows. See as an example the employment of Dr. Shoji Kanai, temporary member of the section for one year. File Shoji Kanai, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 806.

69 As an example see Wallace Aykroyd, a nutrition specialist who worked for the League in Geneva and later on different programs in India. K. J. Carpenter, "The Work of Wallace Aykroyd: International Nutritionist and Author," *Journal of Nutrition* 137/4 (2007): 873–8.

70 League of Nations, *Handbook of International Organisations*, Geneva 1921–38. The covenant mentioned the Public International Unions but since all members had to agree to be part of the League, the big contemporary IGOs remained outside the League, like, for example, the Telegraph Union.

For a “cumulative internationalist” the balance of territoriality, performance, and trans-cultural/transnational entanglement depended on the cosmopolitan’s ability as an information trader, while specific knowledge or expertise were of minor importance. In some respects, “cumulative internationalists” and the League formed a symbiotic relationship. With only limited regular staff, the League solved the problem of self-representation by hiring temporary fellows, who already had several other (international) connections. The League avoided the concept of propaganda, but opened the doors to those who promised an adequate and authentic processing of the most important “raw material” in an international organization – information. A job in a news agency was a good stepping-stone to a short-term League position,⁷¹ or provided the professional background for regional informants. The mixture of self-advertisement/journalism/membership in international organizations gave a global profile to “cumulative cosmopolitans.”

This concept brought people whose qualifications clearly differed from the expert knowledge described above to the surface of public attention. They performed as busy networkers and presented themselves as global subjects with a distinctive feeling for topics with a border-crossing value in more than one country. The Indian Tarini Prasad Sinha’s way of using the League for profiling gives us a good sense of this form of professional and personal border crossing.⁷² In the League’s application form, completed in 1929, Sinha enumerated broad and unspecific interests in history, economics, sociology, and law, and allocated himself to the fields of journalism and research work by mentioning his good knowledge of Sanskrit and highlighting his work as secretary for the Quakers’ Society of Friends’ Committee on India and Opium.⁷³ He had worked as a journalist for the British Labor press, and during most of the time he spent in Geneva he observed the work of the General Assemblies as an Indian journalist. He was once the secretary for one of the Indian delegates and eventually received temporary appointments to the opium section as an assistant based on five short-term contracts between 1930 and 1932. His profiling was based on a well-enacted performance, which was already being practiced before Sinha traveled to Geneva. Instead of presenting academic titles, he had celebrated his studies in a “Grand Tour”⁷⁴ and brought himself in contact with a circle of celebrities. In 1923 he became a secretary to one of the Indian League of Nations’ delegates, the Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanagar.⁷⁵ Thus Sinha belonged to the entourage of a delegate who attracted an immense, and not at all policy-related, public interest as a well-known and celebrated cricket player. However, Sinha pushed his career from a different angle than that of the territorially based inferior position of a Maharaja’s servant. In an almost perfect example of blending Asian and Western public interests Sinha

71 As an example, see Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer or A. C. Chatterjee, already mentioned.

72 File Sinha, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 882.

73 ‘Form of Application, sig. Sinha, 7.12.1929’, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 882.

74 Sinha’s studies had already been made public by the press. Shortly before World War I, he visited a collection of famous universities in Japan, in the United States, and in England. The tour (a form of “Grand Tour” well known in the West) received attention in the press. See “High caste Indian,” *Los Angeles Daily Times*, April 9, 1913, 10.

75 File Sinha, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 882.

performed in the prohibition movement. He started early in the global networks of the Theosophical Society and initiated an Indian Boy Scout organization, but then shifted his focus to the temperance movement. As one of the old, well-established international nineteenth-century associations, this movement had long relied on Indian participation. The Anglo-Indian Temperance Association was founded in 1888 and was actually discussed as an interesting example of the ‘sanskritization’ of modern Western values.⁷⁶ After World War I, the Indian movement gained an additional playground beyond Britain and the United States. Sinha, who was presented as a young prohibition man in the association’s Journal *Abkari*, made lecture tours within the United States, where he emphasized the prohibition aims that were common to both the United States and Gandhi’s Indian nationalist opposition. Based on this nearly perfect match of a form of ‘Indianness’ that was coherent with a powerful American political line of argumentation, Sinha was celebrated in the United States. With a slightly shifted focus, now performing the gospel of pacifism, he traveled to Germany. Of course, this kind of self-promotion produced a huge number of reference letters and included correspondence with well-known persons like Aga Khan. Global networking brought more than temporary positions in Geneva, but these positions confirmed an authority that grew with each lecture made before women’s temperance organizations or Rotary clubs around the world. For someone who had, in his 1929 League of Nations’ application form, nothing more reliable to present than some unspecific “interests,” success came fast and achieved impressive dimensions. In a grateful preface to his book, Harold Richard Goring Greaves, then professor at the London School of Economics, mentioned Sinha as an international relations expert in the same breath as Sir Arthur Salter and William E. Rappard, both high-ranking academics and diplomats.⁷⁷

Global Illusionists

Although Sinha was on the payroll of the League for only two years from 1930 to 1932, his public relations for the League’s international drug conference fitted his employers’ expectations and proved the usefulness of soft skills that went beyond expert knowledge. However, the professionalization of public relations within the League was a difficult task that did not always come to a good end. The case of Sinha reveals the limits of decision-making based on a rather confusing quantity of references describing a variety of functions that were not always transparent to those who wrote polite recommendations. The League’s officials introduced personal interviews, they wrote confidential reports and sometimes, as described below, references came from the British Secret Service. However, this modern form of staff policy did not alter the fact that the verifiability of competences remained a problem. In a world of intensifying communication, the issue of credibility

76 Lucy Carroll, “The Temperance Movement in India: Politics and Social Reform,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10/3 (1976): 417–47.

77 Harold Richard Goring Greaves, *The League Committees and World Order: A Study of the Permanent Expert Committees of the League of Nations as an Instrument of International Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), viii.

arose. Radio, airplanes, and cars reduced distances, and communication technologies detached information from the place of origin. At the same time, propaganda and advertisement gave the illusion of factuality. In a paradoxical situation that demonstrates where performance became more real and territoriality more illusionary, in 1938 listeners panicked when tuning into Orson Welles' radio drama *The War of the Worlds*. Photographs, films, the growing impact of propaganda in politics and the need for visuals in the field of argumentation created new profiles of qualification, which were difficult to integrate into existing professional standards. People with media competence and a professional profile confronted those who made use of new media technology as their only qualification. It is therefore more than just a funny coincidence that illusionists and magicians started fighting against spiritualistic impostors and fraud in the 1920s.⁷⁸ Transboundary lives did indeed reveal a new professional profile, but they also flourished amid traders of illusions and the global community of those who sought professional cosmopolitanism in order to escape social control, creditors, and sometimes national warrants. The League did not always wish to clarify these ambiguities because sometimes the slippery ground of uncertainty helped it to avoid an inconvenient political debate. Although this aspect remained outside the League's historiography, this ambiguity and its use for political reasons gained a certain importance in the reframing of the Asian focus after the Japanese withdrawal.

In 1934 the League's administration considered a consolidation of Islamic networks – an interesting idea in view of the problems with Asian states. Consequently, applications from Muslims were mostly welcome and received serious consideration. This was also the case when Ikbāl Ali Shah applied for a post. He knew the League's world from his role as a secretary in the Afghan delegation at the disarmament conference. When he applied for a post in Geneva in 1934 he was working for the Afghan Legation in London. However, Shah was only a temporary member of the information section and served for a few months in summer 1934. His subsequent attempts at gaining a permanent position failed.

At this point, Ikbāl Ali Shah (1894–1969) was already a well-known traveller and journalist, one who wrote in *The New York Times* about newly independent Afghanistan and, even more interesting for the Western public, one who published on the rising importance of an Islamic East in world politics and culture.⁷⁹ His anthology of eastern literature published in 1933 under the title *The Oriental Caravan* received a page-long review in *The New York Times*.⁸⁰ The prolific author published up to four books per year between 1928 and 1939, discussing Afghanistan, Nepal, India, Persia, the new rulers in Asian countries, Sufism, the Koran, the prophet Mohammed, Aga Khan – all topics that

78 The famous magician Harry Houdini brought this topic to the magicians' professional associations. His library addressed this topic and went to the Library of Congress after the magician's death. See "Congress Library gets Houdini books," *The New York Times*, May 8, 1927, 15.

79 As an example see Sirdar Ikbāl Ali Shah, "Old Asia rises to defy Europe," *The New York Times*, September 9, 1928, 118.

80 Richard Le Gallienne, "Poetry and wisdom of the east," *The New York Times*, January 28, 1934, BR 2.

became an argument for the inevitability of east-west entanglements. His application to the League used many of the same arguments. He enclosed a manuscript on the “Value of the Moslem-World for The League,” where he developed the concept of “Islamic Internationalism.”⁸¹ The most revealing parts might have caused some discomposure in Geneva, since Shah imagined a community of people “who are not allied in race, or color or national feeling,” but “can be shown to be moved as ONE UNIT; because they have a unity of heritage (...).”⁸² Shah had a strong record of public performance and transcultural entanglement, he always highlighted his aristocratic background by using the title “Sirdar” and his connection to Asian aristocracy – but his multilayered and interchangeable territoriality became a major problem; neither his age nor his nationality were certain. While acting in public as an Afghan citizen, he applied from the Afghan Legation in London for an Indian position within the League, pointing to his British passport and his property in India as evidence for this claim.⁸³ Whether the Afghan diplomatic service knew about Shah’s activities or not remained uncertain. Shah’s biography was probably a reflection of the complex political history of the region, which underwent another dramatic period of transition. Remarkably, he did not quote a single Afghan in the long list of prestigious references he sent to Geneva in 1934, nor did he mention Afghanistan as a new member of the League.⁸⁴ The League decided not to accept Shah’s representation of his own biography and resorted to information about him garnered from unknown sources, probably the British Secret Service. According to this information, Ikbāl Ali Shah worked as a Russian spy in Bukhara at the end of World War I, was arrested by the Soviet Secret Service, made his way back to London from Archangelsk, and was again imprisoned, this time in Germany. The League’s informants questioned Shah’s territorial as well as his transcultural credibility, claiming that he should be regarded as a *persona non grata* within the “congrès islamique,” since leading participants feared an involvement of the British Secret Service.

Conclusions

Are transboundary lives first and foremost reflections of stable political situations and therefore only a temporary removal of territorial bindings for a small elite of intellectuals from a wealthy family? At first glance, the chronology confirms a glorious beginning for Wilsonian cosmopolitanism, which then turned into a sad history of failure. In 1939 most of the League’s cosmopolitans had left Europe and emigrated to Great Britain,

81 File Shah, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 880.

82 Ikbāl Ali Shah, “Value of the Moslem-World for the League,” 3. The six-page proposal ended with a global map with the “Islamic World Shown in Red.” File Shah, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 880.

83 ‘Ikbal Ali Shah to Captain Walters, London 15.3.1935; File Shah, *League of Nations Archives*, Personnel Files, S 880.

84 In 1933 King Nadir Shah was assassinated; in the same year, the assassination of the Afghan ambassador in Berlin brought public attention to the country. Although independent since 1919, Afghanistan became a member of the League of Nations only in 1934.

Canada, and the United States. The cars and pianos of those who had to find a new home occupied vast storage rooms in Geneva and remained untouched until the end of the war.

In 1939 the League's administration wrote a long list of polite dismissal letters, which were justified by the need for structural reorganization. This step concealed the League's major structural problem wherein cosmopolitans could easily be turned into stateless persons and/or fugitives without a reliable chance of intervention from either the Swiss government or the League of Nations. Historiography has mostly repeated this narrative and ignored the structural problem, assuming that international organizations and their employees have followed the same trajectory of development as national histories.

This contribution suggests a different approach, one that relies on the ongoing debates about new forms of cosmopolitanism but prefers Balibar's concept of the "polysemic nature of borders" to the numerous (auto)biographical declarations of what cosmopolitanism is. According to this perspective, cosmopolitanism results from the difficult and changing interferences of the following three different sources of legitimation: personal performance, territoriality, and transnational/transcultural entanglement. The three aspects result from the Lonsea database, which combines persons on the payroll of the League, the international organizations that preferred to use the League as an umbrella, and the locations of their secretariats. Translating the matrix of persons, institutions, and space into personal performance, territoriality, and transcultural entanglements, a variety of personnel files from the League of Nations Archives was used as test cases with the aim of finding out whether or not the approach is strong enough to build a typology of persons who lived their personal lives in a transboundary context. The approach gave access to de-nationalized metaphors – cars and pianos, for example. In addition, the three-layered grid helps to shape a typology of transboundary lives and reveals the different problems that elite cosmopolitans, experts creating global topics, cumulative internationalists, and global illusionists faced during a time of growing political tensions. Investigations into transboundary lives, which are henceforth to be undertaken in a more systematic way, reveal a promising starting point: During the League's lifetime, border-crossing networks and platforms for transboundary lives attracted a substantial input of energy, money, time, and work, documenting contemporary society's belief in an added value which eludes the analytical tools of historiography. Transboundary lives therefore give us important insight not only into a specific historical context but also into the new opportunities provided by a transcultural history.