

Transimperial Sociology: A Peripheral Dictatorship at the Centre of Late Colonial Social-Scientific Cooperation Between Empires

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Abstract: This text presents a thick description of Portuguese colonial science policy and diplomacy during the era of decolonization with a focus on the social sciences. By examining archival materials from institutions responsible for monitoring Portuguese participation in transimperial organizations for scientific cooperation, it elucidates social-scientific initiatives within the empire and the epistemic and institutional motivations that shaped them, while also providing insight into how these forums interacted across global and imperial contexts. In doing so, the article illuminates the factors that, beyond political circumstances, both drove and delayed the paradigmatic shift in Portuguese colonial science from physical anthropology toward the social sciences. Additionally, it provides a unique, overarching view of these central yet often overlooked actors in the international arena, highlighting their social-scientific drifting, beyond their differences and specificities. This approach holds intrinsic value as it contributes to the history of the Portuguese empire and to the study of late colonialism, underscoring the central role of the social sciences in renewing and legitimizing imperial governance. Additionally, it serves as a case study in the historical sociology of knowledge, expanding on scholarship that has explored the intersection of authoritarianism and imperialism in the natural sciences but not in the social sciences. In terms of the latter, this approach also highlights some of the material and symbolic determinants behind the rise of sociology and social anthropology in Africa, adding a transimperial layer to studies that have explored their colonial origins.

Keywords: history of the social sciences; Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara; International Conference of Western Africanists; International African Institute; International Institute of Differing Civilizations

Introduction

After World War II, the Portuguese dictatorship actively engaged in transimperial knowledge networks formed around established and emerging international organizations for colonial technical and scientific cooperation, both private and official. Foremost among these was the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara (CCTA, in its French acronym), which in 1950 brought together the governments of the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Portugal, the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.¹ Operating across several technoscientific and public policy domains, it served as a tentative barrier to United Nations (UN) and United States interference in colonial Africa.² Also noteworthy was the International Conference of Western Africanists (CIAO), an initiative of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire (French Institute for sub-Saharan Africa, IFAN), which from 1945 onwards united researchers from countries with colonies in Western Africa.³ The International African Institute (IAI), formerly the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IIALC), established as a learned society in London in 1926 by missionaries, administrators, and educationists, initially funded by philanthropic foundations and later supported by colonial states, similarly played a crucial role in activating these networks.⁴ The same is true for the International Institute of Differing Civilizations (INCIDI), an individual-membership society created in Brussels in 1894, then known as the International Colonial Institute (ICI), and renamed after World War II.⁵

¹ Daniel Vigier, "La Commission de Coopération Technique en Afrique au Sud du Sahara," *Politique Étrangère* 19, no. 3 (1954): 335-349; Isebill Gruhn, "The Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa, 1950-1965," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 3 (1971): 459-469.

² John Kent (1992), *The Internationalization of Colonialism: Britain, France, and Black Africa 1939-1956* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1992), 263-286.

³ Jean-Hervé Jézéquel, "Les Professionnels Africains de la Recherche dans l'État Colonial Tardif: Le Personnel Local de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire Entre 1938 et 1960," *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 24, no. 1 (2011): 35-60.

⁴ Stefan Esselborn, *DieAfrikaexperten: Das Internationale Afrikainstitut und die Europäische Afrikanistik, 1926-1976* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018); Benoit de L'Estoile, "Internationalization and Scientific Nationalism. The International Institute of African Languages and Cultures Between the Wars," in *Ordering Africa. Anthropology, European Imperialism, and the Politics of Knowledge*, eds. Helen Tilley and Robert J Gordon, 95-117 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Frank A. Salamone, "The International African Institute: The Rockefeller Foundation and the Development of British Social Anthropology in Africa," *Transforming Anthropology* 9, no. 1 (2000): 19-29.

⁵ Pierre Singaravélou, "Les Stratégies d'internationalisation de la Question Coloniale et la Construction Transnationale d'une Science de La Colonisation à la fin du XIXe Siècle," *Monde(s)* 1, no. 1 (2012): 135-57; Ulrike Lindner, "New Forms of Knowledge Exchange Between Imperial Powers: The Development of the Institut Colonial International (ICI) since the End of the Nineteenth Century," in *Imperial Co-Operation and Transfer, 1870-1930: Empires and Encounters*, eds. Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski, 57-78 (London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2015); Florian Wagner, *Colonial Internationalism and the Governmentality of Empire, 1893-1982* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

Together, the nature of these organizations and Portugal's involvement in them challenge the perception of the country's isolation from international scientific circles during this period. This is particularly striking in the social sciences, given the assumption that Portugal remained distant until much later in this area, due to the authoritarian regime in place, and considering the country's apparent commitment in these matters.⁶ Over the span of a decade, Portuguese authorities were involved in the organization of five major meetings from those bodies partially or entirely focused on the social sciences, with four of them hosted on Portuguese mainland or colonial territories: the 1947 CIAO in Bissau; the 1953 IAI Executive Council Meeting in Lisbon; the 1955 CCTA Inter-African Conference on Social Sciences in Bukavu; the 1956 CIAO in São Tomé; and the INCIDI 30th session in 1957, in Lisbon.

The causes and consequences of this kind of involvement have been partially explored through the examination of Portuguese participation in one of these organizations, the CCTA.⁷ This reveals a clear contradiction between the obscurantist and propagandist objectives that drove this participation and the subsequent development of Portuguese science, particularly the social sciences, which played a central role in the CCTA.⁸ Expanding the analysis to include the CIAO, the IAI and the INCIDI provides a comprehensive overview of Portugal's engagement with such organizations by the mid-20th century and helps to mitigate this contradiction by further specifying the motives and hesitations underlying Portuguese collaboration. Rather than representing a straightforward and intentional movement, as might be inferred from involvement in the CCTA alone, the process was characterized by advances and setbacks influenced by the shifting and sometimes conflicting priorities of central and peripheral initiative within the empire, as well as the agendas of Overseas and Foreign Affairs ministries in the metropole. In this context, a detailed examination of the meaning and rationales conveyed by colonial bureaucrats and sciences involved in this process can also illuminate the factors that, beyond political circumstances, both drove and delayed the paradigmatic shift in Portuguese colonial science from physical anthropology toward the social sciences—a transition extensively documented elsewhere, and which will be discussed in the conclusion.⁹

⁶ On the history of Portuguese sociology, see Filipe Carreira da Silva, *Sociology in Portugal. A Short History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁷ Frederico Ágoas and Cláudia Castelo, "Ciências Sociais Diplomacia e Colonialismo Tardio: A Participação Portuguesa Na Comissão de Cooperação Técnica Na África Ao Sul Do Saara (CCTA)," *Estudos Históricos* 32, no. 67 (2019): 409–28; Cláudia Castelo and Frederico Ágoas, "Inter-African Cooperation in the Social Sciences in the Era of Decolonization: A Case of Science Diplomacy," *Centaureus* 63, no. 1 (2021): 67–83; Cláudia Castelo, "Recherche et Développement dans les Colonies Portugaises d'Afrique. L'impulsion de la Coopération Scientifique Interimpériale (1950-1962)," *Revue d'Histoire Contemporaine de l'Afrique* 3 (2022): 35–48.

⁸ Besides the social sciences, involvement with the CCTA in particular also had an impact on agricultural sciences, geography, marine biology and other fields. See Castelo, "Recherche et Développement," 42–46.

⁹ On this transition, see Frederico Ágoas, "ISCSP(U) – Burnay Palace," in *Colonial Echoes: Histories*,

In turn, this exploration of Portuguese participation in major transimperial scientific organizations offers a unique, overarching view of these central yet often overlooked actors in the international arena, highlighting their social-scientific drifting, beyond their differences and specificities, as well as their joint influence on Portuguese authorities.¹⁰ At the global level, the process studied here was further influenced by rising African nationalism, strengthened by the first post-World War II independences and the resulting geopolitical framework; the reaction of the main colonial powers to the growing resistance to imperial rule, through the launch of development plans for the colonies based on the social sciences and on inter-imperial cooperation itself; and the affirmation of new global governance agencies, whose action would also be largely indebted to social-scientific knowledge.¹¹

The exercise proposed here can thus be regarded as a thick description of Portuguese colonial science policy and diplomacy during the era of decolonization with a specific focus on the social sciences. The objective is to elucidate the different dimensions of social-scientific initiatives within the empire and to document the various epistemic and institutional motivations that shaped them, while also providing insight into how these transimperial forums interacted across global and imperial contexts. To accomplish this, the relevant archival materials from the institutions responsible for monitoring Portuguese participation in the aforementioned organizations were examined.¹² This approach holds intrinsic value as it contributes to the history of the Portuguese colonial empire in a moment of reform and to the broader study of late colonialism, underscoring the central role of the social sciences in renewing

Legacies and Memories, eds. Ana Guardião, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and Paulo Peixoto, 79-85 (Lisboa: Edições Tinta da China, 2022).

¹⁰ On the intersections between distinct modalities of internationalism and imperialism during the twentieth century, see Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro, eds., *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

¹¹ On the rise of development policies in Africa, see Joseph M. Hodge, Gerald Hödl and Martina Kopf, eds., *Developing Africa: Concepts and Practices in Twentieth Century Colonialism* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2014). On their relation to science, see Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge 1870–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) and Frederick Cooper, “Development, Modernization, and the Social Sciences in the Era of Decolonization: The Examples of British and French Africa,” *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 10 (2004): 9–38. On science and the UNESCO in this context, see Casper Anderson, “Science and Decolonization in UNESCO,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Science and Empire*, ed. Andrew Goss, 286-299 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021) and Per Wisselgren, “From Utopian One-worldism to Geopolitical Intergovernmentalism: UNESCO’s Department of Social Sciences as an International Boundary Organization, 1946-1955,” *Serendipities* 2, no. 2 (2017): 148-182.

¹² The primary sources were consulted at the Library and Archive of the Institute of Tropical Scientific Research, University of Lisbon (Biblioteca e Arquivo do Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, Universidade de Lisboa, hereafter cited as AHIICT-UL), at the Overseas Historical Archive (Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, AHU), and at the Diplomatic Historical Archive (Arquivo Histórico Diplomático, AHD).

and legitimizing imperial governance worldwide.¹³ Additionally, it serves as a case study in the historical sociology of knowledge, expanding on existing scholarship that has explored the intersection of authoritarianism and imperialism with the natural sciences but not the social sciences.¹⁴ In terms of the latter, this approach also highlights some of the material and symbolic determinants behind the rise of sociology and social anthropology in Africa, adding a transimperial layer to previous studies that have explored the colonial origins of the former disciplines.¹⁵ This choice is not merely methodological; it is grounded in the belief that the peak of inter-imperial scientific and technical cooperation profoundly influenced the contemporary landscape of the social sciences, shaping research programs and disciplinary boundaries, particularly in anthropology and sociology.

For now, this conviction is based on the study of the Portuguese case, but as discussed below, there are compelling reasons to extend the same insight to other national contexts. More generally, the very process of internationalization of the social sciences, led by American universities and UNESCO after World War II, cannot be thought of apart from the action of the transimperial knowledge networks studied here, considering the dynamics of competition and cooperation that connected them to the former and the weight of the colonial issue in the emergence and affirmation of global governance bodies.¹⁶

The paper is divided into five sections. Section 1 gives a brief overview of the CCTA, the CIAO, the IAI and the INCIDI, highlighting the growing importance of the social sciences in their endeavours. The remainder of the text then offers a synopsis of the Portuguese state's involvement with each of those bodies, focusing on the five social-scientific meetings it either

¹³ On this period of Portuguese colonialism, see Valentim Alexandre, *Contra o Vento. Portugal, o Império e a Maré Anticolonial (1945–1960)* (Lisbon: Temas e Debates, 2017); Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto, “A Modernizing Empire? Politics, Culture and Economy in Portuguese late colonialism,” in *The Ends of European Colonial Empires*, eds. Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto, 51–80 (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan).

¹⁴ Tiago Saraiva, *Fascist Pigs: Technoscientific Organisms and the History of Fascism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

¹⁵ On the British, French, Belgian and Portuguese cases see, among others, Lyn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); George Steinmetz, “Sociology and Colonialism in the British and French Empires, 1945–1965,” *The Journal of Modern History* 89, no. 3 (2017): 601–648; George Steinmetz, *The Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought: French Sociology and the Overseas Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023); Benoît de L’Estoile, “Enquêter en ‘Situation Coloniale’. Politique de la Population, Gouvernamentalité Modernisatrice et ‘Sociologie Engagée’ en Afrique Équatoriale Française,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 228 (2017): 863–919; Marc Poncelet, “Colonial Ideology, Colonial Sciences and Colonial Sociology in Belgium,” *The American Sociologist* 51, no 2 (2020): 14871; Frederico Ágoas, “Social Sciences, Modernization, and Late Colonialism: The Centro de Estudos Da Guiné Portuguesa,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 56, no. 4 (2020): 278–97.

¹⁶ Jerónimo and Monteiro, eds., *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World*.

organized or collaborated on in this context. In Section 2, the 1947 and 1956 CIAOs held in Bissau and in São Tomé, respectively, will serve as the starting and ending points for discussing Portugal's engagement cycles in these dynamics during the period under review, as reflected in its participation in the intervening CIAOs. In section 3, we will explore the background to the Executive Council meeting of the IAI in 1953, convened in Lisbon, shedding light on the rationale underlying the country's cautious approach to such collaborative ventures, concerning the advancement of social studies in Africa. Section 4 will trace the trajectory leading to the 1955 CCTA Inter-African Conference on Social Sciences in Bukavu, providing insights into the factors that compelled the Portuguese state to confront its anxieties in this field, related to the threat of third-party interference in its colonial territories. Finally, in section 5, the account of Portuguese participation in the INCIDI will confirm this perception and summarize Portugal's evolving stance throughout this process, with the 30th Session of the INCIDI in 1957, held in Lisbon, representing its culmination, alongside the onset of the wave of African independences.

The Social Turn of Transimperial Scientific Cooperation

Established in 1950, the CCTA formalized cooperative efforts in Africa led by the United Kingdom and France shortly after World War II and extended to involve Belgium, Portugal, the Union of South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia. Preceding its creation, the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara (CSA) was formed in 1949, merging scientists from involved countries as representatives in their respective fields, later becoming CCTA's advisory body.¹⁷

The primary goal of the CCTA was to centralize technical interventions previously conducted within colonial empires to enhance living standards and foster development across Africa. Its inception should therefore be viewed against the backdrop of post-war developmental initiatives by the British and the French and the broader agenda of reaffirming colonial authority amidst the tide of decolonization and mounting anti-colonial sentiments. As noted, the CCTA also served to prevent or control the access of the United Nations agencies to European colonies, although the stance of participating nations varied, evolved, and sometimes implied internal discord.¹⁸ Political coordination occurred through intergovernmental sessions held in national capitals, overseen by a permanent secretariat. By 1955, the CCTA and the CSA operated under a joint secretariat with offices in London and Bukavu. After the creation of the first bureaus dedicated to tsetse and trypanosomiasis, soil and rural economy, and epizootic diseases, its

¹⁷ Damiano Matasci, "Internationalising Colonial Knowledge. Edgar Barton Worthington and the Scientific Council for Africa, 1949-1956," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 48, no. 5 (2020): 892-913.

¹⁸ Kent, *The Internationalization of Colonialism*; Castelo and Ágoas, "Inter-African Cooperation in the Social Sciences."

structure came to include various committees and expert networks dedicated to fields such as climatology, pedology, labour, rural welfare, statistics, or human sciences. Much of the CCTA's activities involved organizing "inter-African conferences" on various subjects, often based on recommendations from the CSA and occasionally in partnership with other international organizations. It also provided recommendations to member nations. Additionally, the CCTA engaged in considerable editorial efforts through its *Science-Afrique* bulletin and other publications covering conference proceedings, scientific resources and collaborative projects.¹⁹

With the wave of independences in the second half of the 1950s, the CCTA came to include the new African nations, shedding its "colonial club" status.²⁰ It was eventually incorporated in the Organization of African Unity in 1965, following the expulsion of Portugal and South Africa in 1962, and the subsequent revocation of voting rights of the remaining European countries.²¹ The post-colonial consequences of the CCTA can be measured by this fact alone or by the global influence it had in technical and scientific fields such as health, education, or nutrition.²² Regarding the social sciences, they would be central to the institutional evolution of the CCTA, progressively gaining importance throughout its existence, as we will confirm later.²³

The same holds true for the International Conference of Western Africanists, established in 1945 under the auspices of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, a scientific and cultural institution representing imperial France and headquartered in Dakar. As stated in the meeting's circular, its objective was to "assemble ethnologists, geographers, and naturalists from West Africa, who found themselves isolated due to geographical dispersion and border divisions."²⁴ The inaugural gathering drew approximately 150 presentations from France, Britain, and Spain—and one from Portugal.²⁵ The conference comprised three main sections delving

¹⁹ Castelo, "Recherche et Développement," 37-40.

²⁰ Vigier, "La Commission de Coopération Technique en Afrique au Sud du Sahara," 349.

²¹ Gruhn, "The Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa," 463-464.

²² Jessica Pearson-Patel, "Promoting Health, Protecting Empire: Inter-colonial Medical Cooperation in Post War Africa," *Monde(s): Histoire, Espaces, Relations* 7, no. 1 (2015): 213-230; Philip Havik, "Regional Cooperation and Health Diplomacy in Africa: From Intra-Colonial Exchanges to Multilateral Health Institutions," *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* 27, supl. (2020): 123-144; Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and Hugo Gonçalves Dores, "Enlightened Developments? Inter-Imperial Organizations and the Issue of Colonial Education in Africa (1945–1957)," in *Education and Development in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, eds. Damiano Matasci, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and Hugo Gonçalves Dores, 237–62 (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020); Lola Wilhelm, "'One of the Most Urgent Problems to Solve': Malnutrition, Trans-Imperial Nutrition Science, and Nestlé's Medical Pursuits in Late Colonial Africa," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 48, no. 5 (2020): 914-933.

²³ Castelo and Ágoas, "Inter-African Cooperation in the Social Sciences."

²⁴ CIAO, *Première Conférence Internationale Des Africanistes de l'Ouest*, vol. 1 (Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1950-1951), 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-6.

into the physical, biological and human environments (*milieus*), providing a glimpse into imperial Africanist research during the mid-century period. In the third section, the works on physical anthropology, linguistics, and archaeology stood out. Although there was also a subsection dedicated to “ethnography and African arts” and another to “sociology, religion, and legal customs” (covered by the French term *animologie*), the presence of the social sciences was still marginal.²⁶ In addition to the scientific agenda, the conference spawned an international committee comprising representatives from each participating nation, ensuring the event’s biennial continuity.²⁷ Among the congress’s resolutions, priority was placed on the continuation of ethnological studies to salvage vanishing data and the need to address regional social problems.²⁸

On a rotating basis, subsequent sessions would be held in Bissau (Portuguese Guinea, 1947), Ibadan (British Nigeria, 1949), Fernando Pó (Spanish Guinea, 1951), Abidjan (French West Africa, 1953) and São Tomé (Portuguese São Tomé and Príncipe, 1956), when the CIAO had already been integrated into the CCTA as its regional advisory council. In this new context, a further meeting in Accra, in newly independent Ghana, occurred in 1959.²⁹ By then, the meeting had adopted a more contemporary format, providing dedicated space for the human sciences as such, with sociology and ethnology taking precedence over the humanities and physical anthropology.³⁰

A similar social-scientific drift can be seen in the activities of older international organizations for colonial scientific and technical cooperation such as the INCIDI and the IAI, the latter dedicated to the humanities from the onset. Founded in 1926 as the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IIALC), in London, it aimed to promote research and disseminate information about African societies, with a focus on language and culture. While asserting itself as a non-political entity, it also aimed to connect scientific knowledge with the practical activities of administrators, educators, and missionaries. At its inception, the IIALC Governing Body comprised 20 organizations and associations from 11 countries. Its initial leadership included British figures Lord Lugard and Hanns Vischer as Chairman and Secretary General, respectively, with Frenchman Maurice Delafosse and German Diedrich Hermann Westermann serving as advisory directors.³¹ Early initiatives by the institute included an orthography adaptable to various African languages, a memorandum on textbooks for African

²⁶ Ibid., 41-47.

²⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁸ Ibid., 14.

²⁹ CSA, *Thirteenth Meeting of the Scientific Council* (Muguga: CCTA, 1962), 16.

³⁰ CIAO, *Conférence Internationale des Africanistes de l'Ouest. 5e Réunion. Compte Rendu* (Abidjan: IFAN, 1954), 111-114.

³¹ Daryll Forde, “International African Institute 1926–1951, Report of the Administrative Director,” *Africa*, 21, no. 3 (1951): 226–34, on 226.

schools and an essay contest in the continent's vernacular languages. With support from the Rockefeller Foundation, which in the 1930s funded research led by social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski on cultural contacts and the impact of Western influence on African communities, the IALC's scope expanded.

The outbreak of war partially suspended its activities, but the establishment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund in Britain in 1941, followed by the Colonial Research Office, enabled the implementation of a comprehensive Ethnographic Survey across Africa and the production of a Handbook of African Languages.³² French and Belgian authorities cooperated in these and other projects, while UNESCO granted support for a quarterly review of literature on African ethnology, linguistics and social studies.³³ By 1950, the IAI had affiliates from about thirty countries and British, French, Belgian and Portuguese colonial territories.³⁴ The subsequent activities of the IAI lie beyond the scope of this article, but it is worth highlighting its central role in the development of Social Anthropology in Britain and elsewhere.³⁵ It has persisted to this day, currently being hosted at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

The INCIDI did not fare so well. Established in 1894 as the International Colonial Institute in Brussels, it was a private organization designed to promote the comparative study of colonial governance and international relations among politicians, officials and scientists.³⁶ It continued its activities until 1982, losing momentum during the 1960s, despite undergoing a rebranding to the International Institute of Political and Social Sciences Applied to the Countries of Differing Civilizations in 1949, later shortened to the International Institute of Differing Civilizations. This reflected a response to the anti-colonial wave seeking to preserve its program of “transcolonial governmentality” (to be applied to the “underdeveloped” countries) by adopting the language of the social sciences.³⁷ The decision to admit delegates from around the world during the INCIDI's first General Assembly in 1948 definitely aligned with this strategy.³⁸ However, the name change also highlighted the growing influence of the social sciences in shaping colonial governance.

³² Ibid., 227-228.

³³ Ibid., 231-234.

³⁴ Ibid., 230. Half of those came from Britain and its colonies, and around 150 from the United States. Belgium had over one hundred members, France seventy-seven, and Portugal forty-nine, including their dependencies. The Union of South Africa had sixty-two.

³⁵ Esselborn, *Die Afrikaexperten*.

³⁶ ICI, *Compte Rendu Des Séances Tenues à Bruxelles Les 28 et 29 Mai 1894 Précédé Des Statuts et Règlement*. Bibliothèque Coloniale Internationale (Bruxelles: ICI, 1894), 3.

³⁷ Wagner, “*Colonial Internationalism and the Governmentality of Empire*,” 315-16.

³⁸ Ibid., 316.

By the mid-1950s the INCIDI had 228 members from thirty-one countries, though membership from newly independent nations remained limited. Leadership positions were occupied mainly by representatives of present or former European colonial powers. The editorial committee of its journal, *Civilizations*, mirrored this composition.³⁹ As for the INCIDI's scope of action, its new statutes now aimed "to study the problems created by contacts between people of differing civilizations and by the evolution of such peoples," and "to promote harmony or encourage relations between peoples distinguished by these civilizations."⁴⁰ Sessions in Brussels (1949) and Paris (1951) addressed issues like education, the economic and social impacts of erosion, native elites, and development plans in "underdeveloped territories." Throughout the 1950s, sessions in past or current colonial powers' metropolitan territories tackled specific societal problems in "tropical and sub-tropical countries," including urban and industrial centres' attraction (Florence, 1952), rural development (The Hague, 1953), middle-class development (London, 1955), cultural pluralism (Lisbon, 1957), and the role of women in the development of these countries (Brussels, 1959). Despite organizing sessions throughout the 1960s in Munich, Palermo and Aix-en-Provence, the INCIDI declined as Global South delegates gained prominence. Its zenith coincided with the last gasp of colonialism—and the onset of nearly two more decades of Portuguese imperial rule.

Enthusiasm and Inconveniences: From the 1947 CIAO in Bissau to the 1956 CIAO in São Tomé

After World War II, the Portuguese state's involvement in transimperial scientific forums began with the international conference of Western Africanists. Its second edition, held in Bissau in 1947, was co-organized by the local Portuguese Guinea Research Centre (Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa, CEGP) and the Board of Colonial Research (Junta das Missões Geográficas e de Investigações Coloniais, later renamed of Overseas Research, JIC/JIU) from the metropole. The initiative stemmed from a personal invitation extended by the head of the Spanish delegation at the first 1945 CIAO in Dakar to the president of the JIC, physical anthropologist António Mendes Correia, to participate in the meeting.⁴¹ Though unable to attend, Mendes Correia swiftly became a member of the organization's Permanent Committee

³⁹ Juan Comas, "Centros de Estudio e Investigaciones Sociales En El Mundo: Belgica. El Instituto Internacional de Civilizaciones Diferentes," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 18, no. 3 (1956), 677–83, on 679.

⁴⁰ INCIDI, *Compte Rendu de la Session Tenue à Londres En Septembre 1955: Développement d'une classe moyenne dans les pays tropicaux et sub-tropicaux* (Brussels: INCIDI, 1955), 3.

⁴¹ Regarding the considerable academic and political influence of Mendes Correia within the framework of the Portuguese dictatorship and his international scientific standing, see Patrícia Ferraz de Matos, *Anthropology, Nationalism and Colonialism: Mendes Correia and the Porto School of Anthropology* (New York, Oxford: Berghan Books, 2023).

as Portuguese representative. In the following year, Mendes Correia suggested to French naturalist Theodor Monod, the director of the IFAN, the integration of the conference into the Centennial Celebrations of the Discovery of Guinea in Bissau. The idea garnered support from Monod, at the IFAN, the colony's governor, Sarmiento Rodrigues, and the Portuguese Minister of Colonies, Marcelo Caetano, as well as other committee members, prompting the British to relinquish their turn to organize the conference.⁴² Beyond commemorating the centenary, the occasion served as a pretext for launching an array of studies in various scientific fields, initiated from Lisbon, and aimed at addressing the lack of knowledge about the region and reaffirming national interests in the colony.

There, the French example set in Dakar by the IFAN and the organization of the meeting in Bissau expedited the promotion by local officials of two major social-scientific surveys—an area overlooked by the scientific missions sent from the metropole. At the time, the 1947 Ethnographic Survey of Guinea (*Inquérito Etnográfico*) and the 1948 survey on the Native Housing of Portuguese Guinea (*Habitação Indígena da Guiné Portuguesa*) were unmatched within the whole empire. These dynamics also seem to have played a pivotal role in the very creation of the CEGP itself in the end of 1945, under the decision of the colony's governor. Transimperial contacts of this sort definitely supported its affirmation vis-à-vis the metropole within the framework of a dispute between local colonial officials and academic metropolitan researchers.⁴³

In fact, after the success of the 2nd CIAO in Bissau, with almost 40 Portuguese papers, Portugal's enthusiasm for this forum diminished, at least on the part of the metropole, which would not be represented at the 3rd CIAO in 1949. The Portuguese delegation in Ibadan, Nigeria, was made up of two delegates from Guinea which presented five papers.⁴⁴ The fact triggered protest from the representatives of the CEGP present at the meeting, directed to the Minister of Colonies, Teófilo Duarte, alleging a disinterest on the part of Lisbon. Additionally, there were complaints about the delayed publication of the minutes of the 1947 CIAO in Bissau by the JIC. Suggestions were also made for the participation of other Portuguese territories in the forum and for the creation of similar centres to CEGP in Angola and Mozambique.⁴⁵ The confidential report would be accompanied by a letter addressed to the Minister by the new governor of Guinea, Raimundo Serrão, in which he pointed out “the careless manner in

⁴² António Mendes Correia, “2.^a Conferência Internacional de Africanistas Ocidentais,” *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia* IX, no. 3-4 (1948): 365-71, on 366.

⁴³ Ágoas, “Social Sciences, Modernization, and Late Colonialism.”

⁴⁴ CIAO, *2.^a Conferência Internacional dos Africanistas Ocidentais* (Lisboa: JMGIC, 1950); CIAO, *Proceedings of the III International West African Conference, Held at Ibadan, Nigeria, 12th to 21st December 1949* (Lagos: Nigerian Museum, 1956).

⁴⁵ The confidential report containing these criticisms is missing from the corresponding folder, Proc. 95 (CIAO), Confidential, AIICT-UL. Its content has been inferred from the following documents.

which the competent Body of the Metropole dealt with issues related to representation at this Conference, where the so-called national delegates did not attend on the day of its opening – nor ever afterwards . . .”⁴⁶

The Minister’s furious reaction certainly mirrors the insubordinate tone of this double interrogation, but it also reflects the official attitude regarding this type of initiative:

The proliferation of international conferences that characterizes our era; the numerous representations they claim to have; the nullity of the practical results of most of them; the disorganization they bring to official services; all this has led the Government to adopt the policy to be followed in all Ministries, to minimize our participation in such meetings as much as possible. (...) The statistics for the Colony of Guinea in recent years show little or no progress in economic development, the solid foundation for everything else. It has therefore been recommended that the Services work to overcome this situation so that wealth and demographic growth reach proportions that they have never had. And we can all be sure that this will not be achieved through conferences.⁴⁷

As president of the JIC and member of the Permanent Committee of the CIAO, Mendes Correia argued, in turn, that only ignorance of the efforts by metropolitan entities could justify the criticisms, which also contradicted the report’s orientation towards the bypassing of central organizations by local bodies. He added: “Both types of entities are necessary for the broad and complex task at hand, with the Metropole naturally playing a guiding, coordinating, stimulating and cooperating role, in technical, pedagogical, political and financial terms.”⁴⁸

Meanwhile, with the appointment of Sarmento Rodrigues, former governor of Guinea, as Minister of Colonies in August 1950, the Portuguese state made a deliberate effort to present twenty papers at the 4th CIAO of 1951, in Fernando Pó, today Bioko, where it was represented by two delegates from the metropole and one from the small West African colony.⁴⁹ At the time, plans were also made to host the 6th CIAO at São Tomé.⁵⁰ Somewhat unexpectedly, two years later, on December 7, 1953, at the opening of the 5th CIAO in Abidjan, no Portuguese delegates attended, despite efforts made in that direction.⁵¹ Indeed, funds had been approved

⁴⁶ Governor of Guinea to Minister of Colonies, 30 January 1950, Doc. 37, Proc. 95 (CIAO), Vol. 1, AIICT-UL (unless otherwise specified, all documents in this section have this origin). All translations from the Portuguese are the authors’ own.

⁴⁷ Dispatch from the Ministry of Colonies, 27 February 1950, Doc. 38.

⁴⁸ Mendes Correia to President of the Executive Committee (EC) of the JIC, 5 May 1950, Doc. 2, Proc. 95 (CIAO), Confidential, AIICT-UL.

⁴⁹ CIAO, *Circular Paper of the Fourth Meeting. Santa Isabel de Fernando Pó, 5-12 December 1951* (Madrid: Ares, 1951). Regarding Portuguese participation, see António Carreira, “Notas e Informações,” *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa* VII, no. 26 (1952): 497–503.

⁵⁰ Luís Silveira, Infomation no. 239, 20 November 1951, Doc 129.

⁵¹ CIAO, *Conférence Internationale des Africanistes de l’Ouest. 5e Réunion*, 7.

for the country's representation in March of that year.⁵² Around the same time, the JIU issued invitations to potential interested parties to gather papers for the event; in September, the titles of the Portuguese works were sent by the JIU to the IFAN in Dakar.⁵³ With everything seemingly in place, a farce ensued.

In mid-November 1953, the president of the JIU, Mendes Correia, unable to attend, suggested that the national delegation be composed of two representatives from the metropole, both geographers, Orlando Ribeiro, the second Portuguese member of the Permanent Committee of the CIAO, and Francisco Tenreiro, his assistant. The Minister did not agree to the proposal, arguing that it had been established to send one delegate from Guinea and another from the metropole.⁵⁴ On November 27, less than two weeks before the meeting, the IFAN in Abidjan inquired Lisbon about the arrival date of the Portuguese delegation, following two earlier unanswered letters.⁵⁵ Inexplicably, in the reply mail, the JIU asked about the date of the proceedings.⁵⁶ On December 3rd, the Ministry of Overseas requested the names of the delegates for the meeting, to inform the Foreign Affairs Ministry.⁵⁷ The JIU insisted on the two geographers from the metropole, stating that they had not received a response from Guinea. Given the urgency of the situation, it requested that the travel costs be advanced from the Ministry's funds or taken from the JIU's budget for publications.⁵⁸ With reluctance, the Minister approved the demand on the exact same day, December 4th—too late, already.⁵⁹ On December 7, Mendes Correia sent a telegram to Abidjan, informing he was unable to attend the conference, as he had counted on a later date. .⁶⁰ In the aftermath, Orlando Ribeiro expressed his intention to resign from the Permanent Committee of the CIAO, alleging that he had only been informed of the departure at the last minute and had encountered delays and obstacles in carrying out his duties.⁶¹

Aside from organizational deficiencies, the situation suggests some level of disinterest on the part of the JIC/JIU, extending beyond the underlying conflict between scientists from the

⁵² Copy of the resolution of the JIU dated March 10, 1953 (approved by the Minister of Overseas on June 25, 1953), 25 November 1953, Doc. 231.

⁵³ Circular sent by the Portuguese members of the Permanent Committee of the CIAO, 5 March 1953 Doc. 233; Luís Silveira to Secretary of the Executive Committee of the V CIAO, at IFAN, 12 September 1953, Doc. 242.

⁵⁴ Mendes Correia to President of the EC of the JIU, 16 November 1953, Doc. 250.

⁵⁵ Centrifan, in Abidjan, to Luís Silveira, 27 November and 3 December 1953, Docs. 253 and 256.

⁵⁶ Draft of the telegram from Luís Silveira to Centrifan in Abidjan, 30 November 1953, Doc. 255.

⁵⁷ Directorate-General of Political and Civil Administration of the Ministry of Overseas (DGAPC-MU) to JIU, 3 December 1953, Doc. 257.

⁵⁸ Luís Silveira to Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Overseas, 4 December 1953, Doc. 258.

⁵⁹ DGAPC-MU to JIU, 5 December 1953, Doc. 259.

⁶⁰ Mendes Correia to Centrifan in Abidjan, 7 December 1953, Doc. 260.

⁶¹ Orlando Ribeiro to the President of the JIU, Doc. 264.

metropole and officials from Guinea. Later in this discussion, we will explore how concerns related to UNESCO may have also diverted attention from the event, if not encouraged Portuguese absence. Clearly, three years later, the organization of the 6th CIAO in the Portuguese colony of São Tomé and Príncipe, in 1956, would reaffirm Portugal's pledge to the technical and scientific promotion of the African continent. Prompted by the Minister in this regard, in January 1954, the Executive Committee of the JIU assumed its commitment to being part of the mission focusing on the geography, geology, botany, zoology, economics, and sociology of São Tomé, with the aim of preparing Portuguese participation in the meeting.⁶² The fact did not prevent some delays, and even a few protests from the CEGP, directed at the JIU, for providing a too vague date for the event ("in the next year of 1956").⁶³ In truth, the conference date would only be fixed after this incident, and it was indeed postponed from 1955 to August of the following year. By March 1956, the provisional program was published; one month before the meeting, the list of delegates was defined, with only two names from Guinea among the fifteen indicated.⁶⁴

After the failure of 1953, the Portuguese representation in São Tomé would be marked by an unprecedented number of papers at these meetings.⁶⁵ Although there was still not enough critical mass available to address the selected themes in the field of social sciences (migrations and acculturation), the hesitations that had marked previous participations in the CIAO were apparently overcome.

Cautious Anticipation: The 1953 International African Institute Executive Committee meeting in Lisbon

The reasons for such hesitations can be discerned in Portugal's involvement in the IAI and in the preparations for the Lisbon meeting of its Executive Council in 1953. The approach to the Institute was once again facilitated by Mendes Correia, who, in 1947, was invited by British anthropologist Daryl Forde, the director of the IAI, to participate in the first meeting of that Council after the war. Having seemingly been correspondents for some time, they resumed contact while organizing in Bissau the 2nd session of the CIAO, where they were both members of the Permanent Committee. At the IAI meeting in London, while representing the

⁶² Ministerial dispatch regarding the conduct of studies in São Tomé and Príncipe (...), 26 January 1954, Doc. 273; Resolution of the plenary session of the JIU, Doc. 275, both in Proc. 95 (CIAO), Vol. 2, AIICT-UL (all remaining documents in this section have this origin).

⁶³ President of the CEGP to President of the JIU, 12 July 1955, Doc. 290; President of the EC of the JIU to President of the CEGP, 18 August 1955, Doc. 291; President of the CEGP to President of the JIU, 8 November 1955, Doc. 294.

⁶⁴ President of the EC of the JIU to Dr. Joaquin Mateus, 2 March 1956, Doc. 310; DGAPC-MU to EC of the JIU, Doc. 337.

⁶⁵ CSA, *Conferência Internacional dos Africanistas Ocidentais*, 6.^a sessão (Lisboa: CCTA, 1956).

Ministry of Colonies, Mendes Correia joined the Institute's governing bodies after presenting to the assembly an overview of social research in the Portuguese colonial territories, where the ongoing work in Portuguese Guinea stood out.⁶⁶ Upon arrival in Lisbon, in his report to the Minister, Mendes Correia would emphasize the usefulness of national presence in such meetings, "especially those involving the largest and most important portion of our empire." In his view, "[t]he continuation of our absence or indifference towards the scientific activity of the International African Institute, in which the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium are extensively involved, as well as nations that do not possess African colonies, would be detrimental to our prestige and our interests as a colonial nation, and to scientific progress regarding the scientific understanding of African peoples."⁶⁷ In the same document, he would go on to congratulate himself on his appointment to the Executive Committee of the IAI and highlight the need to increase Portuguese support for the organization and the national advantage in organizing its next meeting in Lisbon.

After missing the Brussels meeting the following year, Mendes Correia attended the 1949 gathering in Paris, where he once again summarized Portuguese ethnological and linguistic research in Africa over the preceding two years. Apart from ongoing studies in Guinea, progress was limited to physical anthropology.⁶⁸ In his latest report to the Minister, Mendes Correia highlighted British dedication to training researchers and a renewed interest of colonial powers in studying African populations. He also voiced concerns about UNESCO's involvement in colonial research, particularly its encouragement by new independent nations. While acknowledging resistance in certain English and Belgian circles against excessive international interference in the colonies, he emphasized that "the insistence and danger persist," suggesting that neutralizing these factors would require demonstrating the commitment of colonial nations to studying and protecting their colonies, especially their populations. In his view, Portugal could not afford to ignore this trend, although it might be considered too costly for the results obtained. He therefore advocated for a position of "cautious expectation rather than intense, unconditional and enthusiastic collaboration, perhaps indeed still premature."⁶⁹

Mendes Correia seems to have taken his own advice at heart, as his association with the IAI is then lost in the archives of the Ministry of Overseas. Contact at this level would only be reestablished approximately three years later, in May 1952, through a letter from Daryl Forde directly to Minister Sarmiento Rodrigues proposing that the next meeting of the Institute's Executive Council could convene in Lisbon the following Spring. Forde indicated that the

⁶⁶ António Mendes Correia, Report of the conference of the International African Institute, in London, 1947, Cx201 (IIA), AHU-MU-DGEDU-P067.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ António Mendes Correia, Report on participation in the 1949 meeting of the Executive Council of the International African Institute, Cx201 (IIA), AHU-MU-DGEDU-P067.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

group gathered once again in Brussels that year had expressed the desire to hold the meeting in Portugal. Personally, he looked forward to the opportunity of reconnecting with Sarmiento Rodrigues, now heading the Ministry of Overseas, and keeping abreast of developments in the Portuguese territories, following visits to Bissau and Lisbon in connection with the organization of the 2nd CIAO.⁷⁰ The meeting was scheduled for July 1953 and proceeded without incident. However, during the preparations, a memorandum surfaced from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, detailing a conversation from February that year between Portugal's permanent delegate to the CCTA, Luís Fragoso, and the organization's Secretary-General, Paul-Marc Henry, containing unfavourable references regarding the IAI.

In the document forwarded to the Ministry of Overseas, Fragoso reported Henry's concerns regarding the trajectory of the IAI, which had recently taken initiatives unrelated to its scientific goals: "Thus, from the anthropological problems that constituted its main field of action before the war, the Institute's interest seems to have shifted to social issues in Africa – with the assistance and funding of UNESCO." In fact, Fragoso continued, the sociology conference announced for Africa by this organisation had been instigated by the IAI itself, which had sought collaboration and funding from that specialized agency for a similar project, only to have it appropriated by UNESCO. Daryl Forde was now addressing certain American circles, particularly interested in the Institute's potential in African sociology. It was therefore necessary, Henry believed, to closely monitor the IAI meeting in Lisbon and seek to ensure any form of control over this organization. According to Fragoso's version of his interlocutor's words, "the delegates from the various countries at the Institute were, no doubt, well-intentioned people, but as scientists, they did not always consider the political implications of the issues they discussed and the initiatives they took."⁷¹

In addition to sharing the memorandum, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would also request the Ministry of Overseas to instruct Mendes Correia to "redirect the organization to its original purposes."⁷² Asked to comment on the conversation's content, Mendes Correia would simply state that he would try to "influence the work in the direction that seems to be desired by the CCTA. . .", appearing resigned to the course taken by the human sciences, to the detriment of the naturalist anthropology that he himself cultivated: "The tendency for sociological inquiries became common after the war, in Anglo-American circles, as I have emphasized in my publications. For these circles, anthropology has almost only become Social Anthropology. But in other countries, many of the traditional norms are still preserved, as is the case in

⁷⁰ Daryll Forde to Sarmiento Rodrigues, 16 May 1952, Instituto Internacional Africano de Londres, PT/AHD/3/MU-GM/GNP01-RRI/S0750/UI01486 (all remaining documents in this section have this origin).

⁷¹ Luís Fragoso, Conversation note, 24 February 1953.

⁷² "Directorate-General for Political Affairs and Internal Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGNPAI-MNE) to DGAPC-MU, 13 April 1953.

Portugal.”⁷³ Naturally, Mendes Correia’s efforts would have no influence on the workings of the IAI. The fact would not prevent Portugal from significantly increasing its contribution to the organization the following year, from 80 to 120 pounds annually. According to Minister Sarmiento Rodrigues, this measure placed the country “in a relative favourable position with regard to the budgets of Belgium and France,” both at the time with contributions of £ 300.⁷⁴

The Portuguese state’s involvement in this organization continued for over a decade, initially ensured by Rodrigo de Sá Nogueira, sub-director of the Institute of African and Oriental Languages, who replaced Mendes Correia, at least in the 1954 and 1956 meetings.⁷⁵ From 1957 onwards, cultural anthropologist Jorge Dias represented Portugal’s interests in the IAI, eventually taking part in its Executive Council.⁷⁶ In 1965, Dias would be removed from that governing body at the Hamburg meeting, after being prevented from participating in the previous gathering in Ibadan due to his Portuguese citizenship, at a time when liberation wars raged throughout the Portuguese empire.⁷⁷ According to the report submitted in Lisbon upon arrival from Germany, pressures from African members of the IAI had lead Daryl Forde to exclude him from the Council, despite protests from figures such as Max Gluckman and Meyer Fortes. Dissatisfied, Dias would register the moment as “the rare opportunity to observe how ‘free elections’ are conducted among civilized peoples. . .”⁷⁸ Following the meeting, the Institute’s treasurer returned Portugal’s contribution for the year 1964.⁷⁹

From Avoidance to Fright: The 1955 CCTA Inter-African Conference on Social Sciences in Bukavu

At the time of this incident, Jorge Dias had been a professor of Cultural Anthropology for almost a decade at the former Colonial School, in Lisbon, which in the meantime had been transformed into the Higher Institute of Social Sciences and Overseas Politics in 1962.⁸⁰ This

⁷³ Mendes Correia to DGAPC-MU, 9 May 1953.

⁷⁴ Daryll Forde to Sarmiento Rodrigues, 11 February 1954; Directorate-General of the Treasury to DGAPC-MU, 7 April 1954.

⁷⁵ Office of the Minister of Overseas to DGAPC-MU, 1 April 1954; DGAPC-MU to DGNPAI-MNE, 28 March 1956.

⁷⁶ DGAPC-MU to DGNPAI-MNE, 19 April 1957.

⁷⁷ Jorge Dias, Report on the participation in the annual meeting of the Executive Council of the International African Institute in June 1965, 3 August 1965.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ IAI to Portuguese Embassy in London, 31 March 1966.

⁸⁰ On the intellectual trajectory of Jorge Dias and his shift from ethnology to cultural and social anthropology, within the framework of his international networks, see João Leal, “As Redes Internacionais de Jorge Dias: EUA e Inglaterra,” *Bérose, Encyclopédie en ligne sur l’Histoire de l’Anthropologie et des Savoirs Ethnographiques*, Paris, IIAC-LAHIC, UMR 8177.

marked the midpoint of a reform initiated in 1955 with the inclusion of a sociology chair into the school's curriculum, following the recommendations from the Inter-African Conference on Social Sciences organized by the CCTA in the same year. The reform continued throughout the 1960s, culminating in the establishment of a degree program in anthropological sciences in 1968 (the first in the country), after the incorporation of other social sciences disciplines. The process has been previously studied within the framework of the institutional evolution of that international organization and its growing emphasis on the social sciences. Let us briefly recap the sequence of events leading to that reform, noting the reactive nature of this concern, influenced by UNESCO in the case of the CCTA, and by the latter in the case of Portugal.

In 1949, the African Scientific Conference in Johannesburg, which preceded the establishment of the CCTA, highlighted the importance of the social sciences in Africa's development. However, the priority of the then-formed African Scientific Council (CSA) lay in the advancement of the physical and natural sciences. It would take more than three years for the CCTA/CSA to respond to these recommendations, organizing a meeting in early 1953 in Kampala, Uganda, to plan social research (it had been summoned six months earlier, during the third session of the CSA). From this meeting in Kampala, where Portugal was absent, proposals emerged for the CCTA to organize a conference in various social-scientific fields and to appoint an inter-African scientific correspondent for research in the social sciences. With manifest hesitation, the proposals were then discussed in a joint meeting of the CSA and the CCTA, in March 1953, and at the eighth session of the CCTA, in June of that year, where a more specific proposal was again requested from the CSA. In August, at the fourth session of the CSA, the council now proposed the creation of an inter-African committee of social sciences, to be further discussed at the next session of the CCTA, at a time when UNESCO had already been operating a Department of Social Sciences since 1949 and was preparing a conference on the social consequences of industrialization in Africa, following previous contacts made with the IAI. In October 1953, the International Research Office on the Social Implications of Technological Change, established under the auspices of UNESCO and led by French sociologist Georges Balandier, was also operational.⁸¹

By the end of that year, events escalated. In November 1953, the prospect of a concrete date for the UNESCO conference after the invitation directed to the CSA to collaborate on the initiative caused upheaval in the CCTA, which since August had considered the event a "duplication of its activities."⁸² Shortly after, member countries received a proposal from the CCTA general secretariat for the creation of a permanent advisory committee for social research,

⁸¹ Castelo and Ágoas, "Inter-African Cooperation in the Social Sciences in the Era of Decolonization," 72-73.

⁸² Paul-Marc Henry to CCTA's liaison officers, Proposed UNESCO Conference on Sociology, 24 November 1953, CCTA/Conferência sobre Sociologia promovida pela UNESCO em África, C.E45. P07.2408, AHD.

to be discussed at the ninth session of the organization, which would take place in London in January 1954.⁸³ At the occasion, the CCTA convention was signed, eventually giving the Commission a formal international character. The meeting also resulted in a recommendation for the establishment of a working group to discuss inter-African liaison and joint projects in the social sciences. According to the event's call, it was now clear that UNESCO would seek to use its own conference scheduled for September of that year in Abidjan to take the lead in social research in Africa, without considering the cooperation movement within the CSA/CCTA.⁸⁴

Portuguese documentation regarding this conference clarifies the immediate reasons for this change in attitude and helps to understand Portugal's position throughout these years. In December 1952, after the first news about the UNESCO conference, transmitted by Paul Marc-Henry to the Portuguese legation in London, a service information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs registers the country's intransigence. Not being a member of UNESCO, Portugal did not accept any interference from it. Faced with the "weak" reaction of the British, who requested the postponement of the conference, and the "apathy" of the other countries, Lisbon advocated an "abstentionist stance" to make the event fail due to lack of host or to concerted boycott.⁸⁵ A year later, on December 11, 1953, on the occasion of UNESCO's movements to schedule its conference in French territory, the Portuguese government insisted that the CCTA countries should try to avoid its realization, alleging duplication of activities and the non-specialized nature of UNESCO. Admitting now that the meeting could take place, it maintained that an isolated conference would be of "little importance."⁸⁶

Somewhat surprisingly, a month later, in January 1954, at the ninth session of the CCTA, Portugal went on the offensive, suggesting the creation of a CCTA Bureau for Sociology in Portuguese territory, just a few days after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had received a direct invitation from the Director General of UNESCO for the country to be represented at its Abidjan meeting.⁸⁷ By the end of February, with the CCTA's working group for the social sciences brought forward to early March in London, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs congratulated itself on the change in attitude of the English, Belgians, and French, who now

⁸³ CCTA (53)70, Proposal to appoint an Inter-African scientific correspondent on Sociology, 1953, CCTA/Sociologia, C.E45.P06.2403, AHD.

⁸⁴ Paul-Marc Henry to CCTA's liaison officers, the Secretary General of the CSA and all elements of the CSA, 18 February 1954, CCTA/Sociologia, C.E45.P06.2403, AHD.

⁸⁵ Franco Nogueira, Service Information, 14 November 1952, CCTA/Relações com organismos internacionais/UNESCO, C.E45.P07.2408, AHD.

⁸⁶ DGNPAI-MNE to DGAPC-MU, CCTA/Conferência sobre Sociologia promovida pela UNESCO em África, 11 December 1953, C.E45.P07.2408, AHD.

⁸⁷ Director-General of UNESCO to Ministro do Ultramar, 17 December 1953, CCTA/Conferência sobre Sociologia promovida pela UNESCO em África, C.E45.P07.2408, AHD.

considered it extremely urgent to make immediate decisions to avoid UNESCO interference.⁸⁸ According to the Portuguese embassy in London, this change was due to indiscretions committed by Paul-Marc Henry during a visit to UNESCO facilities in Paris, where he had access to internal documents with reference to the need of suppressing any competition from the CCTA. A few days later, a confidential draft statute for the creation of an Inter-African Institute of Social Sciences based in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo, Mozambique) was sent from Lisbon to the Portuguese embassy in the United Kingdom, to be presented at the working group. According to the proposal, only a specialized body would be able to provide the CCTA with the resources to combat UNESCO's persistent interference in Africa.⁸⁹

The Portuguese proposal would eventually be declined, with the British citing financial reasons and the strictly scientific nature of the CCTA, while the Belgians and French advocated for a less complex structure that could be operational by September, during the UNESCO conference. As an alternative, an Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences would be established, composed of delegates from the six member countries and led by the Belgian anthropologist Jacques Macquet. Additionally, the working group decided to organize an inter-African conference on social sciences, scheduled for the following year, between August and September 1955, in Bukavu, then in the Belgian Congo.⁹⁰

There the six delegations presented their reports and action plans for various areas of the social sciences and humanities. The Portuguese delegation led by Mendes Correia stood out negatively, with meagre results in all areas, except for physical anthropology. Regarding sociology specifically, mention was made of work conducted in Guinea, presented at the site by its main responsible, the navy officer Avelino Teixeira da Mota. In this domain, French studies on West Africa and ongoing British projects in East Africa clearly stood out. Alongside sociology, social anthropology conducted by the IAI in the former area and by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in the latter were also conspicuous (with the last being presented by the delegation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland). As for ethnography, it was abundant, at least in the reports from France and the UK, but some of it was considered outdated and old-fashioned. Among other resolutions, the meeting emphasized the need for increased financial support to training institutions in social sciences and the creation of closer collaboration between researchers and administrations. Scientifically, social studies were to focus on regionally representative ethnographies of specific groups, inter-territorial migration, urban surveys, land tenure patterns, rural community development, and native law compilations.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Franco Nogueira, Memo, 24 February 1954, CCTA/Sociologia, C.E45.P06.2403, AHD.

⁸⁹ Manuel Rocheta (on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs) to Pedro Teotónio Pereira, Portuguese ambassador in London, 26 February 1956, CCTA/Sociologia, C.E45.P06.2403, AHD.

⁹⁰ Castelo and Ágoas, "Inter-African Cooperation in the Social Sciences in the Era of Decolonization," 74.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 75-79.

The significance of these recommendations on a global scale is yet to be explored. In Portugal, they would be crucial, leading not only to the above said reform of the Colonial School but also to the creation of a social research centre in Lisbon focused on colonial issues, the launching of social-scientific research missions in colonial territories, and the establishment of scientific research centres in Angola and Mozambique.⁹² As another member of the Portuguese delegation at Bukavu – Adriano Moreira, professor at the Colonial School – would put it after arriving in Lisbon, “It seems that the suitability of colonial action is no longer to be measured by the occupation of the territory nor by the scientific occupation from the point of view of the natural sciences, but rather by the scientific occupation from the point of view of the human sciences.”⁹³

Selfish Commitment: The INCIDI’s 1957 30th Session in Lisbon

The beginning of 1954 thus marks the turning point in Portugal’s attitude towards transimperial social-scientific cooperation. This shift is reflected in the proposal to create a sociology bureau within the framework of the CCTA in January that year but also incidentally suggested by the combined effect of the country’s non-attendance at the 5th CIAO in late 1953 and the increase in contribution to the IAI in April 1954. That being said, subsequent efforts should not be understood separately from the obscurantist and colonialist motives that initially prompted Portuguese reservations regarding colonial social research. On the contrary, the account of the country’s participation in the INCIDI and the organization of its 30th session in Lisbon in 1957 serve to document the persistence of these motives, as well as to confirm and refine the chronology outlined in previous sections.

Similarly to other cases, Portuguese commitment to this organization remained intermittent until the mid-1950s. As late as April 1955, this led to a protest from the Secretary-General of the INCIDI, Belgian Pierre Wigny, to the Portuguese legation in Brussels, where the organization was headquartered, regarding Portugal’s lack of collaboration in preparing the next session of the Institute. Reports of the incident indicate that Wigny expressed surprise that contacts addressed to Lisbon often went unanswered and that Portugal rarely sent representatives to the Institute’s meetings. As he pointed out, despite the organization having 23 members in the country, only the Portuguese were absent from the Hague meeting in 1953.⁹⁴ True, after discreet presences at the 1949 and 1951 meetings in Brussels and Paris, respectively, Portuguese

⁹² Castelo and Ágoas, “Inter-African Cooperation in the Social Sciences in the Era of Decolonization,” 79-80.

⁹³ Minutes of the 12th meeting of the Interministerial Committee of the CCTA, 2 December 1955, CCTA/Documentos relativos à 1ª Conferência de Ciências Sociais, Bukavu, C.E46.P02.2436, AHD.

⁹⁴ DGNPAI-MNE to DGAPC-MU, 4 April 1955, INCIDI, PT/AHD/3/MU-GM/GNP01-RRI/S0750/UI12487.

members of the INCIDI did gather to demand conditions for a more active participation in this forum. In a letter addressed to the Minister of Overseas in June 1951, the group co-led by Mendes Correia emphasized the need to increase the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' contribution to the institute and to ensure resources from the Ministry of Overseas to support exchange work.⁹⁵ The surge resulted in significant national representation at the subsequent INCIDI session in Florence in 1952, where Portuguese works were presented in three of the five sections of the meeting.⁹⁶ However, the limits of this enthusiasm were clearly defined by the country's fragile diplomatic position and the irrepressible colonialism of its representatives.

Regarding the latter, it's worth noting the words of Mendes Correia as a member of the INCIDI Bureau in a letter sent to Wigny before the Florence session, addressing the appointment of new members—including Minister Sarmento Rodrigues—and potential collaboration with third-party entities. According to Correia, the expansion shouldn't diminish the prominence of countries with colonial experience. Regarding international cooperation in social research, it shouldn't compromise the legitimate prestige and sovereignty of interested nations. As he stated, "the objective impartiality of these international studies, the rigorous pursuit of truth must be surrounded by the most severe precautions."⁹⁷ As to diplomatic considerations, it is worth noting that until the end of 1953 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs resisted resuming Portuguese contributions to the INCIDI, despite the Ministry of Overseas' insistence. The standstill would only be resolved after Minister Sarmento Rodrigues intervened directly, citing Portugal's fragile position vis-à-vis Spain, which had settled its bills and had fewer reasons to do so.⁹⁸

By April 1955, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had taken the initiative. Following Wigny's protest to the Portuguese diplomatic mission in Brussels, duly transmitted by Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Overseas, the former insisted that the latter appoint someone to produce a study on the development of the middle class in Angola and Mozambique to be presented at the INCIDI session that September, as it had been requested by Wigny at the occasion, a fortnight earlier, and in two previous letters to Mendes Correia—to no effect.⁹⁹ In response,

⁹⁵ Delegates to the INCIDI members' meeting in Lisbon to the Chief of Staff of the Minister of Overseas, 21 June 1951, Cx046 (INCIDI), AHU-MU-DGEDU-P067.

⁹⁶ Institut International de Civilisations Différentes, *Compte Rendu de la XXVIIe Session Tenue à Florence les 4, 5, 6, 7 et 8 Juin 1952: L'attraction exercée par les centres urbain et industriels en voie d'industrialisation* (Brussels: INCIDI, 1955), 3.

⁹⁷ Mendes Correia to Pierre Wigny, 27 September 1951, Cx046 (INCIDI), AHU-MU-DGEDU-P067.

⁹⁸ Minister of Overseas, Information for His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 March 1953, Cx046 (INCIDI), AHU-MU-DGEDU-P067.

⁹⁹ DGNPAI-MNE to DGAPC-MU, 28 April 1955; DGNPAI-MNE to DGAPC-MU, 26 March 1955; Pierre Wigny to E. Vieira Leitão, 15 March 1955, both in INCIDI, PT/AHD/3/MU-GM/GNP01-RRI/S0750/UI12487 (all remaining documents in this section have this origin).

the Ministry of Overseas reached out to Portuguese INCIDI members seeking collaboration.¹⁰⁰ Excuses poured in, barely disguising the general lack of preparation to meet the request. In early July, faced with repeated insistence from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Overseas eventually appointed jurist Adriano Moreira to conduct a study on “Sociology of Urbanism in the Tropics.” For this purpose, the Colonial School professor—soon to be its director in 1958, and eventually Minister of Overseas in 1961— would travel to Angola and Mozambique between late July and August, passing through Bukavu as a member of the Portuguese delegation to the Inter-African Conference of Social Sciences. He would then return via London to present his work at the 29th INCIDI session.¹⁰¹

Upon his arrival in Lisbon, he would submit to the Minister the account of his intervention and the overall summary of the meeting. As he had argued during the session, the issue of the middle class in the tropics was primarily a “social problem” rather than a political one. In his own words, “I am too much of a colonialist to forget that the principle of nationalities cannot be applied to most African colonies. . .” Given the practical non-existence of a middle class in the tropics, the challenge that arose was its very creation, “under governmental supervision, because this is indispensable when it comes to colonization.” It was, therefore, a matter of “choosing the most desirable type of middle class” that could serve as an “instrument of assimilation.” Such flight from reality would not prevent Moreira from acknowledging that it was “necessary to pay closer attention to meetings of international institutes related to colonial issues” and that “the most useful tool for affirming national capability lies in the presentation of research findings.” It was also “opportune to leverage the evident desire for prestige of small countries, such as the Netherlands and Belgium, to jointly establish a strong position in the field of scientific occupation, especially in the domain of the human sciences.”¹⁰²

This recommendation would not go unheeded. By the end of that year, the Minister of Overseas, Raúl Ventura, would pen the following note to his Director General of Political and Civil Administration: “Take the necessary steps to invite the INCIDI to hold its first available session in Lisbon. The invitation will be addressed to Mr. Pierre Wigny, Secretary-General. The theme is usually chosen by the group of the respective country, so arrangements must also be made in this regard. The subsidy is usually 100 contos.” A month later, in another handwriting, a note was added in the margin of the page: “As informed by Professor Adriano Moreira, the theme for the next session has already been chosen: racial coexistence. In these terms, it seems that the invitation can be sent to Mr. Pierre Wigny, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁰⁰ DGAPC-MU to Fernando Emídio da Silva (identical to all INCIDI members), 7 May 1955.

¹⁰¹ DGAPC-MU to Department of Political Affairs and Internal Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 July 1955.

¹⁰² Adriano Moreira, Report on the INCIDI meeting held in London, September 13-16, 1955, 20 September 1955.

Your Excellency will decide.”¹⁰³ On April 15, 1957, Sarmiento Rodrigues, now as President of the INCIDI, would inaugurate its 30th session in Lisbon, dedicated to Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism in Intertropical Communities, reading a message from the dictator Oliveira Salazar. It began like this:

Apart from the honour bestowed upon us by the presence of the distinguished members of the Institute and leaving aside the high value of their personal research-work, is it possible that this country is in a position to make a contribution of its own to the question under discussion? Five hundred years of experience—that is, most of her historical lifetime—of maritime discovery and contacts with various peoples and races in every part of the globe, from America to Africa, India, Malaya, Indonesia, China and Japan, may perhaps elucidate a problem the proper solution of which is likely to shape the destinies of a large sector of mankind.”¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

In retrospect, the 30th session of the INCIDI marks the highpoint of Portuguese involvement in transimperial social-scientific cooperation in the post-World War II era. As the preceding citation suggests, the event represented a deliberate attempt to gain international legitimacy for the new ideological framework of the Portuguese colonial empire as a multicultural society, rooted in the sociological work of Brazilian scholar Gilberto Freyre.¹⁰⁵ However, it also emphasized the Portuguese state’s commitment to the social sciences as a means of fostering inter-civilizational integration and developing colonized and “underdeveloped” territories, even as it remained firmly subordinated to the colonial status quo, without renouncing propaganda and violence.¹⁰⁶

In fact, while the extent to which these sciences were instrumental in the repression of African populations and in Portugal’s own war efforts has yet to be determined, it is reasonable to suggest that they were key in shaping the ideological contours of Portugal’s colonialism through lusotropicalism—at least as much as lusotropicalism itself was in mobilizing the integrative (and even misleading) uses of those sciences, as is frequently observed. As for the degree of commitment to this project, colonial sociology in Portugal—or colonial social science, despite its original framing—emerged as a vast, relatively institutionalized field that undeniably merits

¹⁰³ Minister of Overseas to DGAPC-MU, 27 December 1955.

¹⁰⁴ INCIDI, *Compte Rendu de la XXX Session Tenue à Lisbonne Les 15, 16, 17 et 18 Avril 1957: Pluralisme ethnique et culturel dans les sociétés intertropicales* (Brussels: INCIDI, 1957), 68.

¹⁰⁵ Wagner, *Colonial Internationalism and the Governmentality of Empire*, 327-28. See also Cláudia Castelo, ‘O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo’. *O Luso-Tropicalismo e a Ideologia Colonial Portuguesa* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998).

¹⁰⁶ For a broader view of Portuguese colonialism in the context of decolonization, see Norrie Macqueen, “Portugal: Decolonization Without Agency,” in *The Oxford Handbook of The Ends of Empires*, eds. Martin Thomas and Andrew Thompson, 162-178 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

the label, even if constrained by its inherent limitations.¹⁰⁷ As we have hinted in previous sections, it was centred at the Higher Institute of Social Sciences and Overseas Policy in Lisbon, where it grew to encompass a broad range of social science disciplines, specialized professors, degree programs, research centres, colonial missions, and a lively editorial program. Closely linked were the Research Institutes of Angola and Mozambique, established in 1955, each with its own social sciences sections, as well as the Portuguese Guinea Research Center (CEGP), founded in 1946 and central to this process. Indeed, although the metropole eventually came to recognize social knowledge and international scientific engagement as symbolic assets in themselves, this recognition was initially driven by a peripheral movement within regional institutions, coupled with the bureaucratic local push for scientific exchanges.

As is well known, these manoeuvres failed to prevent the country's international ostracization, the eruption of liberation wars in its African colonies, and the downfall of the dictatorship, largely determined by these conflicts. Nevertheless, the legacy of such manoeuvres persists in shaping Portugal's collective imagination and many themes in the humanities and social sciences, which found in transimperial collaboration one of their main launching pads.¹⁰⁸ While the global impact of this collaboration remains to be considered, the Portuguese case study not only confirms the close link between late colonialism and the contemporary affirmation of the social sciences, but also underscores the significance of transnational dynamics in this relationship. At this level, a comprehensive evaluation of the combined influence of transimperial knowledge networks, international governing bodies and philanthropic foundations on the development of the social sciences is also still necessary. Such an approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these entities, through their cross-border interactions, shaped both academic and political agendas on a global scale.

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¹⁰⁷ Frederico Ágoas, "ISCSP(U) – Burnay Palace."

¹⁰⁸ On this legacy and the subsequent development of the social sciences in Portugal, see Frederico Ágoas, "Governo, Ditadura e Ciências Sociais: O Caso Português," *Tempo Social* 31, no. 1 (2019): 263-276; João Leal, "Introdução à Antropologia e Revolução: do ISCSPU ao ISCSP," *Etnográfica* [Online], special number (2024): 99-106.

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