Transnational Education in Historical Perspective. The *Deutsche Kolonialschule* (1898-1944)

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Abstract
Transnational education (TNE) is widely viewed as focussing on a new form of educational practice specific to the globalised world of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This article explores the potential that a historical perspective can offer. Particular attention is due the political and societal context of colonialism. It focusses on the Deutsche Kolonialschule (German Colonial School) where young German men trained for a life overseas between 1898 and 1944. First, it gives a brief overview of the Kolonialschule's founding and development. The second part explores the various forms of cross-border networks and interconnections that it was part of. The third part analyses the intended types of education and training as well as the educational goals of the Kolonialschule. Fourth, a conclusion takes up the initial question looking at the potentials of a historical perspective on transnational education.

Keywords: transnational education, colonial education

Transnational Education in historischer Perspektive.
Die Deutsche Kolonialschule (1898-1944).

Zusammenfassung
Transnational education (TNE) gilt als neue, spezifische Erscheinungsform im Bildungswesen des globalisierten späten 20. und frühen 21. Jahrhunderts. Dieser Beitrag lotet das Potential einer historischen Betrachtungsweise unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rahmenbedingungen des Kolonialismus aus. Als Untersuchungsgegenstand dient die Deutsche Kolonialschule, die zwischen 1898 und 1944 junge Männer für ein Leben in Übersee ausbildete. Der erste Teil schildert die Gründung und Entwicklung der Lehranstalt. Zweitens geht es um Formen und Ausprägungen grenzüberschreitender Verflechtungen und Netzwerke, in welche sie eingebunden war. Der dritte Abschnitt fragt danach, welche Lehrinhalte vermittelt und welche Erziehungsziele angestrebt wurden. Viertens schließt ein Ausblick auf die Entwicklung der Schule nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg die Ausführungen ab.

Schlagwörter: transnational education, koloniale Erziehung

1 Introduction

The term transnational education (TNE) refers to a field of research that has been emerging since the early 2000s (*Kosmützky/Putty* 2016). It is widely viewed as focussing on a new form of educational practice specific to the globalised world of the late 20th and early 21st centuries (e.g. *Adick* 2005, p. 247). Following a definition put forward by UNESCO, it mainly comprises forms of instruction, mostly in tertiary education, in which learners are located in other countries than the institutions teaching them, or more broadly "...the mobility of education programs and providers between countries" (*Knight* 2016). With most of the research focussing on contemporary issues, the concept is rarely viewed or contextualised historically. History of Education, on the other hand, has not yet systematically adopted the concept of transnational education in its analyses. Although the field has increasingly been addressing transnational questions since the mid-2000s (*Roldán/ Fuchs* 2019), this research deployed theoretical and methodological approaches taken from historical research in pursuit of a transnational history of education rather than a history of transnational education. Its broad approach is aimed at understanding "...the circulation of ideas, people, institutions and technologies across state or national boundaries and thus the entanglement and mutual influence of states, societies and cultures." (*Vidal* 2017, p. 229).

The present contribution seeks to combine these disparate strands of research by exploring the potential that a historical perspective on transnational education offers. *Marianne Larsen* (2018, p. 101, 112f.) recently made an urgent appeal "...to bring historical research back into comparative education" in the form of transnational historiography, which she regards as the only form "...appropriate for our globalized age", for "our world of complex connections, flows, and entanglements." A shared basis and point of departure for these perspectives is offered by the definition of transnational education that *Christel Adick* (2018, p. 3) proposes: "TNE takes place in educational spaces organized […] across national borders in which people meet and act for the purpose of gaining or transmitting education". This is less strongly oriented towards the specific conditions of the early 21st century and, like transnational historiography, places emphasis on the crossing of national boundaries, on non-state actors and institutions, and on the educational intentions pursued by these actors.

The question as to what a historical perspective may contribute to our current understanding of transnational education can, in this contribution, only be answered by means of a case study. Its object will be the *Deutsche Kolonialschule* (German Colonial School) in Witzenhausen near Kassel in the north of Hesse. From 1898 to 1944, about 2,300 young men in their early 20s trained for a life overseas, especially in the German colonies. The school is particularly suited for study in the context of this special issue since it was founded specifically to provide an educational response to the challenges of rapidly accelerating globalisation around 1900. This is what the geographer *Friedrich Ratzel* referred to in 1884 when he wrote: "It is no longer possible today to define the term 'education' (*Bildung*) with the concept that prevailed not many years ago. *Anyone who wants to be vigorously active [in this world] needs an education that may truly be called global* (Weltbildung). This may be achieved inland as well, provided a people of the interior is aware of the sum of its overseas and global interests and exerts its powers accordingly" (*Ratzel* 1884, p. 13f., emphasis in the original)[1]. Moreover, as a college-like institution for

tertiary education, the *Kolonialschule* corresponds to current research focuses on transnational education (*Kosmützky/Putty* 2016, pp. 24f). Finally, it meets the three criteria *Adick* (2018, p. 3) established for TNE: The objective was education, ownership and accountability were private, and the interaction spanned "pluri-locally across national borders".

Historical research has taken an increasing interest in the school since the 1990s; the latest institutional history was provided by *Karsten Linne* in 2017. To date, the focus of these studies has been on colonial history while educational questions and parallels were treated more rarely. Among the latter, we need to mention case studies on the training of experts for work overseas (*Hoffmann* 1980) and on the question whether the Witzenhausen curricula showed rudiments of intercultural learning (*Gülstorff* 2010). No study has yet looked at it in the context of transnational education, however, which is the approach taken in this paper. In doing so, it follows recent trends to strengthen "…the association of empire and the transnational" in history of education (*Rogers* 2019, p. 104). The paper is divided into four parts. The first part provides a brief overview of the *Kolonialschule*'s founding and development under the Empire, Weimar Republic and Third Reich. This framework allows focusing on the *transnational* aspect and the aspect of *education* in two steps: The second part will thus explore the various forms of cross-border networks and interconnections the school was part of. It takes the concern of transnational history seriously in describing the institution as a nexus of transboundary relations. Particular attention is due to the political and societal context of colonialism, to equivalent schools in other empires and to the mobility of Witzenhausen graduates. The third part examines content and aims of the education offered at the *Kolonialschule*. What kind of curriculum was provided, what knowledge and skills were deemed necessary for a future life beyond German borders? And to what extent can this be labelled transnational? Fourth, a conclusion takes up the initial question looking at the potentials of a historical perspective on transnational education.

It is not the primary task of this contribution to produce unprecedented insight into the history of the *Kolonialschule* but rather to use it as a test case for exploring the potential of a historical dimension of transnational education. Therefore, the line of argument builds on the aforementioned literature and complements it with the analysis of documents from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. Historical science provides the methodological foundation for the latter by the long-established historical critique of sources (cf. *Hoffmann* 2018; *Glaser* 2010). The analysis draws mainly on the journal published by the school itself, *Der deutsche Kulturpionier* (The German Cultural Pioneer). All issues from 1900 to 1942 were studied systematically with regard to the matter in question, with additional samples taken from later years until 1960. Other publications and sources associated with the *Kolonialschule,* such as curricula and plans, were also taken into account.

2 The Founding and Development of the *Deutsche Kolonialschule*

One criterion for transnational education, as mentioned above, is the private ownership and accountability of the respective institution. This is true for the *Kolonialschule*. The impulse to establish such a school in Germany did not come from government or public institutions, but from civil society. A number of activists close to the German Colonial Society (*Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft)* that included entrepreneurs, missionaries, and

colonial administrators were instrumental in the process (cf. *Linne* 2017, pp. 25-35). The Empire unification of 1871 had boosted the German colonial movement whose proponents were organised in a number of associations in the late 1870s. Eventually, the influential pro-colonial umbrella organisation *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft,* founded in 1887, presented itself as the sole representative of colonial interests in the public arena. Germany was among the 'new' empires that emerged towards the end of the 19th century. The first protectorates (*Schutzgebiete*) were acquired in 1884, eventually comprising 13.5 million inhabitants on a surface area of 3 million square kilometres in Ostafrika (modern Tanzania), Cameroon, Togo, Südwestafrika (modern Namibia), German New Guinea, Samoa and the Jiaozhou concession (cf. *Gründer* 2018).

Founded in 1898, the *Kolonialschule* was located in a former monastery and estate in Witzenhausen in northern Hesse by the Werra River. Along with classrooms and accommodation, its extensive grounds included workshops and laboratories, gardens, conservatories for tropical plants, and a country estate located some distance away. On roughly 1,000 acres of land, the school farmed, kept livestock, and grew fruit, tobacco and wine. It was, in the words of the school's publication, "...a complete world in miniature" (Deutsche Kolonialschule [1912], p. 45). The purchase of the estate and the operation of the school were funded through donations and fees. At 1,400-1,600 marks annually, the latter were steep, though scholarships for indigent students existed. In addition, both the imperial and the Prussian governments provided subsidies. The school was established as a private limited company (*Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung*) and continued to be privately run, although both subsidies and influence by the government increased in the aftermath of the First World War. After 1939, direct supervision tightened yet further: Government representatives now chaired final exams, and graduates received the state-sanctioned title of government-examined colonial agriculturalist (*staatlich geprüfter Koloniallandwirt,* cf. *Böhlke* 1995, pp. 28ff.; *Linne* 2017, p. 27).

Despite such changes, the overall history of the school was one of remarkable continuity. This is embodied not least in the person of its first chairman, *Ernst Albert Fabarius* (1859-1927), who ran it from its founding to his death in 1927 (cf. *Böhlke* 1995, pp. 17ff.). His successor in 1928 was *Dr Wilhelm Arning* (1865-1943), a former military doctor who had served in Ostafrika and was replaced by the Nazi party member *Karl W. H. Koch* (1882-1970) in 1934. Finally, the ministry of science appointed *Reinhold Köster* (1892-?) to the position in 1940. He managed the school until all agricultural colleges were closed by government decree in 1944. It may seem surprising that the institution continued under its title of *Kolonialschule* well past the time Germany lost its colonial possessions. In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles transferred all former German colonies as mandate territories to the newly founded League of Nations. Shortly before, the impact of the First World War had been felt deeply in the school where a majority of students had volunteered for military service as soon as hostilities broke out. After teaching staff became liable for the draft in 1915/16, all teaching was suspended for the duration of the war (*Linne* 2017, p. 112). The school resumed classes after the end of the war, and its chairman *Fabarius* vigorously upheld its colonial purpose. He saw the role of the *Kolonialschule* not least in keeping colonial sentiment alive in the Weimar Republic and was not alone in this effort: Public outrage over purported allied lies on German colonial atrocities brought supporters to the colonial movement. Public memorials, memoirs and novels reminded the broader public of their cause. Throughout the 1920s, the colonies remained a

potent space for projections in the public imaginary of Germany (cf. *Gründer* 2018, pp. 253-278).

Fabarius argued that Germany needed to continue its engagement in the global economy even after its defeat in order to maintain and expand influence overseas. His school would help the country overcome the challenges of the new political reality. As a 'College of Internal and External Colonisation' (*Hochschule für In- und Auslandssiedlung*), its official title after 1918, it directed its attention on internal colonisation efforts but also educated Germans for settling in all parts of the world, contributing to the Germanness abroad (*Deutschtum im Ausland, Fabarius* 1921). *Fabarius* had suggested a role for his institution in a possible future German colonisation of Eastern Europe during the First World War, an idea that resurfaced periodically during the 1920s and 1930s and was propagated among others by *Richard Walther Darré* (1895-1953), a *Kolonialschule* alumnus and minister for food and agriculture in the National Socialist government (cf. *Sandler* 2016, p. 188f.).

With the advent of the National Socialist government and especially under the impression of German victories during the early years of the Second World War, hopes of regaining the colonies or even acquiring a greater colonial empire rose. For the regime, this consideration was secondary. The focus of their colonial ambitions lay not in the global South, but in Eastern Europe (cf. *Kienemann* 2018). Nonetheless, colonial activists from the early 1930s onwards embraced the idea of using Witzenhausen to train a future governing elite for a German empire overseas. As the events of the war increasingly impacted the school's activities (*Linne* 2017, p. 306), this became impossible. Student numbers fluctuated and both faculty and student body shrank. Teaching was suspended in 1943, and the buildings eventually served as a military hospital.

3 The *Kolonialschule* as a Nexus of Transnational Connections

The *Kolonialschule* was established to provide an educational response to the challenges of globalisation during that time. The years following 1880 can be described as a period of increasing and accelerating transnational connections and interactions between different regions of the world. The pace of globalisation now seemed to reach even into the most distant corners of Germany. In the perception of contemporaries, the world appeared to shrink as continents became linked in all imaginable aspects of their lives. The term *Welt* – global – gained currency in everyday parlance and ideas such as *Weltausstellung* (world fair)*, Weltzeit* (global reference time), *Welthandel* (global trade), *Weltpolitik* (global politics) – or, in the writings of the geographer *Ratzel*, *Weltinteressen* (global interests) and *Weltbildung* (global education) became familiar. People consumed exotic goods, *Kolonialwaren,* and encountered distant lands through travel literature, ethnological museums, exhibitions, and even in schools (cf. *Heyden/Zeller* 2007).

Colonial relations formed a distinct subset of these transnational relations that was formative for different types of cross-border exchanges during the high point of the colonial order between 1880 and 1960 (cf. *Conrad* 2012). Global economic relations were characterised by the asymmetric integration of non-European resources, labour and purchasing power. A large part of migration and settlement took place under colonial conditions. The cultural ordering of the world in contemporary eyes, too, was defined in colo-

nial terms through world fairs, missionary efforts, and dominant conceptions of modernisation, development and 'civilisation'. Europe's powers considered their superior position as the foundation of a mission to cultivate the soil and civilise the allegedly 'primitive' inhabitants of other parts of the world, both of which was expressed by the German term *kultivieren* (*Conrad* 2012).

The *Deutsche Kolonialschule* was tied into this web of colonially determined cross-border relationships at different levels and in a variety of ways. It can thus be described as a nexus in the intensifying transnational educational relations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They often took the shape of travel to study institutions abroad whose structure, facilities, curricula and teaching methods influenced reform projects at home (cf. *Kesper-Biermann* 2011). In 1898, as plans for the *Kolonialschule* took concrete shape, *Albert Fabarius* visited the Dutch National Agricultural College at Wageningen that had existed since 1876 and the Colonial College and Training Farms Limited in Hollesley Bay near Harwich founded in 1887 to study their curricula (cf. *Böhlke* 1995, p. 39; *Linne* 2017, p. 33f., *Hoffmann* 1980, pp. 35ff.). Representatives from other schools also sought to learn from the *Kolonialschule*: *Fabarius* writes that the *École Coloniale d'agriculture* in Tunis and the *École Coloniale d'enseignement pratique colonial* in Joinville-le-Pont near Paris were "...founded and designed following the example of the *Deutsche Kolonialschule*..." since earlier institutions were felt to "...no longer meet higher expectations for colonial education" (*Fabarius* 1902, p. 53). Requests for visits had also come from Italy, Belgium, Austria and Japan (*Böhlke* 1995, p. 97; Ausländische Kolonialschulen 1900). The interest of foreign governments ebbed after the loss of Germany's colonies in 1919, though.

Europe's colonial powers followed each other's methods in colonial education for officials and settlers with great interest. This was generated by a genuine desire to learn from each other as well as by mutual competition in both education and the acquisition and administration of colonies. Whereas Germany's education system enjoyed great international prestige (*Spidle* 1973, pp. 231f.), the Empire's success in colonial expansion was limited. This constellation was referred to again and again in contemporary discourses. *Louis Hamilton* (1911, p. 35), a Briton teaching at a university in Berlin, stated in 1911: "What is evident is that in education of the better class of Colonists Germany is ahead of all countries, as she always is in matters educational. Let us not forget that what is Germany to-day she owes to a great extent to a superior education in everything […] Germany has the education and not the Colonies, we have the Colonies and not the education". A defence of Witzenhausen's importance was given in its journal *Der deutsche Kulturpionier* in 1900: "The French have beaten us, the victors of Sedan, at Lake Chad, the English are sitting in Zanzibar; must the colonial ignorance and misfortune of the German people go so far as to see us defeated even in education when it becomes colonial?" (*Ausländische Kolonialschulen* 1900, p. 40) The goal of colonial education was not least to provide compatriots with a favourable starting point in the scramble for advancement overseas. As former instructor *Curt Winter* reminisced in 1956 (p. 30), the *Kolonialschule* had "...the ambition to give its students heading overseas, vis-a-vis those of foreign colonial schools, the starting position that the quality of their education entitled them to".

Cross-border graduate mobility proved to be a crucial factor for Witzenhausen's transnational relations, even though the students of the *Kolonialschule* were modest in numbers. Between 1899 and 1943, 2,308 young men attended the institution producing an average of 50 graduates a year. Two thirds of them studied there after the end of the First

World War, which indicates that the school had not lost its appeal despite the end of the German colonial empire[2]. Three quarters of its graduates headed abroad, although some of them returned to Germany after only a few years for various reasons. We know the destinations of 1,137 students (see table 1). Before the First World War, they preferred to go to the German colonies in Africa. Afterwards, until the ban on German immigration to the former colonies was lifted in the mid-1920s, many opted for Asia or South America.

Table 1: Destinations of *Kolonialschule* graduates[3]

Destinations of *Kolonialschule* graduates 1898-1938			
Region	*1898-1914*	*1919-1938*	*Total*
Africa	267	258	525 (46%)
South America	77	112	189 (17%)
Asia	19	106	125 (11%)
Central America	16	75	91 (8%)
North America	48	35	83 (7%)
Europe	14	66	80 (7%)
Australia/Oceania	38	6	44 (4%)
Total	*479*	*658*	*1137*

Although the majority of students came from Germany, some young men from other European countries as well as from Asia and Central America came to study at the *Kolonialschule* in the years following the First World War. Its student body itself was thus part of the transnational migrations to and from Europe in the first half of the 20th century. Attending Witzenhausen represented a step along this route for many who hoped to gain the necessary education to prepare themselves for an already intended emigration. Like other migrant communities, these men formed professional and personal networks over time. "Travelling through Africa," one of them reminisced in 1977, "you look through the address book of your old comrades in Southwest (Namibia) or South Africa or wherever else, and no matter where you go, you are connected through Witzenhausen, the spirit of comradeship has remained the same everywhere." (*Hoffmann* 1980, p. 319). The school's close ties with the German Colonial Society, many of whose members were colonial businessmen, also allowed it to provide its students with employment opportunities. The *Kolonialschule* actively fostered the *esprit de corps* it prided itself on through networking and alumni relations. A formal association of alumni (*Kameradschaftsverband*) was founded in 1906, but as early as 1900, copies of its journal *Der deutsche Kulturpionier* were mailed to "...comrades, friends and benefactors..." throughout the world as "...a spiritual, yet visibly effective bond" (Zur Einführung 1900). Former students often felt a permanent connection to their school, kept up correspondence for years and sometimes visited again. Selected letters were printed in the *Kulturpionier* or read out to the student body on weekly occasions (*Bindel* 1923, p. 27). This also served as a quick conduit of information from abroad. The school's collection of teaching materials from overseas was partly stocked by donations from alumni, too (*Böhlke* 1995, p. 63). It served above all to provide samples for scientific instruction.

4 Training the German Cultural Pioneer

"By 1913 the Reich had developed colonial research and training institutes on a scale absolutely unrivalled by any of the other imperial powers of Europe", historian *Jake Spidle* (1973, p. 232) concluded. More than 30 universities and colleges offered colonial curricula to (male) students, while dedicated Colonial Women's Schools (*Kolonialfrauenschulen)* catered to women emigrants (*Spidle* 1973, p. 243). The most important such institutions were the Seminar for Oriental Languages *(Seminar für orientalische Sprachen)* in Berlin founded in 1887, the Hamburg Colonial Institute *(Hamburgisches Kolonialinstitut)* opened in 1908, and not least the *Deutsche Kolonialschule*. All these institutes followed different course designs and curricula in the pursuit of different goals. To what extent can we speak of transnational education here, though? The colonial school in Witzenhausen was based in Germany and attended mostly by Germans, though their aim was individual emigration after graduation. Transnational orientation is therefore mainly found in the curricular content, which was intended to meet the requirements of an increasingly globalised and colonialised world. Although the German colonies were mentioned in geography lessons in all public schools of Germany, their overall significance was limited (cf. *Bowersox* 2013, pp. 53-80). This was one reason why, as non-state activists around Fabarius argued, both settlers and colonial administrators were inadequately prepared to live and work in *Deutschland überm Meer*, Germany's overseas territories.

The goal of the *Kolonialschule* was to prepare German cultural pioneers (*deutsche Kulturpioniere*) for life overseas as future farmers, planters, plantation managers, ranchers and vintners in tropical and subtropical regions. Culture and cultivation in this context are to be understood in the sense of contemporary agrarian ideology on two interconnected levels of meaning (*Lerp* 2016, pp. 190-210, *Kundrus* 2003, p. 174). According to this view, also held by the founder *Fabarius*, there is a close interdependency between the character of a people and the country on which it lives; a specific form of using nature was perceived to be a part of national and cultural identity. The soil, so this popular opinion, is shaped by those who worked it. Any ground outside the German Empire could thus become 'German' through physical cultivating land seizure, but it would only remain 'German', if German settlers took permanent possession and kept cultivating it. Besides, a function as "true bearers of German culture" (graduate of the *Kolonialschule* 1938, quoted from *Linne* 2017, p. 199) in terms of civilizational superiority was attributed to the settlers solely because of their origin and lifestyle. The effective treatment of the soil, in turn, was considered a particular characteristic of European progressiveness (*Lerp* 2016, p. 185). Thus, the *Kolonialschule* intended to lay the foundations for this dual understanding of 'cultivation' by way of its curriculum.

Most began their studies at the age of 19 or 20, a fact that school management and faculty perceived as a particular educational challenge. The high fees were not only needed to fund the institution, but also served as a means of social selection ensuring that only "sons of the best families", referring mainly to the middle class, attended (Deutsche Kolonialschule [1912], p. 7). Its self-proclaimed educational mission went far beyond imparting knowledge; the goal was to form the entire personality of its students. The curriculum was holistically designed to encompass what was referred to as theoretical knowledge and practical work as well as moral and character education (*sittliche und Charakterbildung*).

A wide range of theoretical knowledge deemed necessary for German cultural pioneers was taught in a four-semester course of study (cf. *Böhlke* 1995, pp. 77-85). Specialisation was avoided in favour of a generalist education for colonial purposes. Students were instructed in general or cultural subjects (*allgemeinbildende Fächer* or *Kulturwissenschaften)* that comprised colonial law, colonial policy, ethnology (including ethnogeny, *Rassenkunde,* under National Socialist administration), religious history, and commercial geography. The science curriculum included botany, zoology, mineralogy, geology and chemistry. In addition, there were classes in tropical medicine, economic and technical subjects such as house construction, and theoretical instruction in various fields of agriculture. Finally, the school offered physical education and various languages, among them English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and Swahili. The instructors in the various courses were often recognised experts with regular positions at the nearby university in Göttingen or the forestry academy in Hannoversch Münden (cf. *Linne* 2017, pp. 44ff.). Chairman *Fabarius* in particular was keen to emphasise the academic character of his institution, but even though the formal title Colonial Academy (*Kolonialhochschule)* was officially granted in 1924, it did not progress above the level of an agricultural college in the depth and scope of its education This is evident not least from the fact that prospective students were not required to have the *Abitur*, the highest of secondary school certificates (*Hoffmann* 1980, p. 107).

Theoretical and practical instruction was generally given equal time at the *Kolonialschule*. In practice, this meant theoretical classes were taught in the morning while practical instruction in technical and agricultural subjects took place during afternoon hours. In sum, the students were kept busy from 6:00/7:00h a.m. until 6:00/7:00h p.m. on six days a week (*Djomo* 2007, p. 172). Work in agriculture, conservatories, a smithy and a wood workshop were included to prepare graduates for a life of self-sufficiency in colonial environments where a wide range of basic practical skills would be required. The repeatedly stated concern of the school administration was to avoid turning out overeducated, brainy but practically useless "cultural pioneers in patent leather boots" (*Kulturpioniere in Lackstiefeln*, Deutsche Kolonialschule [1912], p. 41).

Physical vigour, by contrast, was emphasised and the suitability of candidates for practical work was a central criterion for admittance. All candidates who had not either completed the *Abitur* or a vocational training were required to spend a one-year apprenticeship at the school. This provided both cheap labour and the opportunity to judge whether prospective students were equal to the physical requirements of their future careers. The same purpose justified the lengthy trial period at the beginning of the regular two-year course. As the 1920 *Koloniallexikon* records, it was intended to "...remove unsound, lazy, spoiled and physically inadequate elements in a timely fashion" (*von König* 1920). The management made liberal use of this option: Until 1912, *Fabarius* expelled about a third of all new students on average. Altogether, 40% of students left without graduating (*Hulverscheidt* 2015, p. 349). This was not least done to counter the common prejudice that the colonies were the destination of choice for the failed and deficient (*Kundrus* 2003, p. 60). "Model pupils and mommy's boys are unsuited for colonial service, but so are the many weak and shiftless characters who hope to lead the unfettered life of a master overseas", Chairman *Köster* declared in 1940 (quoted after *Linne* 2017, p. 234). Correspondingly, the character education of the Witzenhausen students was considered all the more important.

It was not least to this end that the *Kolonialschule* was designed as a boarding school. Keeping the students under supervision day and night would allow the staff to mould their

character and conduct thoroughly. The heavy workload left little enough room for outside activities, and leisure pursuits were strictly regimented. Recurring problems were posed by students' visits to public houses, alcohol consumption, and sexual conduct (*Linne* 2017, pp. 69-74). Any violation of the house rules with their emphasis on order, discipline and submission to authority was sanctioned harshly, often by summary expulsion. Ensuring compliance was not left to the faculty alone; students were expected to monitor and positively influence each other. Honour and comradeship were upheld as key values, enforced not least through internal disciplinary courts (*Ehrengerichte*) run by the student body (cf. *Linne* 2017, pp. 66f.; *Böhlke* 1995, p. 86). The methods and goals of this character education closely followed military lines. A strict and unyielding enforcement of discipline led to conflicts between the faculty and students that culminated in the so-called student strike (*Schülerstreik)* of 1909 (*Linne* 2017, pp. 42-44).

5 Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore the potential of a historical perspective on transnational education, focussing on the *Kolonialschule* as a case study. This institution was non-governmental with a transnational orientation mainly embedded in the curriculum and character education that prepared German cultural pioneers for a life overseas. Involved in multiple transnational interconnections, it intended to meet the requirements of an increasingly globalised world with graduate mobility as a key factor. With regard to current definitions of transnational education, the *Kolonialschule* is not a case of "the mobility of education programs and providers between countries" (*Knight* 2016). Such a type is, in historical perspective, more likely to be found in German schools abroad (cf. *Kuchler* 2016; *Herzner* 2018). They emerged in the mid-19th century and gained in significance after the foundation of the German Empire. Offering a German curriculum and German exams in foreign countries, these private but government-subsidised institutions were regarded as part of foreign policy. With the *Kolonialschule* they shared the mission to propagate Germanness abroad and the fact that transnational education "never meant education on the basis of an equal partnership" (*Herzner* 2018, p. 23).

In spite of the differences between past and present times, however, the case study presented in this paper may stimulate contemporary reflection on transnational education in three ways. First, it serves to illuminate the precursors and traditions of contemporary forms of transnational education, for example in German schools abroad. With regard to the *Kolonialschule*, its history did not end in 1944. The institution continued after the Second World War (*Sandler* 2016, p. 206). In 1957, it was renamed *Deutsches Institut für Tropische und Subtropische Landwirtschaft* (German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture, DITSL). Assessing the situation in his preliminary provisions (*Vorläufige Bestimmungen*), *Curt Winter*, the son-in-law of longtime *Kolonialschule* chairman *Fabarius* and faculty member in the 1920s, stated that the purpose of the new institute showed "...no evident change from that of the old DKS [*Deutsche Kolonialschule*, SKB]". The opening ceremony was attended by 75 alumni of the old school (*Winter* 1956, p. 22, 66). The DITSL trained German experts in 'development aid'. From the 1960s onwards, students from so-called Third World countries also attended, at times accounting for one third of the entire student body. Training courses specifically designed for experts from

the global South were offered later on (cf. *Linne* 2017, pp. 385-389, 437-440, 463-465). In 1971, the institute was incorporated into the new *Gesamthochschule* Kassel where it now closely cooperates with the department of ecological and agricultural sciences.

Second, the study of the past can sensitise us for the importance of asymmetries and hierarchies of power, particularly with regard to the "shades of colonialism" (*Ling* et al. 2014, p. 48) that generally deserve more attention than they were previously given in the study of transnational education. The context in which the institution studied here developed was shaped by colonialism. Researchers spoke of a colonial pedagogy specific to Witzenhausen (e.g. *Hoffmann* 1980, p. 110; *Spidle* 1973, p. 240). Colonial activists meant that the entire German population should receive a 'colonial education'. To them, the *Kolonialschule* was only part of a wider project (cf. *Dernburg* 1907). It based on the unquestioned conviction that European and German civilisation was superior and thus had to shoulder a broadly defined civilising mission. Cooperation among all participants was never intended on equal terms. The *Kolonialschule* would educate not only its students, but through them the indigenous people overseas. *Fabarius* especially viewed ethnological studies as a form of "applied pedagogics" through which workers and "children of nature" in the colonies would be educated (*Fabarius* 1900, p. 46). Transnational education thus also meant the forcible transfer of knowledge, economic practices and culture to distant parts of the world. Many British-run educational institutions today are found in former parts of the Empire, and in 2013, the majority of foreign students in French universities still hailed from former French colonies in North Africa. The syllabi and curricula of transnational education can thus still profitably be studied with a view to which knowledge they consider worthwhile and how they view the relationship between centre and periphery (*Sidhu* 2015), "challenging the ideological or normative underpinnings" that are predominantly disregarded in current scholarship on the topic (*Kosmützky/Putty* 2016, p. 22).

Yet the historical analysis of transnational education can also shed light, third, on the complex relationship between nation and transnationality. The pedagogical concept espoused by the *Kolonialschule* emphasised the otherness of life in Germany's overseas territories and thus permanently drew its students' attention past the borders of Germany. At the same time, engagement with this otherness allowed them to develop a definition of their own selves (cf. *Gülstorff* 2010). This interaction between colonial discourses and identity creation in the metropole was frequently addressed in History of Education research (e.g. *Goodman* et al. 2009). Since it defines its purpose not as "...deconstructing national history but of contextualizing it", and intends to examine "the development of the nation as a global phenomenon" (*Fuchs* 2014, p. 15), History of Education has emphasised the importance of the nation and the nation state, asking what transnational processes in education contributed to the development and stabilisation of nations. In the case of the *Kolonialschule*, part of this was the conviction of superiority over cultures outside of Europe. The curriculum (*Anstaltsplan)* of 1912 states that students were to be imbued with the advantages of "European Christian" and above all "Germanic" and "German Protestant" culture, and that the creation of a "national ethos" (*nationale Gesinnung*) was a central goal (Deutsche Kolonialschule [1912], p. 48). Although the nationalist thrust in the curriculum intensified after 1918 and again after 1933, it did not take on an entirely new quality in this regard. Viewed from a historical perspective, it is clear that transnational connections in education do not necessarily lead to the overcoming or transcending of national boundaries. Instead, the first half of the 20th century saw an unproblematic coexistence of (excessive) nationalism and what contemporaries knew as internationalism (*Internationalismus*).

Notes

1 All quotations from German are my translations into English.
2 The following figures follow *Hulverscheidt* 2015, p. 349, *Böhlke* 1995 and *Linne* 2017, who differ in some details.
3 Figures follow *Hulverscheidt* 2015, p. 349.

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