

World Society and the Expansion of the Colonization Institution into Africa

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Abstract *This article utilizes English school theory to examine European engagement with Africa between 1870 and 1908. I employ the concepts world society, institution, and, to a degree, international society, to investigate how the African interior, a land previously of little concern to the states of international society, was rapidly brought under European control via the colonization institution during this relatively brief period. Such a study brings much needed empirical discussion of the colonization institution to the English school framework, and moreover, ultimately offers innovative theoretical insights into the institution concept. Specifically, I firstly argue that colonization has been an institution of international society dating back centuries, and moreover, I demonstrate that, over these centuries, the institution has manifest itself in various forms given its evolutionary lifecycle. Thereafter, I examine how the ‘Scramble for Africa’ represented a distinct evolutionary phase of the colonization institution, distinct because this phase was driven by World Society. These findings ultimately point to a larger theoretical argument relating specifically to the importance World Society may have for the institution concept; namely, world society can drive, be central to the evolution of, and expand, an existing institution.*

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Introduction

It would appear a relatively uncontested argument amongst English school (ES) scholars that colonialism was, for many centuries, an institution of international society. Recently, Buzan noted “colonialism was a derivative institution of international society up to 1945” (2004, 183); Holsti contended that colonialism was a defining institution of late 19th century Europe (2002, 32); Keene explored colonization in North America, the East Indies, and American westward expansion in the institution framework (2002); and Little, Jackson (1993), Mayall (1990) and perhaps Rosenberg (1994) all have made reference to colonialism as an institution. Paradoxically however, the ES as a whole offers remarkably little empirical research into colonization, and thus, the idea of a colonization institution is seemingly taken for granted within the school given the argument’s scant historical and/or empirical backing. To speak of institutions in more general terms, it is generally accepted within the ES literature that institutions are evolved social practices, constitutive of international society’s member states. Yet is it representative to claim that such significant and large scale practices evolve and/or emerge *simply* in accordance with state activity? More pointedly, it seems a common sense notion to suggest that non-state elements play a role in how institutions evolve and/or become practices. This possibility has – to date – received no empirical or theoretical attention within the ES literature.

The purpose of this article is to tackle these shortcomings. It does so by empirically investigating the ‘Scramble for Africa’ as a distinct evolutionary phase of the longstanding colonization institution, and argues that the distinctness of the 19th century scramble is tied to the extensive role played by World Society in expanding this institution into Africa. Such an investigation not only offers much needed empirical understanding of how this important stage of colonization fits into the ES’s institutional framework, but its theoretical argument ultimately enhances the very notion of institution itself by examining the concept in conjunction with World Society. To flesh out these arguments and contributions, the first section works towards a definition of the colonization institution by, very briefly, examining a variety of historical practices which resemble colonization, and then reflecting upon them via the ES’s established theoretical claims. The second section shifts to the African context between 1870 and 1885; it examines the overt tensions which existed between, firstly, a core group of non-state actors who pushed for the colonization of Africa and, secondly, a group of states in international society who were relatively reluctant to get involved in

colonization. The third section examines how this tension played out between 1885 and 1908. The fourth concludes by assessing how the scramble fits into the broader history of the colonization institution, by explaining how World society fits into this specific evolutionary phase, and by reflecting upon the ES notion of institution more generally.

Defining the colonization institution

Even superficial study of the history of international politics will demonstrate that, across the globe, colonization has, in some form or another, been a widespread practice in international relations. In this sense colonization has taken various forms, from territorial expansion, to the formal occupation of new lands, to perhaps the establishment of tributaries. It is quite clear that more extensive research into this history of colonization as a social practice in international relations is necessary, and it is unfortunate that such an immense task is beyond the possibilities of this article. In this section, I aim to provide a working definition of the colonization institution to use in the context of this article, and to also briefly review possible forms of colonization in history so as to inform this definition. Such an approach not only helps build a definition, but also highlights possible forms of colonization which predated the scramble for Africa.

To begin by providing a standard definition of colonization to build upon, the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) describes the practice as the settling of a new area with colonists who thereafter form a community which is subject to, or connected with, a parent state. With this in mind, perhaps an interesting way to begin historical discussion of the possible forms of colonization in world history is with Ancient China, an area and period which has drawn a surprising amount of interest from the ES; see Buzan (2010), Suzuki (2009), Watson (1992), and Zhang (2001) for instance. Watson (1992) argues that between 230 and 221 BC, the Qin violently defeated and subsequently penetrated all other states in the Chinese region and set about instilling their own traditions; in this sense resembling colonization. Zhang (2001) and Suzuki (2009) talk of the tribute system as the fundamental Chinese institution post-221 BC. While the tribute system's basic presumption was that the Chinese culture was superior (Zhang 2001, 52), there was a general acceptance of this system by all states involved and there seems to be little evidence that colonists settled in new areas in an effort to build new communities, though there was certainly a practice of enculturation. In this sense, the Chinese tribute system did not feature colonists, but did feature a parent

state, and thus ultimately bears some similarities with what may be referred to as colonization. By contrast, colonization in early African polities was more diverse than that of China. In African tributary arrangements, for instance, there was clearly a parent state present (the Akan in the early 16th century West Africa for example); yet there was an absence of colonists (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1970). African empires such as the Ashanti or Zulu were different, as they actively conquered surrounding territory and established structures there. During the age of discovery, European activity in the new world is again slightly different and perhaps maps onto the above definition more readily, especially when considering the development of state sponsored colonies (Russell 1995). This all serves to demonstrate that practices which resemble a standard definition of colonization have an expansive history in international relations. Yet it is clear that, given the variety of, and diversity in, these practices, this standard definition will have shortcomings if employed within the context of international relations theory. As such, from the perspective of this article, this definition needs to be reworked in accordance with the ES's preexisting understanding of institutions.

Coming from an ES perspective, I accept that an institution is characterized by a remarkably long lifecycle, and that this long lifecycle is the product of an institution's ability to change and evolve in accordance with international politics (Buzan 2004; Holsti 2002). Of course, institutions also serve to constitute members of international society. Taking these features onboard, it is fairly obvious that one is unlikely to see an identical form of colonization carrying over from 221 BC through the 20th century, and the above discussion reinforces this. This notwithstanding, given institutional longevity minor differences or changes in a shared practice of international society does not imply that one is talking of a completely different institution. With all this in mind, how then do I define the colonization institution? Essentially, the colonization institution describes a shared practice of an international society's member states wherein new societies are established, or old societies are altered, in an area previously outside the bounds of that international society for economic, social and/or political reasons; colonists may be involved in this practice, and the resulting relationship which emerges is that of a parent and subject state. What this definition fails to get at, however, is how the colonization institution has evolved and expanded over the course of world history. Indeed, such an inquiry is for the empirical realm. Towards this end, I now provide in depth discussion of the form the colonization

institution took during the scramble. In the conclusion, this discussion, in conjunction with this section's general historical background, will be used to reflect upon how the scramble for Africa represents a specific evolutionary phase within the colonization institution's wider history.

The colonization institution and the Scramble for Africa:

A world society of colonizers and an 'anti-colonial' international society at the Berlin Conference (1870-85)

Before examining the colonization institution in the context of the scramble for Africa, it is necessary to first clarify how I understand the concept of World Society and thus how it is used below.

In effort to operationalize the notoriously slippery World Society concept, this study takes the level initially to be the non-state world in its entirety, thereby emphasizing the desirability of the state/non-state divide (Buzan 2004). Given this vast scope, I assert that it is necessary to zero in on instances wherein individuals are bound by shared values and shared practices: the term value is taken in the social sense, meaning the "moral principles and beliefs or accepted standards of a person or social group" (Buzan 2004, 164); by practice, I mean the actual application or use of an idea, belief, value or method, as opposed to simply the principles of it. Using this conception it is possible to examine the degree to which specific values and practices serve to constitute distinct world societies of individuals, and thereafter explore how these specific values and practices dictate a distinct world society's engagement with international politics more widely. Thus World Society – as the non-state level of international politics¹ (Little 2009) – amounts to an aggregate of distinct individual world societies which are constituted by specific values and practices; such an understanding is hinted on by Clark (2007). Conceptualized in this manner, individual world societies prove to be flexible, diverse in their level of connectivity, and moreover, relate to international politics in diverse ways.

Quite apparently, this conceptualization represents a marked departure from the more normative visions of ES theory and World Society put forth in other ES works; perhaps Bull (2002), Linklater and Suganami (2005), and Dunne and Wheeler (1998) for instance. Yet

¹ Note the use of capitalization when referring World Society as a level of international politics, and the use of lower case when referring to distinct world societies.

the reality is, however, that just such a constellation of individuals bound into a distinct world society was in existence, and also hugely influential, during the scramble for Africa.

A world society of colonizers

It was chiefly between 1870-85 during which a world society of colonizers came into force across Europe and Africa. One of the more interesting members of this society was King Leopold II of the Belgians, a 'king' who was in reality a figurehead unable to appoint a teacher in Belgium (Stengers 1988). Given his lack of domestic power, Leopold saw it as his kingly duty to bestow upon the Belgian people a formal colonial possession wherefrom resources could be extracted, profits could be made through economic exploitation, and the Belgian nation could be aggrandized (Anstey 1966; Collins 1968). In an effort to put these values into practice, Leopold's first attempt was to purchase Portuguese East Africa in 1873, an area long held by the Portuguese from the days of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Curtin 1971). That Leopold's attention gravitated towards Africa in these years was not an isolated phenomenon; by the mid-1870s European explorers were stampeding across the continent in an effort to secure territory for their nation whether their activity was sanctioned by home governments or not. In the Congo region alone, the French explorer de Brazza (Gifford and Louis 1971), the Portuguese through their 15th century squatting rights (Russell 1995), and the British, through the entrepreneur Mackinnon and the explorer Lovett Cameron, all potentially had claims through various treaties signed with native chiefs. Moreover, German merchants and explorers such as FAE Luderitz and Karl Peters were active on the west and east coast, respectively (Cornevin 1969, 405; Dawson 1919, 213). All of these explorers, in similar fashion to Leopold, were lured into Africa by promises of resources, economic exploitation, and national aggrandizement (Robinson and Gallagher 1960).

This multitude of individuals venturing across Africa created a complicated and problematic landscape which needed to be resolved, and Leopold set about doing so by organizing, in September 1876, the *International Geographical Conference*. The Conference gathered delegates from England, France, Germany, Austria, Italy and Russia, as well as a multitude of the aforementioned explorers (Ascherson 1963, 93). Leopold presided over the Conference and set the agenda in his idealistic opening address, he noted "the subject which unites us today is one of those which deserve to the highest degree to occupy the

friends of humanity... to open to civilization the only part of our globe where it has not yet penetrated" (MacDonnell 1905, 94). The most significant outcome of the Conference was the establishment of the *Association Internationale pour reprimer la traite et ouvrir l'Afrique central* (henceforth AIA). The AIA was an international body, divided into an international committee and supportive national committees, created to facilitate and order a multilateral, non-state approach to the exploration of the African interior; Leopold was elected president.²

Immediately following the Conference, the AIA slowly eroded into a hollow shell of an organization which ultimately exercised no control over European explorers.³ Instead explorers renewed their dreams of formal colonial possession, economic exploitation and the national aggrandizement of their respective nations in vigor; so too did Leopold. In 1877 Leopold employed the services of the famed explorer Henry Stanley under the AIA's dwindling, though intact, international and multilateral smokescreen.⁴ In the five years of that followed this partnership's beginnings, no less than six expeditions under Stanley's command set out from Zanzibar and Tanzania; they cost Leopold 11,500,000 francs (Stengers 1988, 235). More widely, the aforementioned Cameron set out to convince the British parliament that colonization of the African interior – specifically the Congo region – would be a worthwhile and profitable venture; he failed (Ascherson 1963, 89). Similarly, the Frenchmen de Brazza continually pushed his home government into ratifying his treaties with Chief Makoko (Sanderson 1965, 6). Interestingly, beyond these explorers there were domestic pressure groups and merchants who emerged at this time, non-state actors who were driven largely by the same values as these explorers.

Germany provides a good study of how pressure groups and merchants emerged within the context of the values and practices already shared amongst explorers in the world society of colonizers. Domestically, Germany suffered from a weak political structure

² National committees were established in Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Russia, Holland, Portugal, and Belgium (MacDonnell 1905, 109).

³ To the Belgian Committee, Leopold said it was "advisable that you should avoid intervening in AIA affairs" (Ascherson 1963, 98).

⁴ Regarding the employment of Stanley, Leopold wrote "I think that if I entrusted Stanley publicly with the job of taking over part of Africa in my own name, the English would stop me. If I consult them, they will again try to stop me. So I think that at first I shall give Stanley an exploring job which will not offend anybody, and will provide us with some posts" (Ascherson 1963, 104).

and a chaotic economic situation; such conditions bred pro-colonial sentiment.⁵ Politically speaking, the *German Colonization Society* (1873) and the *German African Society* (1876) emerged around beliefs and values which are already familiar to the reader, pan-Germanism (or national aggrandizement), and the belief that formal colonization would prove that Germany was one of Europe's powers. The dwindling few who remained anti-colonial were disparagingly labeled 'un-German' or 'anti-nationalist' (Bade 1988, 129). Economically speaking, continuing crises spawned pressure groups which united struggling farmers and steel workers under the protectionist/anti-free trade umbrella, as they saw European free trade as a central cause of the depressions. These groups, such as the *Central Association for Commercial Geography and the Promotion of German Interests Abroad* (1868), the *German Society for Colonization and Export* (1873) and the *Deutsche Kolonialverein* (1882), were created in hopes to turn public opinion in favor of formal colonization, and argued that the key to resolving the nation's economic problems was for the government to acquire new African outlets for export (Bade 1988, 124; von Strandmann 1969, 151; Wehler 1970, 132). These economic beliefs were fueled by merchants – Luderitz, Hubbe-Schleide, von Weber, and Woermann for instance – who were successfully establishing links across Africa, including in Cameroon, West Africa, and Angra Pequena (Cornevin 1969, 398; Bade 1988, 121).

Finally, beyond the political and economic values which drove these explorers, merchants and pressure groups push for colonization, an intellectual movement which embraced the tenants of Social Darwinist theory was adding fuel to the fire and becoming increasingly fashionable not only in Germany, but amongst the European public more widely. Social Darwinism was a popular ideology amongst European intellectuals which applied a competitive view of nature and Darwin's concept of the struggle for existence to the social world (Weikart 1993, 469). In addition, Social Darwinism featured themes such as the innate superiority/inferiority of certain races, and the idea that there was no morality except self fulfillment (Marlowe 1972, 62). Some writers, such as Otto Ammon, went as far as to glorify war and imperial conquest as an essential means of proving which nation or

⁵ Politically, the overarching issues facing the newly united Germany were its citizens' lack of a coherent national identity, and the tremendously fractured political party system (Bade 1988; von Strandmann 1969; Wehler 1970). Economically, the Germans suffered from waves of economic crises, the most significant of which was the depression of 1882. This wave led to an industrial crash which, rightly or wrongly, the public blamed on both overproduction and free trade policies (Bade 1988, 122; Wehler 1970, 121).

race was superior (Weikart 1993, 482). Such sentiments served to further justify world society activity by scientifically legitimizing the idea that black African's were inferior to white Europeans.

Thus despite the competitive relationship between all these non-state actors, it is quite clear that they were bound by shared values and shared practices to the extent that they may be called a world society of colonizers. Explorers, merchants and pressure groups across Europe and Africa held firm to values such as economic exploitation, national aggrandizement and Social Darwinism, and these values transitioned into the practice of pegging claims in Africa, drawing treaties with chiefs, and hopes of formal colonization. Yet as this world society of colonizers gathered strength, a clear tension was emerging; the world society of colonizers values and practices contrasted with the values of many of international society's member states.

An 'anti-colonial' international society at the Berlin Conference

As the world society of colonizers was coming into force, simultaneously an increasingly sharp conflict relating to how to engage with the African interior was emerging between this world society and European governments. On the one hand, the explorers and individuals constituting the world society of colonizers held values based upon economic exploitation, national aggrandizement, Social Darwinism and most importantly, believed these values could only be fulfilled through formal colonization; this tension emerged most dramatically in Otto von Bismarck's Germany.

From 1871-84, German foreign policy was dictated by chancellor Bismarck's vehement anti-colonial stance (Turner 1967, 47). Indeed, even before 1871 the chancellor rejected even the most attractive of colonial schemes on the grounds that they were a matter for private enterprise, not government (Berghahn 2005). For example, Bismarck rejected a request by the Sultan of Zanzibar for imperial protection in 1874, declined a Hamburg firm's request for a West African consulate-general, and actively encouraged France to acquire Tunis from 1878 (Dawson 1919, 174-176). Bismarck's correspondences and speeches, as well as the accounts of his political contemporaries, reveal the

steadfastness of the chancellor's position (Schoenfeld 1905).⁶ The reasons for Bismarck's refusals were made quite clear, and the common theme running amongst them was that colonial possessions were expensive luxuries which Germany could not afford (Lee 1999, 43; Williamson 1998, 81); colonies demanded a high cost of administration (Dawson 1919, 192), and required a strong navy to provide security (Lee 1999, 51; Turner 1967, 53). Yet while Bismarck was clearly opposed to *formal* colonial rule he was an adamant champion of private enterprise, commercial development and free trade (Wehler 1970, 123; Williamson 1998, 81); between 1871 and 1884 Bismarck encouraged German traders and business interests to invest overseas (Bade 1988, 124; von Strandmann 1969, 148). Despite Bismarck's firm anti-colonial stance, on 31 April 1883, the aforementioned Luderitz purchased Angra Pequena for £100 and 60 rifles (Schreuder 1980, 117); moreover, during a ten day span in 1884, the aforementioned Peters managed to secure 60,000 square miles of African territory (Hayes 1980, 46). All this, remember, was occurring while other explorers were rushing around Africa, merchants were establishing commercial links with the interior, and pressure groups were pushing for formal colonization.

The argument here, then, is that this relentless world society activity forced the Berlin Conference. Seen in this light, the Berlin Conference was principally international society's member states response to the world society of colonizers activity and pressures. Thus in 1884, Bismarck and the French Foreign Minister Jules Ferry announced to the world powers their plans for a Conference. The proceedings of the conference, and its outcomes, reveal the bulk of international society's anti-colonial side.

Europe's convening at the Berlin Conference demonstrates that the African interior, a once distant land of concern only to European explorers and merchants, could no longer be a region which was both on the periphery of international society's discussion, and engaged with exclusively at the World Society level; international society had to get involved. Thus on 15 November 1884 with 14 nations in attendance, the Conference of Berlin began – the central players attending were England, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and the United States (Gifford and Louis 1971, 192). International society

⁶ In 1873 Bismarck noted he "consistently pursued a policy of not seeking the acquisition of territory outside Europe" (Wehler 1970, 128); in 1880 Bismarck's advisor, Hohenlohe-Schillingsfurst, noted "the chancellor refuses to talk of colonies" (Lee 1999, 51); in 1884 Lord Sanderson, a member of the British Foreign Office, wrote in his memoirs that "Prince Bismarck was personally opposed to German colonization. He therefore encouraged us to make fresh annexations on the West Coast of Africa" (Taylor 1967, 4-5).

convened in hopes of resolving several pressing issues; of main concern to this article are the issues surrounding the Congo territory. In the first instance, the issue was simply what should be done with the territory, as the Congo not only represented the largest portion of Africa's interior, but also featured a tremendous amount of claims. Finding a mutually beneficial way to deal with this territory was one of the biggest issues in need of resolution by the states of international society. Interlocked with this question was how the AIA should be dealt with. While the AIA was a hollow entity at the time of the Conference, its image as an international humanitarian organization remained intact, so much so that several states of international society recognized the AIA as an 'international entity' just before the Conference.⁷ Aside from the Congo issue, the nations in attendance additionally needed to resolve the issue of trade, and central to this was the preservation of equal access to the wealth of Africa and to the avenues for this wealth, rivers (Robinson 1988, 11). For four months representatives of international society worked collectively to resolve these issues.

A critical analysis of General Act of 26 February 1885 is now prudent, and such an exercise will provide penetrating insights into the values and intended practices of international society in regards to Africa. The chief argument put forth here is that the resolutions reached at the Conference were designed to prevent formal colonization (Robinson 1988).

If one examines the central concerns of the Conference it becomes evident that international society's decisions were designed to curb – or at least avoid the need for – future partitions; I draw upon the emphasis placed upon free trade, the centrality of free navigation of the Congo and Niger Rivers, and the decision to recognize the AIA as a sovereign entity in charge of the Congo Free State (Robinson 1988). These resolutions indeed suggest that the states of international society shared the desire to draw mineral wealth and natural resources out of Africa's interior, but more importantly, they reveal that the powers recognized formal colonization as an expensive and less-desirable alternative to the inexpensive, more easily employed practices of free trade and private enterprise. Evidence in defense of this argument is found throughout the General Act: in regards to free trade, Chapter I reads "the trade of all nations shall enjoy complete freedom" and moreover, "all flags, without the distinction of nationality, shall have free access"

⁷ The AIA was recognized as such by the United States, Germany and France.

(MacDonnell 1905, 150). To reinforce this, the signatories also ensured equal access to the Congo and Niger rivers. Beyond the importance attached to free trade and freedom of navigation, perhaps the most convincing piece of evidence which defends the notion of an ‘anti-colonial’ international society was the story of the Congo Free State. If formal colonization was in the interests of the states of international society, why was such a large piece of territory given to the largely insignificant King Leopold II of the Belgians and his ‘international’ organization? The answer is as revealing as it is simple. Leopold assured all signatories he would fulfill three promises: the area would be open to the trade of all nations (hence Congo *Free State*); Leopold himself would bear the expenses of administration; and Leopold would spearhead the effort to eradicate the internal slave trade there. Such promises highlight the fact that international society preferred, and believed in, free trade, private enterprise and commercial development, not formal colonization. To build upon the claim that international society attached tremendous importance to these three practices, it is worth noting that sovereignty over African territory was not discussed extensively at the conference (Gifford and Louis 1971, 194) and instead, international society expressed a desire to bring Africa into what was being called the “commercial republic of the world” – not into a European political system (Robinson 1988, 2).⁸

Ultimately then, what does the Berlin Conference reveal regarding the values and intended practices of international society in regards to Africa? I argue the principal aim of international society at the Conference was *not* colonization, rather it was to secure free trade and equal access to the Dark Continent for private enterprise, and to promote the commercial development of Africa’s interior.⁹ In 1884-5 international society did not desire formal political control; in this sense international society was anti-colonial. Similarly, Robinson argues, “interpreted in an anti-colonial sense, the Congolese partition becomes more understandable, whereas construed in a colonial sense, it becomes unbelievable” (1988, 19).

⁸ Indeed, one should not be so bold as to suggest that formal colonial rule was not foreshadowed by the Conference. Specifically, scholars point to the embryonic policy of ‘effective occupation’ which began to grow roots in 1884-5, even if the reality was that its introduction was tentative and only later become accepted international policy (Robinson 1988, 11).

⁹ There were also humanitarian concerns, as all agreed to attempt to end Africa’s rampant internal slave trade.

In its entirety then, this section has provided concrete evidence of a tension which was building between the individuals of the world society of colonizers and the states of international society up to and during the Berlin Conference. The world society of colonizers was driven by national aggrandizement, Social Darwinism, and economic exploitation; these values manifested themselves in pressure groups, merchant activity, exploration and pegging claims. These values and practices largely conflicted with those of international society's member states. States pushed, by contrast, free trade and private enterprise (Fieldhouse 1973, 64; Hayes 1980, 47). The Berlin Conference therefore represents a meeting where international society's states pushed against the world society of colonizers (Gann and Duignan 1967, 22; Robinson 1988, 3). The way in which this tension played out post-Berlin provides further insights into how the colonization institution expanded into Africa.

The colonization institution the Scramble for Africa:

Revisiting the world society of colonizers and exploring the expansion of colonization into Africa (1885-1908)

The above critical analysis focusing upon the years 1870-85 developed the argument that, firstly, the Berlin Conference was organized essentially as a response to the persistent activity of a world society of colonizers, and, secondly, that the values of international society largely conflicted with those of the world society of colonizers. This section turns to examine the years between 1885 and 1908, an extraordinary time wherein virtually the entire African continent was colonized. This time period is central to this article and its argument specifically because, given the tension between World Society and international society in regards to how to engage with Africa up through the Berlin Conference, how this tension played out after Berlin offers significant insights into how the colonization institution ultimately expanded into Africa.

Immediately following the close of the Berlin Conference, both old and new actors within the world society of colonizers set to work on bringing the colonization institution into Africa. Members that have already been mentioned, that is Leopold, certain explorers and merchants, were central to this, but so too was Cecil Rhodes.

The version of the Congo Free State which the states of international society had envisioned forming after the Berlin Conference was simply never realized. Leopold quickly

adopted the self-given title as the “state’s proprietor,” reflecting his belief that the Congo was his personal property (Stengers 1969, 263). In April of 1885, the Belgian government – which had little interest in the Congo – reinforced Leopold’s self-appointed title by making him the Congo Free State’s sovereign; thus “up till 1908, the sovereign of the Congo directed the policy of that country in a fashion that was in all respects independent; Belgium had no part in it” (Stengers 1969, 262). Problematically, Leopold’s colony was proving to be a tremendous drain on his personal finances. By 1885, remember, Leopold had spent 11,500,000 francs, this compared to the 150,000 francs he received annually from 1885 through 1895 (de Lichtervelde 1928, 225). After a failed attempt to convince the Belgian government to annex the colony, Leopold began to institutionalize a monopolistic economic policy in attempt to draw profit out of his Congolese money pit. The Ordinance of 1885 declare that all ‘vacant’ land was state or company owned (Anstey 1966: 4);¹⁰ the decree of 21 September 1891 declared that all the products of state land were state owned (de Lichtervelde 1928, 225); in 1892 the Congo was divided into the *Domaine Prive* – of the state – and the *Domaine de la courinne* – the areas leased to companies, all of which Leopold had stock in (Anstey 1966, 3). Leopold’s final policy was a humanitarian disaster, that being to reward administrators and company agents with premiums according to the amount of produce they collected.¹¹ These policies produced a surreal economic turnaround; in 1901 the Congo produced 18,000,000 francs and 6,000 metric tons of rubber (Stengers 1969, 273). Yet the implementation of such a system was not popular, and the king soon faced a barrage of domestic and international criticism. The Belgian government and public actively called for an end to direct exploitation, and came to resent that profits drawn from the Congo which were utilized in Brussels public works projects; international merchants were quick to complain about the clear protectionist monopoly developing; and international society, led by England, began to demand an investigation into labor practices in the Congo (Macalpine 2006). Ultimately the international pressure became too much; after 24 years of Leopold’s ownership, Belgium was forced to annex the Congo in 1908 (Slade 1960).

¹⁰ Vacant land was defined as all unoccupied land and land not being exploited by natives (Stengers 1969, 265)

¹¹ To boost individual profits and in turn production, administrators and company agents began to mutilate hands and ears, and worse, murder natives who returned from the rubber swamps under-quota (Louis 1964; Macalpine 1906). One observer noted “each time the corporal goes out to get rubber, cartridges are given to him. He must bring back all not used; and for every one used, he must bring back a right hand” (Anstey 1966, 7).

Thus in its totality, the Leopold/Belgium case demonstrates how a state of international society was essentially pushed to annex and formally occupy a colony after a member of the world society of colonizers horrifically irresponsible mismanagement came to light. Interestingly, the German case almost mirrors this interplay.

Following the Berlin Conference, Bismarck continued to face the tremendous pro-colonial pressures from the world society of colonizers discussed above, and his staunch indifference towards this pressure was creating a crisis in his legitimacy (Lee 1999). Consequently, the ever politically savvy chancellor recognized that, by developing a colonial policy, he could potentially manipulate this colonial fervor to his advantage (Wehler 1970). Indeed, later in 1889, Bismarck noted that “he had hoped he could evade party strife by colonial policy” (von Strandmann 1969, 145). Nonetheless, in the first instance the stubborn Bismarck remained unwilling to fully commit Germany to formal colonization, and instead pushed a charter company system which was more in line with his aforementioned values (Bade 1988; Dawson 1919; von Strandmann 1969). On 19 April 1884 Bismarck summoned Luderitz for a meeting, whereat the chancellor finally assured the merchant that his possessions would be protected by the state. The agreement followed Bismarck’s wishes of a chartered company arrangement, as Luderitz bore sole responsibility for the cost of development. In return the Reich promised to establish a German counsel at the Cape, provide naval protection, and reinforce the treaties with natives (Turner 1967, 70). With this, Luderitz’s *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft fur Sud West Africa* took over South West Africa (Cornevin 1969, 387). Peters’ acquisitions in East Africa followed similar suit, and gained imperial protection in February of 1885 (Williamson 1998, 84). Yet with the charter company colonial experiment barely underway, the companies quickly exhausted their funds, sent deprived men to manage their under-developed territory, and became characterized by misrule and corruption (Dawson 1919, 212-13). Indeed the companies were to prove a spectacular failure on all fronts, as none of them would survive, and even worse, none of the territories they managed would prove profitable. Luderitz’s *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft fur Sud West Africa* proved so incompetent that it was shut down, and an imperial commissioner was put in charge (Williamson 1998, 80-84). In Togoland and the Cameroons, a region in the hands of Woermann, local merchants failed to take responsibility meaning that the Reich became liable (Cornevin 1969, 398). Finally in 1888 Peter’s East Africa Company provoked the indigenous population into a bloody revolt,

meaning that imperial troops had to be sent and the Company's charter was suspended leaving the Reich in command (Williamson 1998, 84); Bismarck's most dreaded scenario – formal colonization and its high costs – became a reality. Thus Bismarck returned to his firm anti-colonial stance: in 1888 he proclaimed that “our colonial program is subject to this restriction: protection of German pioneers, yet no formal colonial possession” (Wehler 1970, 128); in 1889 “I am not a colonial man” (Eyck 1950, 272); and in 1890 “the foreign office either gets rid of colonial affairs or it gets rid of me” (Schreuder 1980, 130). The chancellor fell that year, and left with Germany entrenched in the colonial game.

Thus the pressures Bismarck faced from the world society of colonizers simply proved to be too much over time. The chancellor's position, no matter how steadfast, faced persistent criticisms from explorers and merchants who were already entrenched in Africa, and from pressure groups who called Bismarck's legitimacy into question. In reality, Bismarck and Germany had little choice but to formally colonize Africa. At this juncture, it is worthwhile to visit the case of England. Here, one yet again sees how a member of the world society of colonizers, Rhodes, pushes a state of international society into colonization.

Scholars note that in many ways, Rhodes' story personifies both the development of post-Berlin colonial activity and the scramble for Africa more generally (Davidson 1984; Marlowe 1972). Indeed, Rhodes was perhaps the most powerful individual within the world society of colonizers, as his surreal financial achievements meant that he had the power to act almost autonomously in Africa. Most importantly for the argument forwarded here, this power enabled Rhodes to pressure England into colonizing vast chunks of Southern African territory during the years this section is concerned with. To begin this argument, it is interesting to note that Rhodes and the British colonial office were often at odds; Rhodes specifically distrusted the Colonial Office following the loss of Southwest Africa to Germany. Consequently, in his African activity Rhodes generally tried to bypass the British government entirely (Wills 1964, 131). As such, Rhodes' role in pushing the colonization institution into Africa was immense, and here we will unfortunately have to settle for a brief overview of key events. Firstly, as a member of the Cape parliament Rhodes pushed vehemently for the annexation of the Tswana people who lived in an area to the north, labeled by Rhodes as the “Suez Canal into the interior” (Davidson 1984, 75). In drawing on Cape anxieties that foreign powers (mainly the neighboring Transvaal) would soon colonize the land, the Cape government appointed Rhodes to the post of High Commissioner for South Africa in 1884;

by 1885 he had successfully lobbied for London to approved annexation. Following the victory, Rhodes shifted his attention northward to Matabeleland and Mashonaland (Vambe 1972, 58; Alderson 1971); to put this area onto the agenda, Rhodes appealed to public opinion. Towards this end, Rhodes' friend in journalism W. T. Stead helped shape and transform public opinion through his *Pall Mall Gazette* editorials (Wills 1964, 124). In addition, the supportive *Times* wrote that Matabeleland was "rich, fabulously rich, we are told, in precious metals and half a dozen others besides" (Marlowe 1974, 122). Rhodes also sent his partner, Charles Rudd, to obtain the signature of Matabeleland's king, Lobengula, on a pre-drafted concession which, once signed, would give Rhodes complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals within Matabeleland, Mashonaland and the adjacent territories (Rudd and Lobengula 1972, 56).¹² With the required paperwork and signatures in place, Her Majesty's Government created the British South Africa Company (BSA) on 29 October 1889. It was an unsurprising move as Rhodes promised to fully fund the venture, and construct a much needed railroad and telegraph line from the Cape to the recently acquired Bechuanaland (Robinson and Gallagher 1961, 237). Yet the British government knew granting Rhodes the BSA was a risk; one member of the Colonial Office noted "Her Majesty's Government would not be able effectually to prevent the company from taking its own line of policy" (Robinson and Gallagher 1961, 238). Indeed, once in South Africa Rhodes set about on a campaign of browbeating and violence aimed at both natives and the home government (Hole 1924, 129-132). Rhodes' explicit desire to bring Matabeleland and Mashonaland under formal British dominion was not assured, as the BSA charter did not grant land rights. By law, to bring any territory into the British Empire it was first necessary to occupy land through treaty or war, and second to have the home government recognize sovereignty over the region. As such, Rhodes set about provoking Lobengula's people into an entirely private war; private in that it was funded by his fire sale of 40,000 BSA shares and fought by mercenaries (Hole 1924, 299-328). By May of 1894, the whole of Lobengula's territory was declared conquered territory which the BSA was assigned to govern. Yet

¹² The circumstances surrounding the concession were extremely problematic. Lobengula was bribed with lavish gifts, and some claim the king was drunk upon marking the document with his 'X' (Vambe 1972, 74). Later, a panicking Lobengula sent a letter of complaint sent to Queen Victoria; it is worth quoting at length: "A document was written and presented to me for signature. I asked what it contained, and was told that in it were my words and the words of those men. I put my hand to it. About three months afterwards I heard from other sources that I had given by that document the right to all the minerals of my country" (Tandon 1972, 58). Lobengula's complaint fell on deaf ears.

Rhodes was *still* not finished. In what was perhaps Rhodes' greatest display of power and influence, in April 1890 he urged Salisbury to bring all Barotseland (the area northwest of Matabeleland and Mashonaland) into the British sphere of influence – Salisbury agreed. Yet the prime minister's decision agitated Portugal, who felt they had a rightful claim to the region. The result was the Anglo-Portuguese Convention, wherein Manicaland was conceded to Portugal and England received most of Northern Zambesia. This agreement outraged Rhodes to such a degree that he threatened to resign from his position at the BSA. Salisbury responded by refusing to sign the arranged agreement with Portugal, and instead redrew an agreement more to Rhodes' liking (Robinson and Gallagher 1961, 248); in the new agreement Rhodes received all of Barotseland, the Portuguese received a piece of land Rhodes was not interested in. The incident proved to all actors involved that the British government was an agent of Rhodes, not the other way around (Robinson and Gallagher 1961, 247).

The case of Rhodes and England further solidifies my aforementioned claims regarding colonization during the scramble. Rhodes, a powerful non-state actor, held values which corresponded to those discussed within the context of the world society of colonizers; the benefits of economic exploitation, Social Darwinism and national aggrandizement. He clearly transitioned those values into practices; signing treaties with native kings to secure pegs in Africa. These facts, in conjunction with study of Rhodes' relationship with the British government, reinforce the notion that a world society of colonizers was expanding colonization into Africa.

This section has explored how the tension between the world society of colonizer's values and practices and international society's values and intended practices played out between 1885 and 1908. The data suggests, quite remarkably, that despite the states of international society pushing for free trade and private enterprise, the world society of colonizers continued to operate in Africa according to its values and practices, meaning that the colonization institution soon expanded into Africa via this world society.

Conclusion

The above study has been a focused analysis of specific aspects of what was undoubtedly a very complex and expansive phenomenon, yet it has become evident that two highly

plausible arguments can be made: firstly – and specifically in light of the first section’s findings – the scramble was a distinct evolutionary phase of the colonization institution; and secondly, that this evolutionary phase was distinct because World Society was intricately involved in the expansion of the colonization institution. Theoretically speaking, these findings reflect back on the existing ES framework, particularly in regards to the understanding of institutions. Here I reflect on these two arguments in turn, before drawing out some theoretical claims.

By comparing the first section’s historical overview of the various forms of colonization to the form of colonization which took shape during the scramble for Africa, it becomes apparent to even the inexperienced observer that there was significant variety in the manner by which colonization came into being in each circumstance. I have made note of military conquest by, and eventual subordination to, the powerful Qin, Ashanti and Zulu states, the establishment of longstanding tributary relationships within the East Asian or West African region, the European international society’s state-based expansionist tendencies, and finally, the push by European explorers, merchants and individuals to bring the African interior into this longstanding institution. What is clear is that all of these forms ultimately fit into the definition offered earlier, in that member states of an international society established new societies, or altered old societies, in an area previously outside the bounds of that international society. What is more interesting is, however, that these forms represent significant evolutionary phases within the colonization institution over the course of world history. In other words, the colonization institution dates back centuries, yet the way in which it was carried out has evolved in accordance with the circumstances of international politics. This begs the question: in what way was the scramble distinct?

The predominant focus of this article has been the tension between international society and World Society, and how this tension ultimately played out in international politics. More specifically, a core group of states in the European international society – many of which were already participants in the colonization institution in other parts of the world – demonstrated an obvious reluctance to engage with Africa via the colonization institution. This reluctance was manifest most clearly during the Berlin Conference. Yet international society’s reluctance was largely in vein, as individuals within the world society of colonizers presence in Africa, and there persistent international and domestic activity, meant that, at the end of the day, international society had remarkably little control over

the means by which the world society of colonizers were engaging with Africa's interior. I argue that it is the world society of colonizers' tremendous significance to the ultimate colonization of Africa which makes this phase of the colonization institution distinct. Indeed, the scramble for Africa was largely driven by World Society, and this compares with other phases which were driven by governments, military forces, and rogue individuals. By contrast, the colonization of the African interior was driven by a group of people whose awareness of each other led to the construction of shared values and practice; this society subsequently extended the colonization institution into the African interior at an unprecedented rate. Thus not only did this world society extend the colonization institution into Africa, but it was also central to the institution's evolution and the driving force behind it.

Finally, the importance of these findings must be weighed theoretically. Given that the relationship between international society and institutions is already widely recognized, the principal contribution of this article to ES theory is as follows: World Society can act as a force pushing for the extension of an existing institution into a specific geographical area; World Society can be central to institutional evolution; and World Society can be the force which drives an institution. Such a realization should have implications for the way in which the ES contemplates institutions going forward.

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