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The Paris/Geneva Divide

A Network Analysis of the Archives of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations

1 Introduction: Studying the Structure of Intellectual Cooperation

The International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) is often framed as a step in the constitution of a “League of Minds” – a place where scientists and writers reign, and a necessary part of a successful and harmonious “League of Nations” – but the fact that it was created in the context of a bureaucratic and politicised international administration leaves little room for such creativity. In reality, intellectual cooperation is one of the technical elements of the impressive but imperfect machinery that is the inter-war League of Nations (LoN from now on). However, the ICIC’s universal aspect and its sympathy capital, fuelled by the appointment of leading scientific and cultural personalities, including Albert Einstein, Marie Skłodowska Curie, Hendrik Lorentz, Henri Bergson, and Jagadish Chandra Bose, make it an organ of the League that enjoys high visibility in proportion to its modest size. This explains why the recovery of the symbolic benefits of intellectual cooperation is at the heart of a power game between the Geneva administration and the main powers of the LoN Assembly. On the one hand, Great Britain and its dominions are fighting to prevent these secondary, strictly national or private issues from hampering the fundamental missions – political, financial, and technical – of the League of Nations. France and most of the Latin countries, on the other hand, see an excellent opportunity to globalise cultural issues and impose the vision of a civilising and universal League. In between, with an independent political agenda that prevents it from being a totally impartial arbiter, is the Geneva secretariat, which tries, despite lacking means, to make this small technical organisation work and legitimise it.

This dynamic originates in Geneva, a city chosen by the nations participating in the Paris Peace Conference because of the neutrality of its territory, because of the fact that it has international status without being the capital of a state, and certainly also because of William Rappart’s lobbying of President Woodrow Wilson (Fleury 1981). As the capital of a belligerent country, Paris

was excluded *de facto* from being the seat of the League (Geneva's competitors were Brussels and The Hague). However, it is in Paris that intellectual cooperation finds its most powerful and effective echo. The French government's offer to house an institute dedicated to helping to the Geneva Committee just a stone's throw from the Louvre, made only a few years after the ICIC's first efforts, introduces a key piece to the chessboard of cultural relations in the 1920s – a small step for scientific and intellectual coordination, but a giant step for France's influence and its cultural diplomacy. Indeed, from 1926 onward, France's International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) proves to be a significant counterweight to the Secretariat of the League of Nations – so much so that the latter tries unceasingly to regulate the Institute's activities to keep it under its supervision. It is this balance of power, this pendulum swing between Geneva and Paris, that lies at the heart of our study.

Like the field of LoN historiography, where global and institutional political studies eventually gave way to approaches focused on local mechanisms and technical achievements (Pedersen 2015), the study of intellectual cooperation in the post-war decades (Bennet 1950; Northedge 1953; Pham 1962) was invigorated by a "Parisian" period, which often highlighted the continuity with UNESCO (Bekri 1990, but more importantly Renoliet 1992 and Renoliet 1999). This period was followed by a tendency toward a more transnational approach (Laqua 2011) that questions the very concept of intellectual cooperation (Wilson 2011; Saikawa 2014; and Millet 2015, e.g.) and addresses thematic issues (Laqua 2018; Riondet 2020; Roig-Sanz 2021). Compared to the French historiography of the late twentieth century, these new perspectives give a greater place to Geneva, since the concepts that were later embodied by the Parisian institute were developed within the League of Nations and the ICIC. Beyond the importance of a quarrel over symbolic heritage between two hubs of internationalism in the first half of the 20th century, understanding the nature of intellectual cooperation's "centre" (and, on the contrary, its "periphery") is a way of interrogating this complex, two-sided situation.

We therefore propose to explore the problematic relationship between Geneva and Paris around the activities of the ICIC and the IIIC. To identify this pendulum swing's crucial moments, it will be necessary to outline the institutional history of intellectual cooperation, but we will also demonstrate that a serial analysis of the archives from the Committee's first years and the pivotal moment of the Institute's creation gives a good account of the tensions and competition between the two and the IIIC's eventual takeover. Concretely, we will conduct a network analysis of the metadata of more than 30,000 ICIC documents from 1919 to 1927 in order to map the relationships of more than 3,000 protagonists of intellectual cooperation. Network analysis enables new hypotheses on the notions of

centrality or scale, and metrics from graph theory such as the notion of betweenness centrality allow us to highlight the structurally minor role played by ICIC experts in the rivalry between the Secretariat of the League of Nations and the IIC's management.

2 The Bureaucratisation of the “Society of Minds”

As we have noted above, the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation has been the object of a significant historiographical renewal over the last twenty years. While there are now specialised studies of actors (Richard 2012; Brzeziński 2013; Pita González 2015; Feichtinger 2020; Fóllica and Ikoff 2020) and peripheral regions (Roig Sanz 2013; Kreissler 2014; Pita González 2014; Grandjean 2020a), our aim of understanding the tension between Geneva and Paris has led us to remobilise a more institutional history. Taking up these structural questions is not a step backwards, since it is a matter of confronting this institutional knowledge with the complexity of interpersonal relations, which can be observed in the ICIC archives. In the following sections, we will focus on institutional episodes that illustrate the pendulum's swing between Geneva and Paris.¹

2.1 The Initial Structure of the Committee

The first meeting of the ICIC, on August 1, 1922, is only one step in the process of reorganising the International Bureaux Section of the League of Nations. Indeed, the ICIC is one of the section's later achievements, and it is initially thought of as marginal. As early as July 1919, the Secretariat – and the Japanese Under-Secretary-General Inazo Nitobe in particular – is primarily focused on identifying the international “bureaux” of primary importance. However, with the exception of a few remarkable collaborations, this mission does not bear any notable fruit other than a directory that continues (in part) the work initiated before the war by the Union of International Associations (Grandjean and

¹ This paper builds on Grandjean (2018a), which precisely details all the stages of the institutionalisation of intellectual cooperation, and the considerations on the centre/periphery issue developed in Grandjean (2020b).

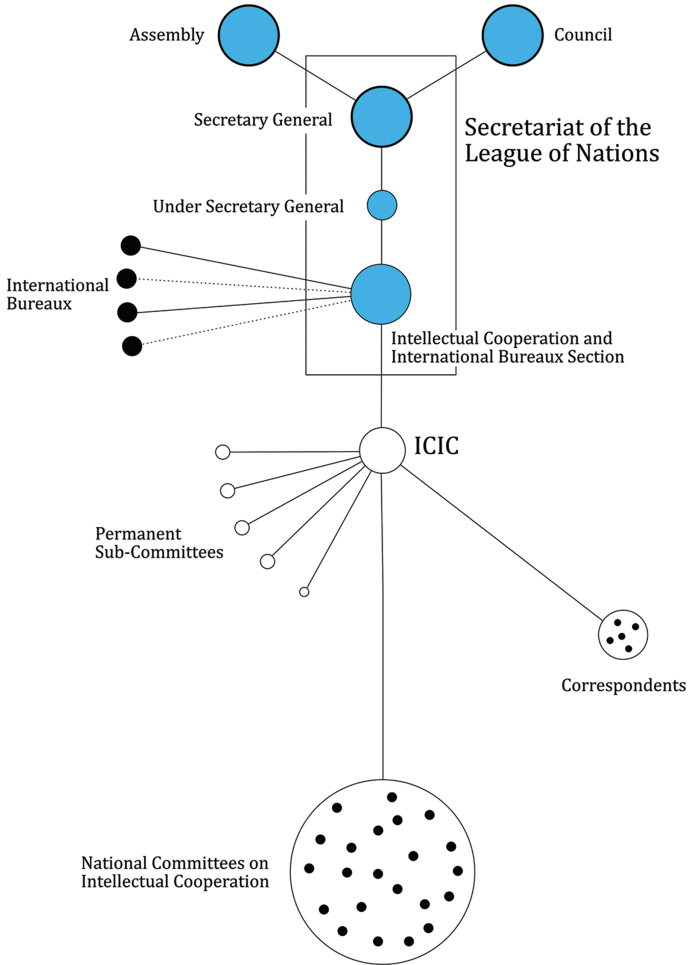
Van Leeuwen 2019). The drafting of this document – the first volume of which was published in 1921² and has been reissued and updated several times – is the focus of a whole part of the Section’s activity. If this first phase is apparently unrelated to the creation of the ICIC, which is being discussed at the same time at the Assembly of the League of Nations, it is nonetheless important for understanding one of the origins of the Geneva-Paris antagonism. Indeed, it is in these first hesitant years of stammering that the Geneva section assumes its place in the field of cultural and scientific relations by projecting itself in the role of coordinator of international bureaux, or centre for the transmission of information. This is the role that the IIIC will contest *de facto* a few years later.

Not long after its creation in 1922, the ICIC quickly takes on considerable importance because of the work of its supervisory unit, the “International Bureaux” Section, whose title is more or less officially supplemented by “and Intellectual Cooperation” and sometimes simply called the “Intellectual Cooperation” Section. From the beginning, the sessions of the ICIC are attended not only by the twelve experts of the Committee, but also by representatives of other organs of the League who are concerned with the questions being addressed, specialists summoned for a particular occasion, and correspondents from different countries, not to mention the staff of the Secretariat. At the very first session, in August 1922, William Martin represents the International Labour Office³ and Julien Luchaire assists Henri Bergson as Inspector General of French *Instruction Publique*. Luchaire’s presence foreshadows his active involvement in the Institute’s creation.

Quickly, with the consent of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, the Committee creates a small ecosystem around itself. The organisational chart of the ICIC at this time consists of a fairly simple tree structure and reveals a very close relationship between the Committee and the Secretariat on which it depends, and which maintains its relationships with international bureaux (see Fig. 1). In this “first phase” of the Committee’s activity, its relationships with bodies outside the League are limited by its provisional status. In addition to establishing several sub-committees of experts, which generally meet on the margins of the plenary sessions, the ICIC occasionally enlists the services of “observers” and “correspondents” in certain countries, as national committees for intellectual cooperation gradually emerge in some twenty nations.

² “Répertoire des organisations internationales (associations, bureaux, commissions, etc.)”, 1921, LoN Archives 13/299/19568.

³ Letter, Fleury to Secretary General, 27 July 1922, LoN Archives 13/14297/21759.



1922-1925

Fig. 1: Organisational chart of the first stage of intellectual cooperation (subsequent stages in Fig. 2, Fig. 5 and Fig. 6). We distinguish between the bodies of the League of Nations (in blue), the ICIC (in white), and the external organisations (in black). The following figures use the same colours.

2.2 The International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation: A Double-Edged Sword

For many observers, the Institute is the visible face of intellectual cooperation within the League of Nations. Its founding is a kind of culmination, a milestone victory for the ICIC in its early years that considerably modifies its structure and internal balance. The Institute represents a pivotal step in the bureaucratisation of intellectual cooperation, since it gradually evolves from a group of experts charged with advising the League of Nations into a fully-fledged institution, albeit one that is not yet completely independent.

The proposal to create a permanent body financed by a state is original in the context of the League of Nations. Even if the stakes of such an undertaking cannot be reduced to their financial element alone, the fact that France offers to assume most of the cost of the Institute is crucial in overcoming the opposition of the Assembly whose delegates compete to pose as champions of austerity and systematically oppose any increase to the ICIC budget. Of course, the delegation of responsibility that comes with such an organisation, which entrusts a single state with a mission that everyone agreed to consider as belonging in principle to the League of Nations only a few years earlier – is not without consequences for the redrawing of the field of cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless, it is based on the hope that such practical voluntarism will produce a more effective result and perhaps even be imitated in other regions by League members wishing to build their own “soft power” and thus increase their financial contribution. This proves to be the case when the Italian government proposes two institutes in response to the French offer, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (proposed in 1924 and inaugurated in 1928) and the International Educational Cinematography Institute (proposed in 1927 and also inaugurated in 1928) (Herrera León 2008; Goodman 2018; Taillibert 2019).

The French proposal does not come out of nowhere, however. Following the Council of the League of Nations’ call to governments to contribute their moral and financial support to the ICIC,⁴ France begins to prepare its strategy. In November 1923, the French Minister of Public Education, Léon Bérard, requests the creation of a French national committee for intellectual cooperation (Renoliet 1999, 38). In other countries, national committees are created via the initiative of academic circles, and this political decision, from a minister who

⁴ Fourth Assembly, 16th session, 27 September 1923, LoN Official Journal, special supplement no. 13, 109 (French version). See also the Bardoux Report 19, 357–360.

announced himself as an opponent of Esperanto in order to guarantee the primacy of French alongside English as the official language of the League of Nations (Biltoft 2010), signals that France sees a diplomatic interest in playing the game of intellectual cooperation. France's Director of Higher Education, Alfred Coville, is also in correspondence with Julien Luchaire, who is actively preparing the nation's next move: on January 9, 1924, Luchaire writes to Coville to propose a project to establish an international institution focused on intellectual issues in Paris. In terms that largely align with "pendulum" hypothesis, Luchaire offers this explanation, which does not hide the fact that this initiative is the fruit of a long-standing calculation with ICIC president Henri Bergson:

Bergson and I [. . .] are now concerned, after having been very "international" at the beginning (and we had to be), with gently attracting to Paris, as far as possible, a good part of the activity of the International Committee, and above all the stable organs that it will create or sponsor [. . .]. In our opinion, the best plan would be this. The French Government would place at the disposal of the League of Nations a building in Paris, to house the services and institutions of an intellectual nature that it would see fit to put there. It would have to allocate to the functioning of these services a special subsidy as a gift. It is thus a great effort, but the result would be considerable.⁵

Luchaire also details the new French National Committee's mission in a January 1924 note, proposing that it should be "able to practice hospitality with regard to international intellectual institutions whose headquarters are not immutably fixed elsewhere".⁶

At the end of the spring of 1924, with a change of government and the arrival of the *Cartel des Gauches* to power, Édouard Herriot, the new president of the Council of Ministers, wants to move France's image away from the militaristic reputation it developed under Raymond Poincaré during the occupation of the Ruhr. On July 24, François Albert, Minister of Public Instruction, responds to Bergson's appeal. Placing itself at the service of the ICIC, the French government announces its intention to leave the establishment of the definitive plan of its "admirable machine" in Bergson's care, noting, in order to spare the feelings of League of Nations members, that "the future institution will be the instrument of your Committee; it will be his responsibility to direct it".⁷ When Renoliet (1992: 392; see also 1999: 44) remarks that the French proposal represents a break from its prior attitude towards the League and the ICIC, it should

5 Letter, Luchaire to Coville, 9 January 1924, UNESCO Archives, IICI AI.9, box 2, cited by Renoliet (1999, 392–393).

6 "Note sur le rôle du nouveau Comité national français de coopération intellectuelle" (January 1924), UNESCO Archives, UNESCO, IICI, A.III.8, box 21, cited by Renoliet (1999, 40).

7 Letter, François-Albert to Bergson, 24 July 1924, LoN Archives 13C/37637/37645, 3.

be noted that it is based on an element of continuity in the person of Julien Luchaire himself. The editor of a French project that aimed to create an institution in charge of studying educational and scientific questions, initially submitted to the League of Nations in 1920 by Paul Appell,⁸ Luchaire became the liaison between the French government and Bergson, and then (as previously noted) a stakeholder in the Institute project.

Having passed in the Council, which adopts the resolutions of the French rapporteur, the dossier is transmitted to the Assembly. In the Second Committee of the Assembly, Gilbert Murray agrees with Bergson, presenting the situation as a “matter of life and death for the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation”, which “will probably die of starvation”⁹ if it does not accept the donation from the French government. But not all delegations are convinced by the opportunity that the French gift represents, and it is only after very long debates that the resolution is adopted, on September 18, 1924.¹⁰

This result is truly a French victory, as the League of Nations cannot afford to refuse such a financial contribution. It is also an entirely French-speaking subcommittee that is put in charge, in May 1925, of “fixing in a definitive way the titles and the general attributions that will be conferred to each of the sections [of the new Institute]”.¹¹ Julien Luchaire is joined by the Swiss professor Gonzague de Reynold and the former Belgian minister of arts and sciences Jules Desrée, both pillars of the ICIC’s early years. Another major concession is made to France during this process with the obvious aim of appeasing the French Parliament, both in the moment and in future annual elections, when it will have to vote on the subsidy that supports the Institute: Henri Bergson proposes that the president of the ICIC’s board of directors should always, systemically, be a French member of the ICIC, and that the first director should be of French nationality in order to facilitate the establishment of the Institute and ensure smooth relations with its future hosts. The ICIC mentions in the draft of its rules of procedure that “it is desirable that the successor [. . .] does not belong to the same nationality as this one”,¹² but this clause will not be observed, as we shall see.

8 Julien Luchaire, “Projet de Convention créant un Organisme permanent pour l’Entente et la Collaboration internationales dans les Questions d’Enseignement et dans les Sciences, Lettres et Arts”, LoN Official Journal, no. 7, October 1920, 446–451.

9 Fifth Assembly, Second Commission, 6th meeting, 15 September 1924, LoN Official Journal, special supplement no. 25, 19.

10 Fifth Assembly, Second Commission, 9th meeting, 18 September 1924, LoN Official Journal, special supplement no. 25, 27.

11 ICIC Minutes, 5th session, 4th meeting, 12 May 1925, C.286.M.104.1925.XII, 24.

12 ICIC Minutes, 5th session, 7th meeting, 14 May 1925, C.286.M.104.1925.XII, 33.

The arrival of the IIIC considerably alters the balance of power and the structure within the organisation. Despite the reluctance of some Committee members who would have preferred a more modest institution, the Paris Institute is constituted from the outset as an international office comprising several sections, departments, and committees. And although each of these internal subdivisions are not immediately populated with swarms of officials, as they will be later, the simple tree structure of the LoN's International Bureaux Section (Fig. 1) is disrupted considerably by the emergence of the IIIC in 1926 (Fig. 2). The Institute is more than a new tool at the disposal of the Geneva Committee; it is the Committee's new backbone, if not its entire body, sensitive and active, as Hendrik Lorentz describes it in his inauguration speech of January 26, 1926:

This Institute should be, and already is, our organ of action. It is more than that, it is a true harmonious organism. For an organ is an eye or a hand, but the Institute is a combination of these two and many more. It sees and hears for us; nothing that happens in the world, in its domain, will escape it. It thinks for us, suggesting problems and questions for study. He speaks for us in every language.¹³

This metaphor echoes the one that Julien Luchaire formulated in September 1925: "the Committee remains the soul of the complex organisation that the League of Nations now possesses".¹⁴ As for the IIIC, it is divided into six units: the General Affairs Section, the Academic Relations Section, the Scientific Relations Section, the Literary Relations Section, the Artistic Relations Section, and the Information Section.¹⁵ In addition to these departments, there is a legal service, a documentation service, and a small film service. The whole organisation of the "body" is designed to correspond to the organisation of the "soul" of the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (see the arrows between the subcommittees of the ICIC and the sections of the IIIC in Fig. 2, right). It is quite interesting that this parallel organisation is unanimously accepted in 1926, and that it becomes part of the "organic" idea of the functioning of the institution; however, it is not uncommon for this parallelism to lead to misunderstandings between the League of Nations and the IIIC. The ICIC archives contain several examples of situations in which Julien Luchaire jealously points out to the Romanian art historian Georges Oprescu, secretary of the Intellectual Cooperation Section, that the technical subject of such

¹³ Speech, Lorentz, 16 January 1926, LoN Archives 13C/37637/48765.

¹⁴ Luchaire, "Organisation de l'Institut international de coopération intellectuelle", LoN Official Journal, special supplement no. 35, 88.

¹⁵ The organisation is described in the report of the Board of Directors to the Council, Document A-27-1926, XII, 22.

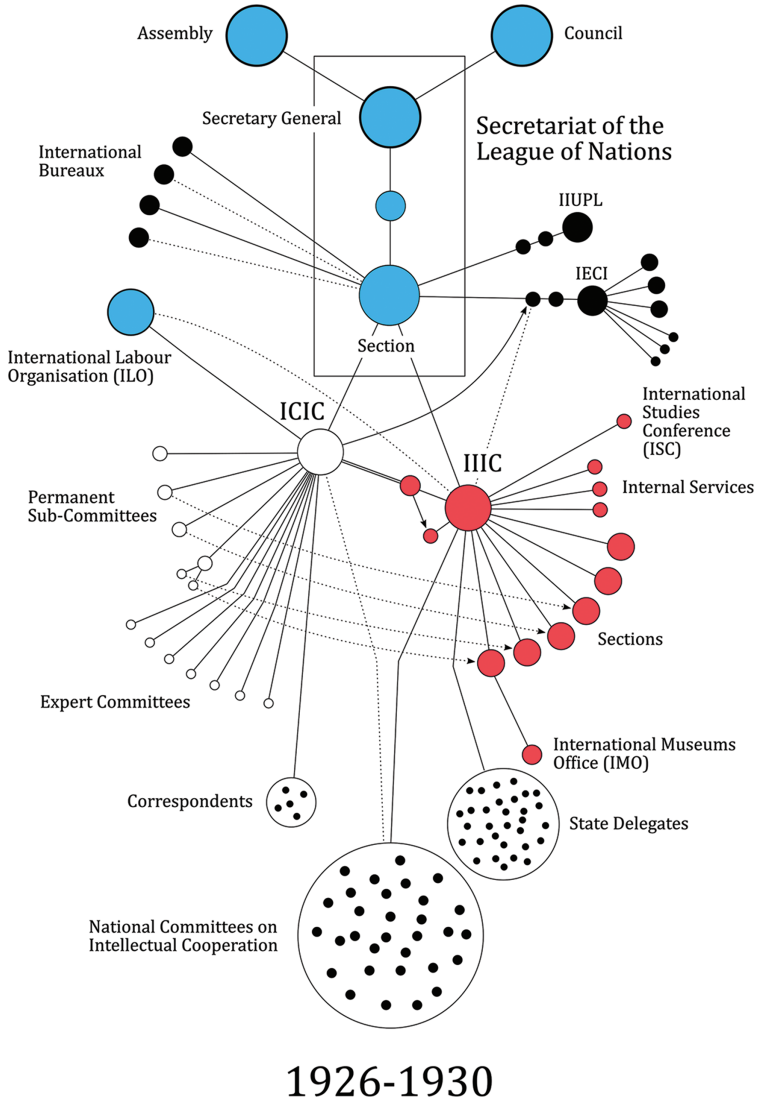


Fig. 2: Organisational chart of the second stage of intellectual cooperation after the creation of the IIIC (in red).

and such a correspondence handled by the League of Nations Secretariat should have been his own administration's responsibility.¹⁶

This is the beginning of a period of intense activity for the Institute, of rapid and voluntary expansion under the direction of a man who intends to prove the efficiency of his institution. But in front of the ICIC, the director struggles to hide the fact that his ambitions go beyond the scope of his mandate: in July 1927, when Luchaire announces the end of the trial-and-error process – a period during which he declared “it was advisable to multiply the attempts, the surveys, to try to awaken the attention of all the countries”¹⁷ and drew some criticism – Gonzague de Reynold questions the organisational structure of the Institute. Fearing that the year-round work activity of the IIIC will allow it to escape from the control of the authorities at the LoN, who meet more rarely, the Swiss delegate wonders “if we have not fallen from one extreme to another, if, after having felt for three years the need for a working instrument, an executive body, we do not have one today that is a little heavy to handle, a little difficult to direct for our Committee”.¹⁸ The ICIC's enthusiasm for the Institute is not a given.

3 Centralities and Peripheries in the Intellectual Cooperation Network: A Marginalised Committee?

The archives of the League of Nations offer fascinating material for documenting the shifting balance between the ICIC and the IIIC. They complement our institutional approach very well, since they allow us to weigh the effectiveness of these entities in practice: How do the different actors in these two groups interact on a daily basis? Do they follow the clear lines of official organisation charts and hierarchies, or do they organise themselves differently? Are the connections between them based on well-defined channels of communication, or are they established according to personal behaviour?

¹⁶ Letter, Luchaire to Opreescu, 28 November 1927, LoN Archives 13C/62455/62455.

¹⁷ ICIC Minutes, 9th session, 3rd meeting, 23 July 1927, C.424.M.157.1927.XII, 17.

¹⁸ De Reynold, “Certains compléments à apporter dans l'organisation actuelle de la Commission internationale de coopération intellectuelle”, ICIC Minutes (Annex 3), 9th session, 23 July 1927, C.424.M.157.1927.XII, 60.

3.1 Visualising the ICIC Archive Network

These archives, which have been very well preserved in files that maintain both the intellectual and material organisation of the Secretariat (Habermann-Box 2014), allow us to dive into the meandering of decisions and negotiations while maintaining a panoramic and institutional perspective.¹⁹ For the purposes of our study, we will focus on the ICIC documents produced between 1919 and 1927. This periodisation, which constitutes the first of the three major phases of archiving the League's documents – and thus a homogeneous corpus, a complete and coherent set of documents where all the materials related to a given correspondence appear together – allows us to study the effect of the emergence of the Paris Institute on the Geneva-based ecosystem of the Committee.²⁰

As we have shown elsewhere (Grandjean 2017), the history of international organisations lends itself well to network analysis, and particularly to a study of information exchanges within the Organisation of Intellectual Cooperation, which quickly take on the mission of cultivating relationships and bringing individuals and institutions into contact, often more for the sake of “networking” – to prove that they are at the centre of an international dynamic – than in the hopes that these contacts will bear fruit in the long term. An analysis of networks in the context of the League of Nations' history quickly reveals that the field is fertile, and that this analytic approach need no longer be limited to clarifying “network-like” situations. Rather, it is a research tool that can allow us to take a new look at a corpus, and even to make a new source criticism possible. Despite its quantitative appearance, the way in which people and institutions structure an organisation is qualitative information – or “morphological” information (Moretti 1999, 68) – of the highest importance since the quantified indicators make it possible to qualify the arrangement of relations (Hollstein and Straus 2006, reviewed by Diaz-Bone 2008). Moreover, network analysis allows us to move away from a traditional perspective centred on the discourse produced by the institution in order to instead identify a nebula of relationships through the testimony of thousands of letters, notes, reports, and telegrams. Analysing the network of these documents is therefore not an end in itself but a way to contextualise individual activity within the overall structure.

While the network metaphor is particularly appropriate for such a topic, in this chapter, we aim to go further and propose a formal approach (Lemercier

¹⁹ The archives of the League of Nations are now digitised and accessible on the platform of the Library and Archives Service of the UN Geneva: <https://archives.ungeneva.org/>.

²⁰ The encoding decisions for this portion of the ICIC archives are detailed in Grandjean (2018a, 42–69).

2015): an application of graph theory concepts to archives (Ahnert et al. 2020; Kerschbaumer et al. 2020; Grandjean 2017).²¹ Specifically, we have modelled the ICIC archive as a network of document actor metadata: the senders and recipients of the thousands of messages sent and received by the International Bureaux Section. As the aim of this analysis is to focus on the pivotal period that saw the Institute's irruption into the system set up by the League and the Committee, we proceeded to index nearly 30,000 documents, grouped into nearly 3,000 files from 1919–1927.²² The result of this processing can be seen in Fig. 3, which represents all the co-occurrence relationships of actors in the ICIC files during that period as a weighted graph. Each point on the graph is an individual who is involved as an actor in these documents (that is, as a sender or receiver; the persons mentioned in the documents are not considered as acting on them). The points are organised in space according to the gravitational logic that prevails in force-directed algorithms:²³ vertices attract each other if they are strongly connected and repel each other if they are not, forming relatively distinct groups.

Since the size of the dots is proportional to the number of times the individuals appear in the archives, we can quickly spot a handful of leading actors. But it is not so much this metric that interests us as the way these dots are structured and included in neighbourhoods, in clusters made even more visible by the colourisation of the three main groups in the network: the members of the League Secretariat (the 158 blue dots), the experts of the Committee and its sub-committees (the 66 white dots), and the Institute's members and delegates (the 101 red dots). As Tab. 1 illustrates, the top-ranking individuals in terms of occurrences are almost all from the LoN first and then the ICIC, while a number of individuals affiliated with the IIIC rank higher in terms of structural measures – both the number of co-occurrences (degree centrality) and their total number of connections (weighted degree).

But what kind of panoramic overview does such a graphic representation allow us to make? In reality, the purpose of such a method is not necessarily to

21 The literature on the application of network analysis to historical sciences is the subject of a public bibliography with more than 1000 titles, available here: <https://historicalnetworkresearch.org>.

22 A full description of this process of the “datafication” (Clavert 2013) of these archives can be found in Grandjean (2018a, 69–103), along with the complete, downloadable dataset: <https://github.com/grandjeanmartin/intellectual-cooperation> (Grandjean 2018b).

23 The network was produced with Gephi (Bastian, Heymann, and Jacomy 2009) and its spatialisation algorithm Force Atlas 2 (Jacomy et al. 2014). We have produced a comprehensive tutorial for this software (Grandjean 2015).

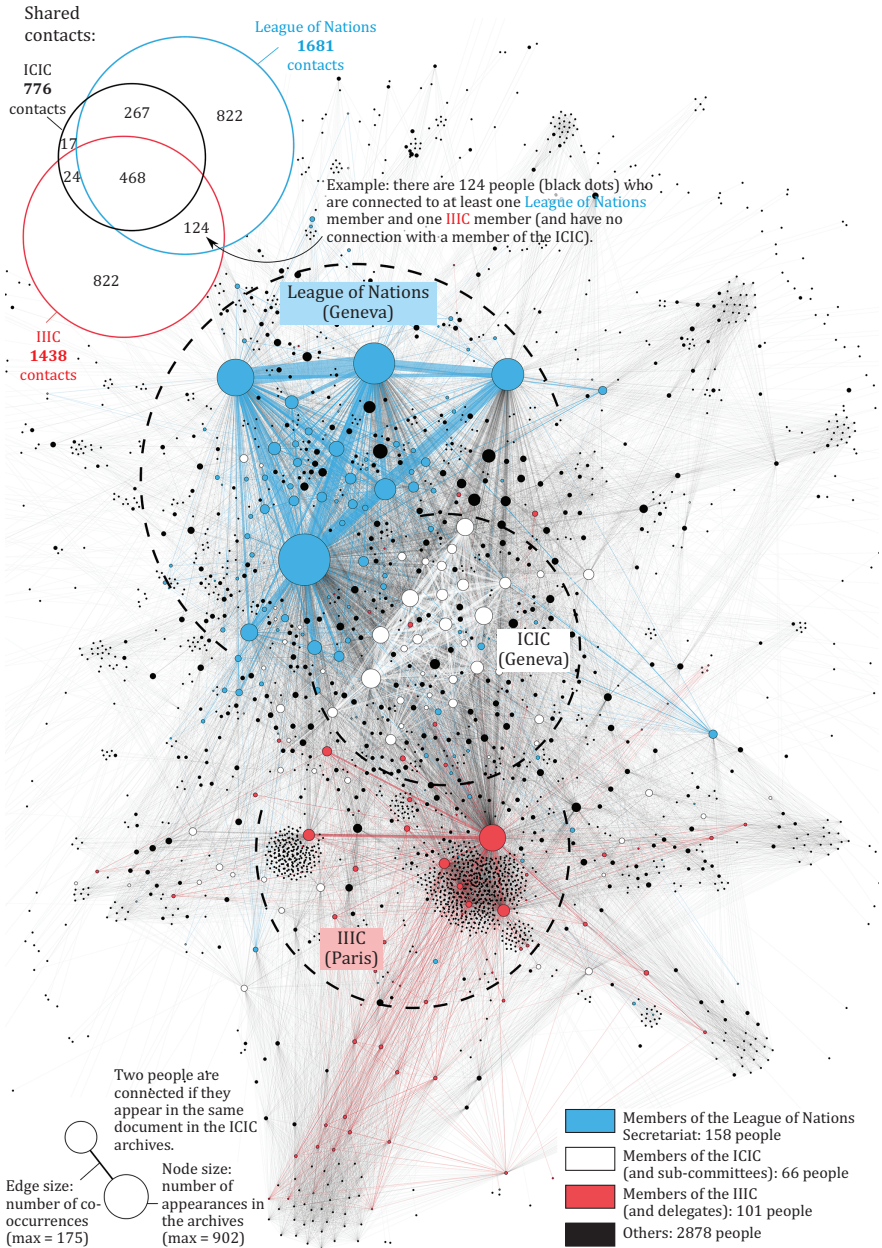


Fig. 3: Network of actors in the documents of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation between 1919 and 1927, accompanied by a diagram summarising the overlapping contacts of the three main groups (top left).

Tab. 1: The 10 most central individuals in the network (out of 3000) according to three metrics: occurrences, degree, and weighted degree. Degree centrality counts the number of other people to whom the node is connected, while weighted degree centrality counts the number of times they co-occur (one can be connected to the same person several times).

Actors			Occurrences		Degree		Weighted degree	
Sender or receiver of the documents			Number of appearances in the archives		Number of unique co-occurrences (number of contacts)		Total amount of co-occurrences	
Last name	First name	Affiliation	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
Oprescu	Georges	LoN	902	1	1141	2	3602	1
Nitobe	Inazo	LoN	584	2	724	7	2181	3
Drummond	Eric	LoN	471	3	629	8	1695	4
De Halecki	Oscar	LoN	361	4	583	9	1567	5
Luchaire	Julien	IIIC	248	5	1268	1	2663	2
Harada	Ken	LoN	159	6	338	12	618	18
Destrée	Jules	ICIC	130	7	392	11	1258	7
De Reynold	Gonzague	ICIC	109	8	322	13	985	11
Bergson	Henri	ICIC	104	9	249	17	778	13
Hallsten-Kallia	Arnie	LoN	103	10	246	18	500	22
Vos v. Steenwijk	Jacob Evert	IIIC	49	21	1028	3	1322	6
Prezzolini	Giuseppe	IIIC	35	30	947	4	1078	8
Rothbarth	Margarete	IIIC	10	110	925	5	1011	10
Picht	Werner	IIIC	9	128	876	6	939	12
Dupierreux	Richard	IIIC	44	24	431	10	654	17
Murray	Gilbert	ICIC	100	11	293	14	1038	9

demonstrate something that is immediately evident; rather, it is used as part of a research process to test and confirm hypotheses and facilitate the emergence of questions that are absent from traditional approaches. In our case, the overrepresentation of administrative actors from the League of Nations and the Institute compared to experts from the ICIC and the scientific community might seem obvious to the researcher who regularly uses these archives, but precisely establishing the role of each actor in the structuring of exchanges over the years is a way to overcome the natural reflex to take their presence for granted and focus only on the period's brilliant political or academic personalities. This first list alone (Tab. 1) thoroughly demonstrates that people like Georges Oprescu, Oscar de Halecki, and Ken Harada occupy an essential place in the structure, even though they are generally in the shadow of experts like Bergson, Curie, or Einstein.

In concrete terms, we can see in Fig. 3 that the network does have the Committee cluster (in white) at its centre, but this cluster is only the interface between the two main hubs of the graph – the Secretariat of the League on the one hand and the Institute on the other. It is as if the ICIC was the point of contact between Geneva and Paris: it is at once topographically central and structurally peripheral, because the relational activity of the two administrations is much more intense. This observation is reinforced by an overlap analysis of the contacts outside these three groups, which is summarised in the Venn diagram (Fig. 3, top left). Indeed, if we focus on the multitude of black spots in the network – the 2,878 individuals who do not sit on a body that is directly active in the organisation of intellectual cooperation, who make up the overwhelming majority of the actors despite their small size – we can calculate the three groups' capacity to connect with the scientific, literary, artistic, and diplomatic communities of the 1920s. This calculation enables us to verify our visual intuition about the poor connectivity of the ICIC group. Only a handful of people are connected only to the experts on the Committee (17), while both the Institute and the Secretariat have large communities of contacts (822 each). However, the central position of the ICIC becomes meaningful in the overlap analysis, as it appears in more than 80% of the cases where an external actor is simultaneously connected to the LoN and the IIIC (468). The Committee shares more common contacts with the LoN Secretariat (267) than with the IIIC administration (24) – quite logically, since their history together is longer.

3.2 The Notion of “Betweenness Centrality”: A Clue for Reinterpreting the Role of International Civil Servants

The notion of betweenness centrality disrupts the conception of what the “centre” of a network might consist of. Because of its capacity to reveal fundamental structural elements at the interface between large, dense, and highly visible groups, this family of concepts has been particularly prized in the social sciences since the debates around the notion of “weak ties” (Granovetter 1973). Like degree centrality, which counts the number of contacts linked to each vertex, it has nothing to do with a “centre” in the geographical sense of the term.

Betweenness measures a node's ability to be at the intersection of several distinct groups. It is based “upon the frequency with which a point falls between pairs of other points on the shortest or geodesic paths connecting them” (Freeman 1979). The name of this centrality metric, “betweenness”, serves to remind us that the intuition that forged it is closely linked to the notion of circulation in a graph: to calculate the shortest paths between points and highlight their steps

to identify the intermediate “bridges” is the domain of the analysis of “key passages” that are capable of opening or locking certain portions of the network to others. Depending on the application, these nodes are therefore both positions of power and vulnerable places. Freeman (1979, 221) makes this filiation explicit when he recalls that twenty years before him, Bavelas (1948) and Shaw (1954) “suggested that when a person is strategically located on the communication paths linking pairs of others, that person is central”. He adds that betweenness is “useful as an index of the potential of a point for control of communication”.

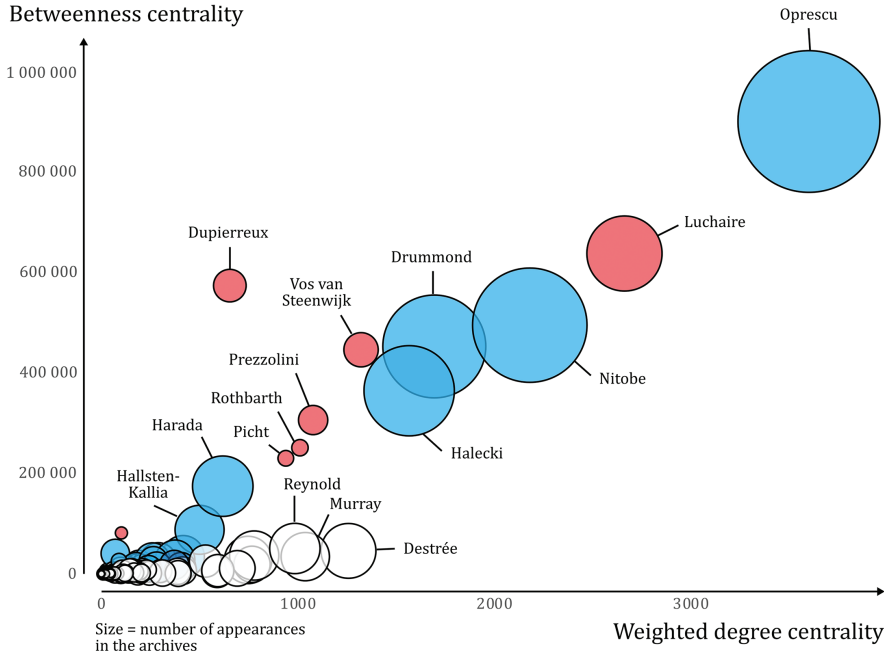
Who are the “bridges” in the intellectual cooperation network? Here, if an actor is at the intersection of two communities – of two groups that have little or no relationship with each other – it is because he or she is indexed in files that deal with themes that are distant enough from each other that they do not gather the same list of correspondents. Rather than “intermediary” individuals, we should speak of “generalist” personalities who participate in exchanges in various fields; in fact, the term “controllers” or “gatekeepers” would be more appropriate for describing these individuals. In contrast, having a low betweenness indicates that an individual is probably very specialised. We notice in Fig. 4 that high betweenness centrality is a rare characteristic that only the main administrators of intellectual cooperation possess. Out of 3,000 individuals, only about 30 have a significant betweenness value (vertical axis of Fig. 3) – or 1% of the individuals. Among this small group, a few dozen stand out. For example, the secretary of the Section and the ICIC, Georges Oprescu, appears nearly 900,000 times on the shortest theoretical path between two points of the graph. This value does not reflect the number of times he transmits a message, but rather the statistical potentiality that his position offers him. Clearly, the general secretaries, undersecretaries, and section secretaries are the actors who touch all areas of the organisation, because of their political and technical coordination activities. Unlike the experts who sit on the plenary committee and on some sub-committees, this secretarial work involves all areas without distinction.

This apparently trivial information about the importance of international civil servants in a documentary network²⁴ is not the only lesson to be learned from the use of betweenness centrality. By looking at the opposite side of this observation, we can ask another question: Who are the actors who we would have initially imagined to form part of the neuralgic centre of the exchanges

²⁴ The study of the administration of the League of Nations is a recent practice in its own right – see Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou (2017 and 2019). If it seems trivial to recall the importance of the role of the civil servants and “little hands” of this great bureaucratic machine, we should not forget that for half a century the ICIC was considered almost solely from the perspective of its own experts.

The betweenness centrality shows how many times a vertex is on the shortest path between two other vertices of the graph. A high betweenness centrality generally indicates that this point is a "bridge" in the network.

Betweenness centrality



The degree centrality is a simple counting of the number of edges around a specific vertex (number of vertices that are connected to it). The weighted degree centrality takes the weight of the relation into account (if two people co-occur more than once).

Fig. 4: Comparison of the distribution of two metrics, weighted degree centrality and betweenness centrality: both are correlated in most cases for IIC members (red) and the Secretariat (blue), but not for ICIC members (white).

who are not, in the end, people who create links? Of course, most of them are members of the ICIC itself.

The difference between the members of the Committee, the Secretariat of the League of Nations, and the staff of the Institute is even more glaring when we compare weighted degree and betweenness in a systematic way. Indeed, it is striking that the interpretation of this measure as an opposition between “experts” and “generalists” applies perfectly: all the actors identified as being part of the Committee (in white in Fig. 4) appear below the trend that runs through the scatterplot composed of the members of the Section and the ICIC (in blue

and red). In the whole network, the betweenness centrality of a given actor is on average 80 times higher than that actor's weighted degree – an unsurprising correlation, since the more contacts one has, the more likely one is to be on the information path. This ratio rises to 130 times higher for the 500 most connected actors. Yet within this network, the betweenness of ICIC members is only 30 times higher on average than their weighted degree. In Fig. 4, although they have a weighted degree that is quite comparable to that of the three section heads of the Paris institute – Jacob Evert Vos van Steenwijk, Giuseppe Prezzolini, and Margarete Rothbarth (on the horizontal axis) – and they appear much more often in the committee's archives (the size of the circles), prominent individuals such as Jules Destrée, Gilbert Murray, and Gonzague de Reynold appear ten times less often in the position of “intermediaries” (on the vertical axis). IIC officials benefit greatly from their institution's desire to make contact with as many people as possible as quickly as possible. One can find traces of this proactivity in the ICIC archives: in most cases, these were large-scale “networking” campaigns with the scientific and cultural world, started in order to understand this terrain and establish the Institute's legitimacy in the eyes of these future partners.

This result does not call into question the influence of the members of the Committee, whose massive presence in the documents shows that they are central actors in intellectual cooperation, but it qualifies their presence according to the presence of other actors who are more “unavoidable” than them, even if they are less present or less well known. This is typical of a structural perspective, which simply highlights the fact that although the ICIC's members are very active, they are only marginally involved in the wide range of intellectual cooperation issues dealt with by the League of Nations.

This analysis of betweenness centrality more explicitly demonstrates something that was already visible in the network: the ICIC's experts are the centre of gravity of intellectual cooperation, but they are paradoxically on the periphery of the two-headed LoN-IIC system, which contains the actors who are really the link creators. In other words, the ICIC is indeed a “bridge” between the LoN and the IIC (as seen in Fig. 3, top left), but not outwardly. Of course, this chapter only addresses the period around the creation of the ICIC and the IIC, and we are observing this situation through the prism of the League archives.²⁵ It is therefore particularly interesting to note that by 1927, even though it has only

²⁵ And not that of the IIC, even if this bias is largely compensated for by the fact that the archives contain many copies of documents from Paris, just as the IIC archives are full of copies of documents from Geneva.

been active for a handful of years, the Parisian Institute is already an essential hub. It will continue to strengthen this position until the 1930s, when things took a turn.

4 Intellectual Cooperation After the 1930 Reform: Temporarily Regaining Control?

In order to understand the reasons for the structural change that took place during the 1930s, it is necessary to take the measure of what the IIIC becomes after only a few years of activity under the direction of Julien Luchaire. On April 1, 1927, the Institute has no less than 69 officials.²⁶ However, the Institute's offices are also filled with a host of trainees and temporary employees who are rarely counted in the reports sent to the League of Nations. This short-term workforce, made up of young men and women from all over Europe and beyond,²⁷ boosts the number of employees: in fact, the IIIC has 119 employees in 1926, and 143 in 1928 (Renoliet 1999, 187–88) – double the number announced by Julien Luchaire at the time and three to four times more than the ICIC projected when it drew up the first plans for its executive body. Moreover, as it grew, the IIIC took over the liaison with the National Committees for Intellectual Cooperation, thus mechanically increasing its potential number of delegates, correspondents, and relationships.

4.1 Challenging the Parisian Institute

The cumbersome nature of the IIIC's administration is remarked upon from the very first years of its activity. As early as March 1927, Alfred Zimmern, Professor of International Relations at Oxford and head of the Institute's General Affairs Section, expresses his disagreement with the current governance to the Under-Secretary General in charge of the International Offices Section, Alfred Dufour-Féronce. Pleading for a lighter Institute, a “centre of intellectual life and stimulus” organised as a permanent and organic conference of intellectuals rather than an office set in stone, he confides that the IIIC should be “a comparatively small body

²⁶ List of the Institute's employees, transmitted to the LoN in a letter from Gilmore to Oprescu, 1 April 1927, IIIC Document A.VII.4.

²⁷ It should be noted that half of them are French. On this subject, see Manigand (2003).

of officials [. . .] who will play something the part of the wandering scholars of the age of humanism, maintaining at Paris, and conveying in frequent journeys, both a high intellectual standard and a sense of close association between science and peace”.²⁸ Zimmern’s conception of an institute as a place of exchange is clearly opposed to Luchaire’s vision of a proper international organisation.

The first signs of a desire for more in-depth reform emerge in the summer of 1928. Preparing for the July session of the ICIC, Gilbert Murray, who has succeeded Hendrik Lorentz as president of the Committee, observes that “the Institute is still regarded with a certain lack of sympathy”, noting that “the bureaucratic façade, with its complete list of sections, its special Information Service and its meetings of State Delegates, seems to these critics somewhat too stately for the work done inside”.²⁹ The machine is imposing, but it does not produce much. The Under-Secretary General assures Murray of his support when he replies that “it will be difficult to clip the branches of the tree which has grown too fast but, if you so desire, I will do my best to assist you”.³⁰ Is this a “plot against the IIIC” by an ICIC president who, upon assuming this position after the death of Lorentz, wishes to bring it “out of its lethargy and restore its primacy within the [organisation]” (Renoliet 1999, 86)? This analysis would reinforce our hypothesis about the pendulum swing between Paris and Geneva, but it may misunderstand the intentions of Murray, who seems to seek above all to make the great enterprise of intellectual cooperation viable in the long term, since he explains to Dufour-Féronce that “if we tackled one of these [modifications of policy] one of the American foundations would give us the funds”.³¹

The debate about the Institute culminates the following year, in the July 1929 conference of representatives of the National Committees on Intellectual Cooperation. This is a key moment for the organisation, and one that can be seen as the official starting point of the reform that will keep the ICIC on its toes for the next two years. In his opening remarks, Murray politely comments that the criticisms are not “made against the preponderant French influence that was to be feared in the work of the Institute”, adding that “this observation is to the credit of the Director of the Institute”.³² It is clear, however, that many actors indirectly point out the IIIC director’s style of governance and the freedom he has taken in orchestrating the bureaucratic expansion of his institute. Luchaire is in an uncomfortable position: as Renoliet writes, “the wind of criticism is blowing too hard

²⁸ Letter, Zimmern to Dufour-Féronce, 13 March 1927, LoN Archives 13C/37637/62388, 2.

²⁹ Note, Murray (to Dufour-Féronce), 15 June 1928, LoN Archives 5B/396/5614, 1.

³⁰ Letter, Dufour-Féronce to Murray, 22 June 1928, LoN Archives 5B/396/5614, 2.

³¹ Letter, Murray to Dufour-Féronce, 18 June 1928, LoN Archives 5B/396/5614.

³² ICIC Minutes, 11th session, 6th meeting, 24 July 1929, C.342.M.121.1929.XII, 44.

and Luchaire has to make the best of it and accept the reform [. . .] while trying to limit its scope” (1999, 94).

The delegates agree to create a “committee of enquiry” in charge of auditing the IIIC, but this committee is nevertheless forced to spare French interests, as stipulated by the president of the Committee. “In this small committee”, he declares, “the French point of view should be fully represented”.³³ France is given veto power, even if it is difficult to imagine that it will directly oppose the coming reform. Moreover, the mere fact that Murray explicitly mentions the “French point of view” implicitly reveals that antagonism does indeed exist.

4.2 The Turning Point of 1930: The “Intellectual Cooperation Organisation”

Although the creation of the committee of enquiry in charge of the audit is not debated, its vote at the Assembly of the League of Nations in September 1929 leads Julien Luchaire to make a new mistake. In a column for the *Journal de Genève*, he anticipates the results of the reform by writing that “it is therefore probable that we will continue along the path followed up to now, with the corrections of detail that experience will have suggested”.³⁴ Commenting on this risky strategy, Lord Hugh Dalton clearly implies that the British delegation does not share the same interpretation when he threateningly declares that

It is possible that the Director has slightly misunderstood the meaning of the resolution now before the Assembly. The resolution does not necessarily imply a vote of confidence in all those engaged in the work of intellectual cooperation; it emphasises the need for an investigation, and I think it would have been better if the Director had reserved his observations for later, to be communicated to the Committee [of enquiry] which is to be established.³⁵

In the spring of 1930, the reform process has been underway for almost a year and French support is gradually cracking under Julien Luchaire’s feet: the director of the Institute seems to be losing the support of the head of the League of Nations department at the Quai d’Orsay, René Massigli (Renoliet 1999, 99–100), and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself, where the opinion is spreading that

³³ ICIC Minutes, 11th session, 7th meeting, 25 July 1929, C.342.M.121.1929.XII, 56.

³⁴ Julien Luchaire, « La coopération intellectuelle », *Journal de Genève*, 18 Sept. 1929, no. 255, 1.

³⁵ Tenth Assembly, 16th plenary meeting, 21 September 1929, LoN Official Journal, special supplement no. 75, 137.

in order to preserve French influence over the IIIC, a change of leadership is necessary.

The fears are justified: the audit report makes a severe judgement on the administration of the Institute, and while it concludes that “the integrity of Mr. Luchaire does not seem to us to be in doubt”, it underlines that “it is not doubtful nevertheless that a certain fantasy and a great prodigality inspired most of the acts of his management”.³⁶ The financial report is so explosive that the committee of enquiry decides out of modesty to simply append it to its own text without comment.³⁷ If everyone seems to agree on the need to preserve Luchaire from the potentially disastrous public consequences of the disclosure of such an audit, it is because his resignation is already almost certain. On April 27— one day before discovering the contents of the financial report — Luchaire writes to Roland-Marcel to confide in him his desire to “offer next July [. . .] the termination of his contract”. In a letter to Paul Painlevé, the president of the committee of enquiry admits that Luchaire’s resignation “is indispensable” and that “if he had not taken the initiative, we would have recommended it to him”.³⁸ He also adds that the committee is asking the former president of the Council of Ministers to obtain the French government’s guarantee that Luchaire will regain his position as Inspector General of the Ministry of Public Education, which he left in 1925, as compensation, and so that he can still have the opportunity to “serve the cause of intellectual cooperation”. This is a more-than-symbolic victory for those who are contemptuous of the IIIC, the end of a glorious era, and the concrete beginning of a rebalancing of the organisation as a whole towards Geneva.

While the names of the sociologist André Siegfried and the co-director of the Graduate Institute of International Studies Paul Mantoux come up in conversations about who will take over the direction of the IIIC, it is very clear that Henri Bonnet, who has been with the Information Section for ten years, is the favourite of the main actors involved in reforming the Institute. For the French government, Bonnet, an administrator who benefitted from experience in the Secretariat of the League of Nations, is an ideal compromise candidate. In the end, Bonnet’s appointment shows that the Paris/Geneva oscillation is implicit in the negotiations over the future of the organisation for intellectual cooperation. His personality — and above all his background in the secretariat and as Joseph Avenol’s chief of staff for many years — guarantees that he will not be resistant to any instructions from the League as the new director, even if he is

³⁶ Vivaldi Report, 25 April 1930, LoN Archives 5B/13977/19193, 23–24.

³⁷ ICIC Minutes, 2nd meeting, 23 July 1930, C.428.M.192.1930.XII. 19.

³⁸ Letter, Roland-Marcel to Painlevé, 1 May 1930, LoN Archives 5B/13977/19528, 1–2.

less well known than some of his competitors.³⁹ Comparing him to Julien Luchaire, whom he calls “a high French civil servant devoted to his country”, Renoliet describes Henri Bonnet as “one of these new international civil servants secreted by the League” (1999, 329).

From the fall of 1930 to the summer of 1931, the executive committee and the new director proceed to reorganise the Paris Institute. In the end, there is only limited reduction in its personnel, but the reform, which defines the ICIC and the IIIC as a homogeneous whole under a common direction, is a step forward that lays a solid foundation for the decade to come. One indication of the maturity of the new structure is that the League of Nations accepts the term “Intellectual Cooperation Organisation” (ICO) to refer to the system as a whole, although this has no budgetary or official impact.

In concrete terms, as Fig. 5 illustrates, the IIIC and ICIC are thus simplified by the same unifying dynamic, which breaks down the overly hermetic divisions between their components to allow for better consideration of the overlaps between them. In the previous rigid system, it was possible for some sections to be underemployed while others received all the requests (this is expressed graphically in Fig. 5 by ensembles rather than purely hierarchical relationships, since the *ad hoc* services are no longer permanent bodies). However, it should be noted that under the guise of simplifying the ICO’s functioning, the flexibility introduced by this reorganisation largely benefits the Institute, since a non-negligible part of the activity of the sub-committees will henceforth be taken over by committees of experts who meet in Paris for practical reasons. In addition, its director is still French, despite the initial recommendation.

4.3 Preparing for the Post-League of Nations Era

In the second half of the 1930s, the diplomatic context and the inability of the League of Nations to impose itself on the political terrain pushes the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation to seek to guarantee its durability by preparing to disassociate itself from the Geneva institution. The study of this dynamic is central to the works of Renoliet (1999) and Bekri (1990), who both endeavour to show the continuity between the ICO and UNESCO. This approach is also advanced by Pemberton (2012); by Pernet (2014), who takes a slightly more focused look and

³⁹ Paul Painlevé contacted the following people in addition to Henri Bonnet: the sociologist André Siegfried, the philosopher Célestin Bouglé, the historian Paul Mantoux, the professor of literature Fernand Baldensperger, and the Germanist Edmond Vermeil.

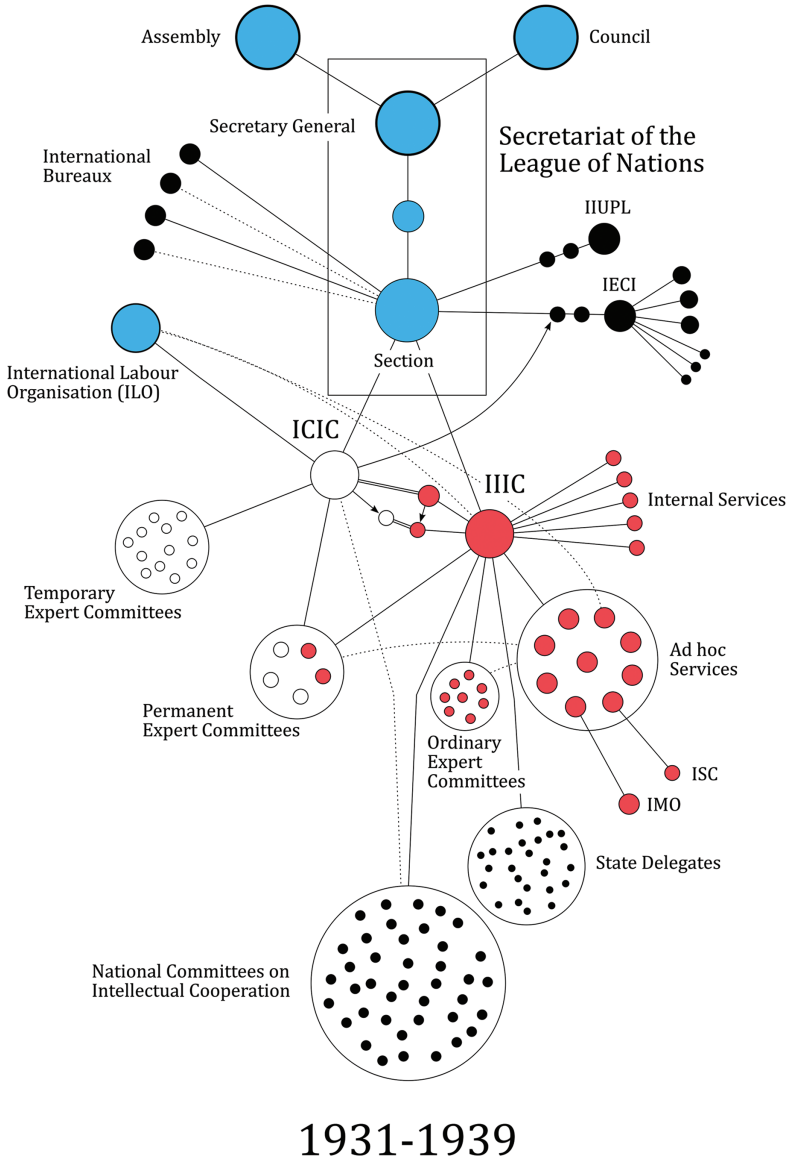


Fig. 5: Organisational chart of the third stage of the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation (continued from Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

nuances the continuity somewhat; and in Pita González's (2015) work on the evolution of the concept of cooperation. For this reason, we propose to focus here on the last surge of the "base": a reform initiated in 1938 that would have given new life to the ICO if the Second World War had not permanently interrupted its work.

In July 1936, Gilbert Murray laments: "Perhaps are we like workmen carefully decorating the ceiling of a house that is about to be blown to pieces by artillery".⁴⁰ But attempting to "raise the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation above politics and even above the political League of Nations" – to "prevent the League of Minds from being dragged into this failure"⁴¹ – also means preparing for the post-LoN world. This reflection takes a concrete form a year later during the great gathering of the 43 national committees for intellectual cooperation, held from July 5–9, 1937 in Paris. It was during the previous meeting of this kind that the reform of the Institute was initiated, which shows that despite their very marginal position in the organisation, the national committees are capable of collectively triggering major reforms. This is an important moment that convenes more than 125 official participants – a kind of "intellectual general assembly",⁴² as the Danish minister Peter Munch points out. In Munch's view, it is necessary "to open a supplementary act to the 1924 agreements, which would be proposed for signature to States and which would give the Institute the character possessed by other international organisations founded by collective agreements or treaties, while preserving its closer connection with the League of Nations". Gonzague de Reynold agrees, recalling that "the first idea of intellectual cooperation was not to put intellectuals at the service of the League of Nations, but the other way around".⁴³ The spirit of 1929, when everyone agreed to ask the League of Nations to strengthen its control over the Institute, is long gone.

The act is not opposed at the ICIC, and it is approved by the League of Nations in the fall of 1937. Invited to take the lead on this project, it is now France that has the initiative and holds the future of intellectual cooperation in its hands. It

40 ICIC Minutes, 18th session, 1st meeting, 13 July 1936, LoN Archives, ICIC volume 1935–36, 5–7.

41 Letter, Reynold to Tewksbury, 27 April 1953, LoN Archives LO 004 R 46, 3.

42 Report, Munch, "Structure de l'organisation de coopération intellectuelle", included in "Actes de la deuxième conférence générale des commissions nationales de coopération intellectuelle", Paris, 5–9 July 1937, C.530.M.369.1937.XII, LoN Archives 5B/14390/32496, 49–50.

43 Report, Reynold, "Rôle de la coopération intellectuelle dans l'organisation du monde contemporain", included in "Actes de la deuxième conférence générale des commissions nationales de coopération intellectuelle", Paris, 5–9 July 1937, C.530.M.369.1937.XII, LoN Archives 5B/14390/32496, 58.

convenes a diplomatic conference at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris from November 30 to December 3, 1938, and some fifty delegations respond.⁴⁴ Everyone agrees about the technical issues related to the international act, but what will happen to the relationship with the League of Nations and its Committee on Intellectual Cooperation? Although the ICIC is implicitly included in the third paragraph of the preamble of the act, which mentions that the governments have “noted the value of the efforts made [. . .] by the International Intellectual Cooperation Organisation and the various organs constituting it”, the official document itself does not mention the Committee.⁴⁵

Indeed, the new organisation has now virtually cut its ties with the League of Nations, as shown in Fig. 6. The president of the ICIC, despite being “a convinced supporter of the League of Nations” and seeing “in the principles of this League the hope of the world”, nevertheless betrays a certain discouragement when he notes that “it must be admitted [. . .] that, in the great affairs of the politics of war and peace, the Geneva machine, for the time being, does not work”.⁴⁶ The rebirth of a new intellectual cooperation thus appears to have taken place on the ashes of the old one, and one can only conclude that France, by being the depositary of the act, has finally dispossessed the League of Nations of a body that it once strove to create within that League. But for how long?

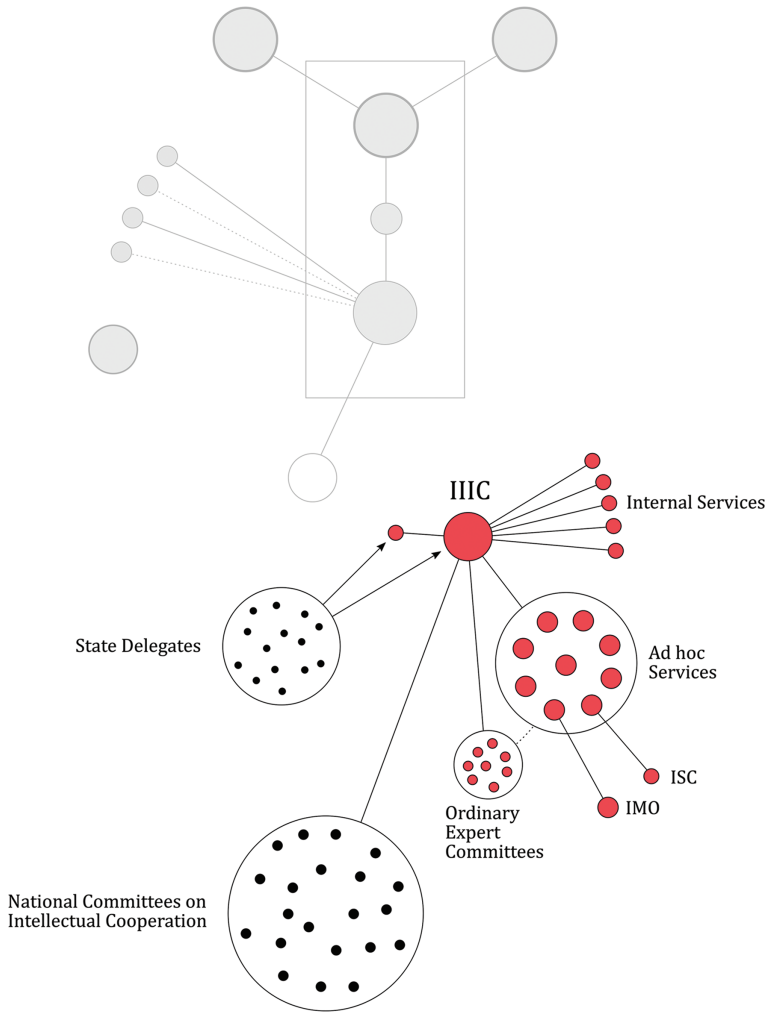
On May 1, 1939, 37 states sign the act.⁴⁷ However, only Portugal ratifies it. France, Switzerland, Norway, Latvia, and Romania follow suit by the summer of 1939, in a race against the clock that starts as soon as France enters the war, since the act requires eight ratifications to enter into force, and any subsequent denunciation that brings the number of high contracting parties below this figure suspends its validity. When Poland and the Netherlands join those first six nations in January 1940, the international act officially enters into force on January 31, 1940, and it is promulgated by the French government a month later. But the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation is already a shadow of its former

44 « Communication du Gouvernement Français au sujet de l'Acte international concernant la Coopération intellectuelle », communicated to the Council, 14 January 1939, LoN Archives 5B/33863/36476, 1.

45 « Acte International concernant la Coopération Intellectuelle », made in Paris on 3 December 1938, LoN Archives 5B/33863/36476, 2.

46 Minutes of the Diplomatic Conference concerning Intellectual Cooperation, 4th plenary meeting, 2 December 1938, Paris, LoN Archives 5B/33863/35946, 70–71.

47 Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Union of South Africa, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia (Renoliet 1999, 146).



1940

Fig. 6: Organisational chart of the last stage, planned but not realised, of the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation.

self, and most of its meetings have been postponed. Subsequent ratifications by Egypt, Mexico, and South Africa in the following months are not enough to enable it to resume its activities, and it closes on June 9, 1940.

5 Conclusion

In this article, we have proposed to combine two approaches in an attempt to understand the pendulum swing in the world of intellectual cooperation between Geneva and Paris from 1919 to 1939 – the shift from centre to periphery and back again. The first is a study of the institutional phases and the changes of equilibrium in the organisation of the bodies in charge of this question. The second is a network analysis of the tens of thousands of documents in the Committee’s archives, which enables us to gain an overview of the structure of relations between groups and individuals.

In reconstituting the organigrams of the four phases of the institution by means of a simple codification, we have developed an additional tool for understanding the object of our study. While administrative inflation may have been part of the ICO’s downfall, its dense structure and well documented organisational evolution makes it a rich case study for the history of international cultural and scientific institutions. Fig. 1, Fig. 2 and Fig. 5 allow us to grasp the structural evolution of the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation and its organs. One can clearly trace the lack of resources at the beginning, the bureaucratic inflation that followed the creation of the IIIC in the late 1920s, and the flexibilisation of the reform at the beginning of the following decade, when the Institute’s committees of experts and services became ad hoc tools and ceased to be fixed bodies in the organisational chart. The last phase, which was never carried out, shows that the logical maturation of such an organisation goes through an autonomisation, like the international bureaux that pre-dated the League of Nations, which the latter generally failed to integrate into its “system”. In the background of these organisational charts, we see the back and forth between the two geographical clusters of activity: the centre is in Geneva first, even if the creation of the ICIC owes much to the French delegates, then it moves to Paris when they decide to shift into a higher gear; then it returns to Geneva again, with a less independent Institute in the hands of a very “Genevois” Frenchman, only to leave permanently for Paris when the organisation separates from the League of Nations.

In addition to enabling a global reading, modelling the ICIC archives as a network has made it possible to extract graph metrics and compare them in

order to derive a kind of measure of the diversity of the subjects in which individuals and groups intervene: the relationship between number of connections and betweenness (the ability to make “bridges”), explained in Fig. 4, clearly distinguishes the members of the Secretariat from the members of the ICIC. And the representatives of the IIIC in Paris occupy a very similar position to the international civil servants of the League of Nations, despite the fact that they appear much more rarely in the archives. This illustrates that the Institute played an important role in the activity and structure of intellectual cooperation from its creation. Structurally, it is worth noting that the very notions of centre and periphery are renewed by the central position that the two secretariats (LoN and IIIC) occupy in relation to a Committee that is clearly peripheral in terms of its ability to create connections with the outside world.

What conclusions can be drawn from France’s involvement in intellectual cooperation? Essentially, French efforts partially created intellectual cooperation and then saved it by offering it an Institute, at a time when it was still only concretised by a temporary committee within the League of Nations. At the same time, French control, both in terms of form and content – i.e., the very definition of intellectual cooperation and its technical and bureaucratic organisation – seemed to compromise the Institute’s progress with all the partners who were opposed to France, such as the non-Latin countries and the American philanthropic foundations. Until the end, even the British Gilbert Murray struggled to get his own circles to adopt intellectual cooperation; in 1938, he wrote to the former Prime Minister of South Africa, Jan Smut, that “unfortunately the British Empire still maintains its mistrust of all that is intellectual”.⁴⁸ It is probably because the French definition of intellectual cooperation prevailed from the very first hours of the discussions about its own creation that the Committee was never able to seduce the British and the Americans, whose support it needed to reach its effectiveness threshold. This analysis is shared by the Swiss Gonzague de Reynold, who writes retrospectively that “England’s hostility to cooperation” was one of the main factors in the Committee’s failure, and could be explained by the fact that England “saw it as a French idea, a French work, at a time when it feared that a victorious France – or one who believed herself to be victorious – would take on too much importance in Europe”.⁴⁹ The installation of the League of Nations in Geneva, a secondary, “peripheral” European city, was precisely intended to neutralise the “centres”, the great European capitals. At no price did the other powers wish to see Paris take over this position and impose the primacy of its

⁴⁸ Letter, Murray to Smuts, 8 December 1938, cited by Smith (1960, 200).

⁴⁹ Letter, Reynold to Tewksbury, 27 April 1953, LoN Archives LO 004 R 46, 4.

cultural diplomacy. The “League of Minds” was definitively not able to rise above the political tensions of the “League of Nations”.

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