



## Introduction: Historical geographies of internationalism, 1900–1950



Jake Hodder \*, Stephen Legg, Mike Heffernan

School of Geography, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Available online 4 October 2015

#### Keywords:

Historical geography  
Internationalism

### ABSTRACT

This introduction to a special issue on historical geographies of internationalism begins by situating the essays that follow in relation to the on-going refugee crisis in Europe and beyond. This crisis has revealed, once again, both the challenges and the potential of internationalism as a form of political consciousness and the international as a scale of political action. Recent work has sought to re-conceptualise internationalism as the most urgent scale at which governance, political activity and resistance must operate when confronting the larger environmental, economic, and strategic challenges of the twenty-first century. Although geographers have only made a modest contribution to this work, we argue that they have a significant role to play. The essays in this special issue suggest several ways in which a geographical perspective can contribute to rethinking the international: by examining spaces and sites not previously considered in internationalist histories; by considering the relationship between the abstractions of internationalism and the geographical and historical specificities of its performance; and by analysing the interlocking of internationalism with other political projects. We identify, towards the end of this essay, seven ways that internationalism might be reconsidered geographically in future research through; its spatialities and temporalities; the role of newly independent states; science and research; identity politics; and with reference to its performative and visual dimensions.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

As we write this introduction, in early September 2015, an international crisis of historic proportions is playing out along the borders and within the transport networks of 'fortress Europe'. Like many international crises, this one was foretold, and largely ignored. Almost a year ago, in November 2014, Pope Francis addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg, chastising its members for turning their backs on the thousands of men, women and children, many fleeing war-torn regions of the Middle East and North Africa, seeking refuge in Europe. Francis expressed particular concern that the European Union had allowed the Mediterranean, Rome's *mare nostrum*, "to become a vast graveyard" for the thousands who had already drowned attempting to reach the shores of Italy and Greece.<sup>1</sup> Since then the crisis has steadily worsened and as we write today the numbers of refugees seeking sanctuary in Europe has reached levels not witnessed since the end of the Second World War.

Media representations have ranged from the earnestly sympathetic to the callously indifferent, the latter exemplified, with a

certain sad inevitability, by Britain's *Daily Mail* which carried an article in May 2015 under the headline "How many more can Kos take?", a surreal commentary, presented without a trace of irony, about the difficulties facing British holidaymakers on the Greek island whose enjoyment had been spoiled by "thousands of boat people from Syria and Afghanistan". The subheading read: "Summer break labelled a 'nightmare' by British holidaymakers, who won't be coming back if it's a refugee camp next year".<sup>2</sup> Thankfully, more responsible news agencies have provided powerful critiques of the humiliating treatment refugees have received in makeshift encampments at border towns and train stations from Calais to Budapest.

In the past few days, the self-assured realism of this 'keep-out' rhetoric has been confronted and partially challenged by a brutal photo-aesthetics that has encapsulated, more effectively than words, the terrible plight of refugees. The disturbing image of a Hungarian lorry, abandoned by people traffickers on an Austrian motorway with the bodies of 71 suffocated migrants inside was compounded by a heart-rending photograph of a Turkish policeman tenderly retrieving the lifeless body of a three-old Syrian boy, Alan Kurdi, still in his smartest clothes and shoes, from the gently lapping waves on a beach near the popular resort of Bodrum.<sup>3</sup> This latter image, which has provoked widespread discussion

\* Corresponding author. School of Geography, University of Nottingham, Sir Clive Granger Building, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD, UK. Tel.: +4401158468402; Fax: +44 (0)115 95 15249.

E-mail address: [jake.hodder@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:jake.hodder@nottingham.ac.uk) (J. Hodder).

about the exploitation-after-life of Alan's image, went viral almost immediately under the hash-tag #KiyiyaVuranInsanlik ("humanity washed ashore"), accompanied by a line from the poem 'Home' by the British-Somali Warsan Shire: "no one puts their children in a boat, unless the water is safer than the land"<sup>4</sup>

Shire's poem highlights the elemental geography of this crisis – the violence of sea versus the violence of land – and hints at the more complex geographies of wars and uprisings that provide the explanatory framework within which this crisis has unfolded: the geographies of the 'Arab Spring' and its irresolution in many countries; the connections, geographical and historical, between these events and the earlier invasions by the United States and its allies of Afghanistan after September 2001 and of Iraq two years later; or the postcolonial geographies of Bangladesh and its Rohingya refugees. Underlying the apprehension of these geographies is a need to rethink scale: at what scale should we comprehend these human dramas? What is it that is moving? What is the scalar *object* of this crisis – a population, an ethnicity, a community, a family, a child, a *subject*?

In addressing these questions a historical framing of the crisis is essential. Understanding the historical lineage of these crises such as those displaced *within* Europe during and after the Second World War to the League of Nations' Committee for Refugees, established in 1921 to assist the 1.5 million people who had fled the Russian Revolution, is both vital to understanding our contemporary moment, but also to understanding the formations of 'the international' as a social and political idea. In the near-century since the League's founding, the world has experienced de-colonisation, the Cold War, neo-imperialism, rampant globalisation, and the rise of the 'BRIC' geo-economies, yet many of the challenges of internationalism remain troublingly familiar – revealed so starkly by the on-going crisis in the Middle East and Africa.

Whilst this is unquestionably an *international* crisis, one is particularly struck by the inadequacy of writings on internationalism to provide a satisfying analytical lens to comprehend its diverse meanings and responses. With some exceptions, accounts of internationalism remain overly procedural and technocratic: detailing how an international machinery of leagues and institutions relate to one another in terms of legal jurisdiction, electoral mandate, etc. This is reinforced by how the international is often framed in popular discourse as a bureaucratic scale or extension of the nation state. To some extent this reflects how "internationalist" ideas emerged out of dissatisfaction with the emotional registers of patriotism, nationalism and jingoism. Yet it points to an important gap in our understanding of how everyday people, in everyday places, through routine and everyday acts have a powerful sympathetic and emotive understanding of internationalism, and invest the international with a global sense of duty, hospitality and openness. The refugee crisis, if read through nationalist media commentaries or the reaction of the United Nations or European Union alone, seems to demonstrate both the crippling failure of the 'international community' to respond in any kind of coherent, decisive or passionate way, and also a tragic failing of internationalism more generally as a cultural, historical and political idea.

Yet, anyone who witnessed coverage of the first refugees being applauded with water and food on the platforms of Munich's central station, the "refugees welcome" vigils across Europe, or the 70,000 petition signatures requesting that the BBC refer to these events as a "refugee crisis" rather than a "migrant crisis" must be struck by the extraordinary display of support and solidarity among millions of Europeans.<sup>5</sup> This, in many quarters, seemed at odds with their own governments' ill-chosen representations of the crisis. This included, for example, the British Prime Minister David Cameron's infamous channelling of a tried and tested colonial

discourse of "counter-insurgency" (Guha, 1983) in describing the migrants as a "swarm" or the British Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond's, previous claims that African migrants to the UK were threatening the country's standard of living.<sup>6</sup> Whilst the essays in this special issue do not address the refugee crisis directly, the on-going context of events in Europe and beyond starkly reveal both the urgent need for a more effective international solution, and the incredible difficulty in finding one; both the promise and problem of internationalism. The essays do not seek to provide an exhaustive historical account of internationalism, but rather they collectively examine a wider array of sites, people, and politics than is often considered when addressing internationalist thought and practice. Broadening the field of enquiry to settings and groups commonly overlooked, like many of the people now calling on their governments to open their borders to refugees, we argue is critically important to understanding the international crises of our own age.

### Why historical geographies of internationalism?

Across the arts, humanities, and political and social sciences there has been a re-engagement with the international as a concept, a scale, and a political and cultural affiliation. This has been founded on a shared agenda to re-think the potential of the international as the most urgent scale at which governance, political activity and resistance must operate when confronting the larger environmental, economic, and strategic challenges of the twenty-first century. Despite their global reach and ambitions, geographers have as yet made only modest contributions to this re-conceptualisation of the international. Geography's puzzling silence in this regard suggests that the discipline is still too narrowly constrained by national contexts and frameworks that have proved surprisingly resistant to internationalism, or perhaps more accurately geographers have a slight unease about the kind of hegemonic internationalism that increasingly characterises the discipline. The growing significance of national (and particularly Anglo-American) geographical conferences, specifically the annual conferences of the Royal Geographical Society-Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG) in the UK and the even more successful annual meetings of the Association of American Geographers, as the key 'international' events in the discipline's calendar, especially when compared with the conferences of the International Geographical Union itself, reinforces the sense that an Anglo-American version of geography has now become, at least to many Anglophones, the definition of the international. This sits in contrast to 100 years ago, for example, when French and German were considered equally seriously as important languages of scientific, and specifically geographical, communication.

The issue of language is important because whilst other disciplines such as mathematics, physics, economics and the natural sciences rely at least in part on their distinctive international languages of communication, human geography arguably relies more than ever before on conventional forms of written expression. This is especially true because maps, once the common visual language of all geographers, are now less widely deployed as *analytical* devices within the explanatory language of the discipline and have become instead the preserve of technical experts and specialists in Geographical Information Science and remote sensing. Whilst in the past all geographers, regardless of affiliation and sub-disciplinary interests, were expected to create maps and make their arguments, at least in part, through visual and cartographic means, the map has ceased to be part of the common language of the discipline in a way comparable to even the 1960s or 1970s, for example. Paradoxically this has coincided with a period in which maps, through the likes of GPS or Google Earth, have in a popular

sense become more democratically accessible than at any time prior. The demise of the map as a unifying language of geographers has, arguably, had the effect of accelerating the discipline's concentration among isolated spoken-language blocks and, this has meant in practice, a globalised form of English. The fact that so much geographical writing is now expressed in globalised English emphatically does not mean that the discipline has necessarily engaged, critically or otherwise, with the ideals or spirit of internationalism however.

As a quick review of the pages of *Political Geography* confirms, the international remains a problematic strategic category even for political geographers, despite their growing rapprochement with the larger discipline of International Relations. Where the word 'international' appears at all in the titles of *Political Geography* articles, it is almost invariably used as an adjective rather than a political concept worthy of interrogation in its own right. Our objective in bringing together the essays that comprise this special issue is, therefore, straightforward enough: we believe that geographers have something significant to add to the debates about the meanings and challenges of the international as a scale of political consciousness and political action, not least because these on-going discussions, especially as they are conducted within International Relations, have rarely acknowledged that internationalism has both a history and a geography. As each of the essays which follow reveal, internationalism in the first half of the twentieth century was created and enacted through specific sites, practices and people, an argument that echoes recent claims about the constitutive importance of location in the making of modern science (Livingstone, 2003). Though attentive to the extensive networks, vocabularies and imaginaries of internationalism, the essays published in this issue provide specific and detailed answers to the question: "where was the international?" (Legg, 2014).

In addressing this central question, the essays outlined below highlight the diverse and often uneven ways in which internationalism has been defined and deployed, both by practical political leaders and by academics, writers, and intellectuals of various kinds. In so doing, they follow some of the arguments developed almost three decades ago by the late Irish-born writer and international relations specialist Fred Halliday whose classic article from *International Affairs* still serves as an important introduction to this field of inquiry (Halliday, 1988). As Halliday noted, "while often phrased in unhelpfully facile terms, the idea of internationalism raises issues of considerable analytical and normative value" and that despite its many deficiencies, this most beleaguered and unfashionable of ideas remains the best critique of "the world of states complacent in their sovereignty, inflated with pride and national conceit and prone to war and hatred" (189). In developing his analysis of this 'cluster concept', by which he meant a term that has acquired various understandings and meanings without any one constituting a core definition, Halliday identified three different forms of internationalism that have often competed throughout the 20th century: a *liberal internationalism* rooted in political economy and inspired by traditional 18th and 19th century appeals to free trade and international co-operation between equal partners; a *hegemonic internationalism* shaped by a 'realpolitik' acceptance of the asymmetry of international relations and the necessarily dominant, neo-colonial role that rich and powerful countries have to play in enforcing and policing internationalism; and a *radical or revolutionary internationalism* inspired initially by Marxist theory though mobilised in different forms during the 20th century by a range of ideologically motivated actors whose objectives are connected solely by their common desire to overthrow established political structures. Following the perceptive and closely related comments of the political geographer John Agnew (2001), whose work on 'realist' and 'constructivist' approaches to the international

represents a major exception to the above generalisation, a central objective of this special issue is to consider how the forms of internationalism identified by Halliday, and potentially other variations as well, have been constituted by their historical geographies; to reveal and to problematise where and how different kinds of internationalism have been devised, deployed and enacted, both successfully or unsuccessfully, in the face of specific political challenges and crises.

In doing this, the special issue raises, directly and indirectly, a series of questions that have been addressed or alluded to in the broader literature. How does, for example, the international relate to the imperial, the colonial, or the global manifestation of US nationalism? Is it above it, contested by it, or complicit with it (Pedersen, 2015; Schmitt, 2011 [1939])? What are its racial assumptions, gendered practices and radical potential? And how can it be comprehended through regional and potentially radical internationalisms such as the *Black Atlantic* (Gilroy, 1993) or the *Black Pacific* (Shilliam, 2015)? What moral codes were used to inspire internationalism? Were they religious (Pan-Islamic, Muscular Christian), humanitarian (missionary, humanist) or secular (scientific, Marxist)? What political or cultural components would an international community consist of (institutions, congresses, unions, societies)? How would it be policed, protected or challenged (by international law, for example)? And, centrally, what are its geographies: who could articulate the international and from where? The answers to these questions begin to reveal the conceptual malleability, and the important difficulty, in defining or categorising internationalist thought, and yet it is precisely these questions which, in contemporary political debates, are too often ignored or overlooked. There is therefore, we believe, a real value and importance in bringing together historical and political geographies of internationalism.

The six papers of this special issue engage with the historical geographies of internationalism in diverse yet conversant ways. This collection emerged from three sessions entitled 'Historical Geographies of Internationalism' at the 2013 RGS-IBG International Conference to which some, though not all, of the authors in this special issue contributed.<sup>7</sup> All the papers in this special issue explore internationalism in the first half of the twentieth century which, though with earlier origins and later manifestations, was a vital historical juncture in the formulation and formalisation of the international. Collectively the issue seeks to give a sense of the breadth of internationalist thought and practice through a myriad of sites, people, and practices not often considered in traditional histories of internationalism. Whilst there has been a proliferation of recent work in International Relations and History, for example, focussed on the growth of a formalised institutional apparatus of internationalism during the period (especially within Europe), the papers in this special issue challenge and expand such a focus in several key ways.

First, the papers address new geographies, spaces and sites of the international and thereby force us to consider internationalism's diverse political manifestations. David Featherstone's account of subaltern maritime networks, for example, exposes the ship and the port as key sites in organising and conceptualising radical internationalist networks between diverse subaltern groups which were racialised and gendered in both productive and contested ways. He shows how anti-colonial internationalism 'from below' was fractured through specific sites and organising networks (such as the Seamen's Minority Movement in Cardiff) which are often overlooked in traditional histories of internationalism. Equally Mona Domosh's examination of the early 20th century work of the American agricultural giant International Harvester focuses on how the site of the farm as a laboratory and the American South as a region was imagined as a

domestic international, which existed apart from the broader American economic and political setting. Accordingly the technical solutions offered to farmers could be seamlessly transplanted from racialised populations of the American South, to the global South. This built the intellectual and ethical architecture for the developmental discourse which would occupy a central role in American foreign policy for more than a century.

Second, the papers in various ways ask us to interrogate the relationship between internationalism in the abstract and the geographical specifics of its creation in particular sites. Arnaud Brennetot, for example, questions the historical and geographical specificity of the normative values on which the doctrine of neoliberalism is based. He examines how a renewed geopolitical vision of liberal internationalism interlocked with the broader issues at stake in 1930s Paris and, as a result, how neoliberalism was understood in decidedly internationalist terms; welded to ever-greater interdependence across borders. By showing how the origins of neoliberalism rested on an inherently scalar reading of political power, he shows how the belief that state sovereignty should be delimited by the necessities of an open and competitive world economy was an understandable conviction for those faced with the particular historical and economic conditions of interwar Europe. Similarly, Jake Hodder uses literatures on conferencing to show how the pacifists who met at the 1949 World Pacifist Meeting in India sought to capitalise on the juxtaposition between the abstract and the particular to further their own peace and internationalist agenda. The essay shows how the conference was carefully staged to simultaneously seem both 'singularly free from any sense of geographical limitation' exemplifying a transcendent and universal pacifist ideal, whilst drawing extensively on the geographically and historically specific context of post-war India and 'the Land of Gandhi' to legitimise their claims within contemporary political debates.

Third, the essays reveal the ease by which internationalism intersects with other projects ranging across the political spectrum. Like Domosh, David Nally and Stephen Taylor explore American international developmentalism, not through the site of the Southern farm, but through the Rockefeller Foundation's attempts to spread technologies of self-help as part of an anti-revolutionary geopolitics. In so doing, they show how the international was carved out as a space for the expansion of American national values to be projected globally, adding another important dimension to our understanding of the formation of the 'American Century' as a particular manifestation of internationalism in a period in which American economic, political and military power was being consolidated on a planetary scale. The same theme is examined by Chay Brooks in his critical biography of the American political scientist and international educationalist Stephen P. Duggan, the long-time director of the Institute of International Education, established in New York in the aftermath of World War One with support from various US philanthropic foundations, including the Rockefeller Foundation and with the active engagement of notable figures such as Elihu Root, the former Secretary of War under Theodore Roosevelt and the winner of the 1912 Nobel Peace Prize. As Brooks reveals, Duggan's internationalism was shaped by a characteristically patrician American hostility to existing forms of European cultural imperialism and by his fervent belief that the United States was ideally placed to facilitate a new spirit of cultural enlightenment across the globe, untrammelled by the power politics of the League of Nations and other international organisations based in Europe that seemed all too ready to serve the interests of the older imperial powers, a world-view that had much in common with that of Isaiah Bowman, America's leading geographer and Duggan's contemporary (on Bowman, see [Smith, 2003](#)).

Despite highlighting the diversity of internationalism, the papers also suggest a common, unifying quality: internationalism in its various guises shared a powerful aspirational component. What the papers collectively reveal is the hopes of its key exponents, however forlorn, were rooted in a belief that internationalism offered a crucial (and often sole) route to a more peaceful, progressive or prosperous future. The flexibility of its conceptual foundations combined with this aspirational strength is no doubt key to understanding its endurance and continued appeal. The optimism of internationalism does, however, place it in direct opposition to the more dominant 'realist' approach in International Relations. This approach is most associated with the English liberal historian E. H. Carr who argued in his account of the twenty years' crisis, that the well-conceived ideas of peace and international cooperation in the wake of the First World War had failed to grasp the intrinsic chaos, insecurity and competitiveness of the international sphere and thereby the 'reality' of geopolitics ([Carr, 1939 \[1993\]](#)). The truth, of course, is that realists' belief that the world can be understood through a collection of discrete and stable national units is an ideology every much as self-serving and delusional as internationalism, and as the essays below acutely demonstrate many seemingly idealistic internationalists proved to be if not brutally pragmatic, at least cautious and worldly ([Rich, 1995](#)).

### Future directions

How, then, to study something as complex as internationalism and why is a geographical perspective valuable? As the foregoing summaries have suggested, there must be some interconnection between internationalism and interdisciplinarity (also see [Legg, 2010, pp. 5–6](#)). But it is, of course, possible to have a singular disciplinary take on internationalism, whether through the filter of 'World History', sociologies of 'Global Civil Society' or political economies of 'International Finance'. Perhaps what internationalism both encourages and needs is what W.J.T. Mitchell (1995) called "indiscipline", that is, the turbulence or incoherence at the inner or outer boundaries of disciplines. We believe the papers collected in this special issue provide both the rigour developed within specific sub-disciplines of geography and the provocative turbulence of different traditions and analyses rubbing together.

All of the papers take a key political geographical concern, the international, and approach it using various techniques developed within historical geography. For instance, the long established technique of network analysis ([Lester, 2001, 2013](#)) informs Featherstone's analysis of subaltern connections and relational nodes which exposes how flows were disrupted, circulations were facilitated, and racial agency was constituted. Likewise Nally and Stephens examine the international networking of the Rockefeller Foundation as a means of creating networks of emancipation that could link the scale of the individual to the international scale of the Green Revolution. A second technique in evidence here is that of geographical biography, or, the tracing of "lifepaths" ([Daniels & Nash, 2004](#), also see [Lambert & Lester, 2006](#)), as evidenced in Brooks' examination of Stephen Duggan, and Featherstone's multiple biographical interests in the movements of Trinidadian radical Jim Headley or the anticolonial publisher Rupert Gittens. Domosh continues the work in historical geography on photographs as archives in themselves ([Bressey, 2011; Rose, 1997](#)), presenting us orientated and richly contrasting images of progress versus places and practices in need of development. Finally some of the papers contribute to the burgeoning interest in event spaces ([Craggs & Mahony, 2014](#)). Hodder does this explicitly, looking at the painstaking work involved in putting together an international conference which became, as he puts it, "half conference, half pilgrimage".

Brennetot analyses an event space more through its afterlife than its performance, namely, the neoliberalism that emerged from and is often linked back to the Walter Lippman Colloquium of Paris 1938.

If the papers combine historical and political geography, so they also draw upon other subdisciplines of, and cross-cutting themes within, the discipline, namely: development geography (Domosh, and Nally and Taylor); postcolonial geography (Featherstone and Hodder); economic geography (Brennetot); and geopolitics (Brooks). This gives just some sense of the rich potential for historical geographies of internationalism, as well as signalling connections with other components of this issue of the journal that are beyond the curated article set: the discussion surrounding Claudio Minca's work on the geography of the camp – a spatial practice that links the past with present, as well as the guest editorial by Thom Davies and Arshad Isakjee that brings this discussion to bear on the refugee camp in Calais. Drawing in part on the papers in this special issue but also on developments from further afield, we would like to suggest seven equally significant ways in which we believe, and hope, future studies could explore the histories and spaces of the international further.

First, the spatialities of internationalism: further work needs to interrogate in more detail how practices and theories of internationalism, despite their universal assumptions, are rooted in particular geographical and historical contexts, as well as their various spatial dimensions – an empire, a continent, the globe (Sidaway, Woon, & Jacobs, 2014). The political geographies of internationalism in national and urban contexts, for example, remain a rich area for further enquiry. How have particular cities and states sought to position themselves as 'natural' locations for the placement of international agencies, institutions and organisations and how has the spirit of internationalism been symbolically and materially presented? Conversely, why have some cities and nations singularly failed to develop such internationalist claims?

Second, the temporalities of internationalism: whilst much work has drawn on the typology of different internationalisms (liberal, imperial, radical, from Halliday) and how they differ, their distinct temporalities are often taken as given (see Klinke, 2013). Future work could consider the millenarian or eschatological elements (Hell, 2009) to both imperial (decolonisation) and radical (revolution) internationalisms and the forms that these took, as well as the perceived open-ended temporalities of liberal internationalism. Moreover, how do we relate these as historical and political geographers to more tightly time-stamped moments of internationalist sentiment? Moments like the refugee crisis above, or the extraordinary rise of the World Government Movement and One Worldism in the wake of the development of the nuclear bomb, for example, raise important questions of how we understand and weigh different temporalities of internationalist thought.

Third, the role of newly independent states: the emergence of newly independent states, both in the wake of war in Europe or globally through decolonisation, mobilised and negotiated an international presence and ideology in diverse ways. New states, for example, played a key role in the expansion of one of internationalism's key sites: the summit. Without an established diplomatic corps, which was often centred in the former metropole, new heads-of-state necessarily had to represent themselves on the international stage. Or, alternatively take the example of Ireland's development of a network of embassies and diplomats which were established as new international spaces and protagonists of Ireland and Irishness. What effect do these have on our understanding of not only the times and spaces of internationalism, but its distinct typologies and processes?

Fourth, the role of science and research: still too little work has been done on how science and scholarly research sought to reformulate itself as forms of intellectual practice, both in light of the practical realities and possibilities of internationalism, as well as by a firm normative commitment to it. The example of the role of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) within the League of Nations, and their eight conferences (Copenhagen 1931 to Bergen 1939) is just one example of the role that scholars and intellectuals played in internationalist thought and practice. What are the politics and geographies of this and how do they correspond or challenge our contemporary drive to the internationalisation of science, individual disciplines or institutes of higher education?

Fifth, the role of identity politics: whilst claims to internationalism are often rooted in geography and history, so too are they articulated and mobilised through common identity categories, like race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. Work has developed well in this direction, but the porous boundaries of these categories and how they are strategically and politically mobilised remains a key underexplored theme. What is the relationship between race and internationalism, for example? How have conceptions of Blackness or Black activism been understood in a global context and how has this unsettled more spatially defined identities? Yet, also, how do we avoid the danger of romanticising cross-cultural connections or, put another way, how do we go about developing a critical conceptual apparatus through which to differentiate internationalist claims or challenge their basic assumptions (racial or otherwise)?

Sixth, performative dimensions: geographers are especially well-placed to think about the performative and affective geographies of internationalism. What was it like to be in the sites of internationalism, for example, and how can we reconstruct these in a way which is sensitive to their contingencies? Work needs to further integrate multi-sensory approaches which necessarily draw on the sounds, tastes, feel and dress of internationalism and the real and important effects these have on the making of political geographies.

Seven, visual dimensions: the representation of internationalism remains relatively overlooked compared to its other dimensions. Questions of how the international was articulated visually, and specifically through cartography and related forms of visual culture, remain vitally important. The International Map of the World, backed by the League of Nations, provides one obvious example of an international scientific project designed specifically to encourage collaboration between rival mapping agencies and to create thereby a new image of the entire globe on which older nation-states and empires would have no privileged status. Visual representations are therefore central to questioning how wider internationalist cultural and political claims can be marshalled, by whom and from where – indeed, the map's fate as a scientific project provides an eloquent commentary on the challenges and deficiencies of internationalism.

This list does not seek to be exhaustive nor representative, but we hope a productive opening to a conversation both within and beyond *Political Geography*, of which this special issue is one modest contribution. Future research questions, like those above, we believe raise pertinent questions, both past and present, and are key to recognising the important contribution that geographers could and should make to understanding one of the key issues of our time.

#### Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest in this article.

## Acknowledgements

The writing of this introduction was undertaken with the support of AHRC grant AH/M008142/1 “Conferencing the International: a cultural and historical geography of the origins of internationalism (1919–1939)”.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Ian Traynor, 25 November 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/25/pope-francis-elderly-eu-lost-bearings>> Accessed 04.09.15.

<sup>2</sup> Mail Online Reporter, 27 May 2015. <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3099736/Holidaymakers-misery-boat-people-Syria-Afghanistan-seeking-asylum-set-migrant-camp-turn-popular-Greek-island-Kos-disgusting-hellhole.html>> Accessed 04.09.15.

<sup>3</sup> <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34133210>> Accessed 04.09.15. The boy's parents have corrected earlier versions which used a Turkish misspelling of the boy's name as Aylan.

<sup>4</sup> <<http://seekershub.org/blog/2015/09/home-warsan-shire/>> Accessed 04.09.15. The poem was also published as *Shire* (2013).

<sup>5</sup> On the Munich reception see Kate Connolly, 3 September 2015. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/03/germany-refugees-munich-central-station>> Accessed 10.09.15. For example of a refugee vigil in Nottingham on 7 September 2015, see <<http://www.nottinghampost.com/Nottingham-vigil-pay-tribute-thousands-tragic/story-27750288-detail/story.html>> Accessed 10.09.15. For the BBC petition see: <<https://www.change.org/p/request-bbc-use-the-correct-term-refugee-crisis-instead-of-migrant-crisis>> Accessed 04.09.15.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Gregory Walton and Tim Ross, 15 August 2015. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/11804861/David-Cameron-says-describing-migrants-as-a-swarm-wasnt-dehumanising.html>> Accessed 04.09.15; cited in Adam Withnall, 9 August 2015. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/philip-hammond-says-african-migrants-are-threatening-europes-standard-of-living-10447207.html>> Accessed 04.09.15.

<sup>7</sup> The contributors to the sessions were Samuel Anderson, Nick Baron, Chay Brooks, Ruth Craggs, Mona Domosh, Federico Ferretti, David Featherstone, Jake Hodder, Paul Griffin, Alma Heckman, Mike Heffernan, Gerry Kearns, Stephen Legg, Alastair Pearson, and Florian Wagner.

## References

- Agnew, J. (2001). Disputing the nature of the international in political geography. In J. Agnew (Ed.), *Reinventing geopolitics: Geographies of modern statehood (Hettner Lecture 2000)* (pp. 29–49). Heidelberg: University of Heidelberg.
- Bressey, C. (2011). The city of others: photographs from the city of London asylum archive. *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 13, 1–14.
- Carr, E. H. (1939 [1993]). *The twenty years' crisis 1919–1939: An introduction to the study of international relations*. London: Macmillan.

- Craggs, R., & Mahony, M. (2014). The geographies of the conference: knowledge, performance and protest. *Geography Compass*, 8, 414–430.
- Daniels, S., & Nash, C. (2004). Lifepaths: geography and biography. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30, 449–458.
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Guha, R. (1983). The prose of counter-insurgency. In R. Guha (Ed.), *Subaltern studies II* (pp. 1–42). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, F. (1988). Three concepts of internationalism. *International Affairs*, 64, 187–198.
- Hell, J. (2009). Katechon: Carl Schmitt's imperial theology and the ruins of the future. *The Germanic Review*, 84, 283–326.
- Klinke, I. (2013). Chronopolitics: a conceptual matrix. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37, 673–690.
- Lambert, D., & Lester, A. (2006). In D. Lambert, & A. Lester (Eds.), *Colonial lives across the British Empire: Imperial careering in the long nineteenth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Legg, S. (2010). Transnationalism and the scalar politics of imperialism. *New Global Studies*, 4, 1–17.
- Legg, S. (2014). An international anomaly? Sovereignty, the League of Nations, and India's princely geographies. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 43, 96–110.
- Lester, A. (2001). *Imperial networks: Creating identities in nineteenth century South Africa and Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Lester, A. (2013). Spatial concepts and the historical geographies of British colonialism. In A. Thompson (Ed.), *Studies in imperialism, 100th edition* (pp. 118–142). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Livingstone, D. N. (2003). *Putting science in its place: Geographies of scientific knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. (1995). Interdisciplinarity and visual culture. *Art Bulletin*, 77, 540–544.
- Pedersen, S. (2015). *The guardians: The League of Nations and the crisis of empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rich, P. (1995). Alfred Zimmern's cautious idealism: The League of Nations, international education, and the Commonwealth. In D. Long, & P. Wilson (Eds.), *Thinkers of the twenty years' crisis* (pp. 79–99). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rose, G. (1997). Engendering the slum: photography in east London in the 1930s. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 4, 277–300.
- Schmitt, C. (2011 [1939]). Großraum versus universalism: the international legal struggle over the Monroe Doctrine. In S. Legg (Ed.), *Spatiality, sovereignty and Carl Schmitt: Geographies of the nomos* (pp. 46–54). London: Routledge. trans; Matthew G.; Hannah.
- Shilliam, R. (2015). *The Black Pacific: Anti-colonial struggles and oceanic connections*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Shire, W. (2013). Home. In A. Triulzi, & R. McKenzie (Eds.), *Long journeys. African migrants on the road* (pp. xi–xii). Leiden: Brill.
- Sidaway, J. D., Woon, C. Y., & Jacobs, J. M. (2014). Planetary postcolonialism. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 35, 4–21.
- Smith, N. (2003). *American empire: Roosevelt's geographer and the prelude to globalization*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.