



Geographies of internationalism: Radical development and critical geopolitics from the Northeast of Brazil

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the international networks of three Brazilian geographers who were exiled or variously persecuted after the establishment of a military dictatorship in Brazil in 1964 — Josué De Castro (1908–1973), Milton Santos (1926–2001) and Manuel Correia de Andrade (1922–2007) — whose works had an impact in the international field of critical scholarship in geography and development studies, which remains underplayed in present-day scholarship. Addressing for the first time their unpublished correspondence, whose inventory is ongoing in Brazilian archives, I reconstruct their international work, especially focusing on its constraints, to engage with recent debates on the geographies of internationalism and on international agencies problematizing the concepts of ‘international geographies’ and ‘internationality’ of scientific life. My main argument is that the study of informal networks of scientific sociability allows for an understanding of the constraints that institutions and states pose to the internationalisation of knowledge, not only through political repression but also through the establishment of ‘national schools’. On the other hand, these sources suggest that the exile can play a creative role in stimulating exchanges of knowledge, a concept, on which further research is needed in political geography.

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This paper addresses the international networking of three Brazilian geographers who were exiled or persecuted at different levels after the 1964 military coup: Josué De Castro (1908–1973), Milton Santos (1926–2001) and Manuel Correia de Andrade (1922–2007). Santos, De Castro and De Andrade were from the Northeast (Santos from Bahia, De Castro and De Andrade from Pernambuco), a Brazilian region characterized by a strong Afro-Brazilian presence and levels of poverty traditionally higher than the national average. They were part of international, cosmopolitan and multilingual scholarly and activist networks on geography and development, where they interacted with scholars from the ‘Global North’ and exerted an important influence in these radical circuits, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. Recent scholarship on Milton Santos, the most famous of the three (Ferretti & Viotto, 2017; Melgaço, 2017), shows how their works are worthy of reconsideration.

Drawing upon recent scholarship in the geographies of internationalism, I analyse the international networks of these

geographers through a systematic survey of their unpublished correspondences that have survived in the archives of the Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros (IEB) in São Paulo, an indispensable tool for retracing their international connections, especially with European and North American scholars. This paper confirms and extends the claims of Santos’s scholarship mentioned above on the early role that the ‘Global South’ played in ‘theorising back’ (Slater, 1993), showing how Southern geographers were not only dependent on theory but also exerted an influence on ‘Northern’ colleagues. My main argument is that this case shows how internationalism and transnationalism are rooted in activism and hindered by states, academies and ‘national (or nationalistic) schools’. When these institutions fostered internationalisation, it was often done indirectly by imposing exile and constraints on dissidents: thus, I also argue that the scholars’ exile played a creative role in bolstering international circuits and multilingualism, as shown by works on other non-institutional scholarly circuits such as the anarchist geographers (Ferretti, 2011) or the Zimbabwean anticolonialists in London in the 1960s (McGregor, 2017). The potential of diaspora practices was already suggested by studies on literature (Said, 2000), on Latin American history (Sznajder & Roniger, 2007) and on Black internationalism (Featherstone, 2013), arguing that the

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diaspora intellectual 'can lay claim to a discourse of universality, and can gain purchase on the institutionalization of universality represented by international civil society' (Edwards, 2003, p. 116). This means that internationalism can be rooted in voluntarist, activist (and often radical or subversive) practices rather than in institutional arrangements.

In the last few years, historical and political geographies of internationalism have increasingly examined the time, spaces and places of the complex concept of 'the international' (Legg, 2014). Jake Hodder, Stephen Legg and Mike Heffernan called for a reconceptualisation of the idea of internationalism and transnationalism in geography, considering this to be an important task for political geography to undertake regarding the present global challenges, although 'Geography's puzzling silence in this regard suggests that the discipline is still too narrowly constrained by national contexts and frameworks' (Hodder, Legg, & Heffernan, 2015, p. 2). These authors also hypothesise that the globalising processes of the last decades have paradoxically hindered the processes of the internationalisation of geography that have been ongoing since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in heterogeneous forms (Jöns, Meusbürger, & Heffernan, 2017), by 'accelerating the discipline's concentration among isolated spoken-language blocks and, this has meant in practice, a globalized form of English' (Hodder et al., 2015, p. 3). The authors argue that this does not necessarily correspond to a drive for internationalisation. The case study I address shows that multilingualism and transcultural commitment are fundamental tools for internationalist and transnational approaches.

Therefore, this paper will contribute to this call for 'bringing together historical and political geographies of internationalism' (Hodder et al., 2015, p. 3) and address questions such as how does 'the international relate to the imperial, the colonial, or the global manifestation of US nationalism? ... How can it be comprehended through regional and potentially radical internationalisms such as the Black Atlantic or the Black Pacific? ... What political or cultural components would an international community consist of?' (Hodder et al., 2015, p. 3). If this case can provide only provisional answers for these complex questions, two points stand out in the international networks I analyse: first, the importance of a political, humanitarian and ethical commitment to find global solutions for global problems, a task in which the exiled Brazilian geographers were inspired by the traditions of both Marxism and Anarchism. The second point is a confirmation of the idea that 'there must be some interconnection between internationalism and interdisciplinarity' (Hodder et al., 2015, p. 4); this is clearly shown by the international trajectories of De Castro, De Andrade and Santos, who mobilised geography connected to other disciplines, including medicine, planning, history, anthropology and development studies.

Moreover, I assume that 'still too little work has been done on ... the role that scholars and intellectuals played in internationalist thought and practice' (Hodder et al., 2015, p. 5). Most recent scholarship has focused either on diplomatic international cooperation or international geographical congresses. As Hodder has correctly stated, 'internationalism and the international conference are inexorably entwined' (Hodder, 2015, p. 40). Recent works also focused on conferences and summits as places for hospitality and international cooperation, including development and decolonial networks (Craggs, 2014; Craggs & Mahony, 2014). Less attention has been given to informal and extra-institutional networks beyond 'summitry' or state-accredited spaces of 'high diplomacy' (Hodder, 2015, p. 41). This paper assumes that this problem exists in both conceptual and methodological plans. Regarding internationalism, I draw upon works considering non-statist geographies (Ince & Barrera de la Torre, 2016; Springer, 2016) and activist transnational solidarity networks (Featherstone, 2012) as a

possibility for analysing the geographical features of political and scientific movements beyond institutional frames. In the case of international organisations, their contradictions and role as imperial devices have been highlighted, among others, by Legg in his studies on the League of Nations (Legg, 2010, 2014).

From a methodological standpoint, I provide an alternative view on internationalism beyond institutional frames of reference by studying both formal and informal networks of sociability. To do so, I draw upon the insights provided by research following scientific networks and distant connection (Latour, 1987) while using some methodological innovations as far as I apply my analysis to multilingual, transnational and cosmopolitan networks, which were minimally institutional or formalised. In addition, it is necessary to consider the concept of sociability as addressed by French historian Maurice Agulhon (1966) to follow personal and informal relationships between these exiles and their international correspondents, considering the importance of biography for geography (Keighren et al., 2017; Withers, 2007) and localisations and circulations of knowledge (Secord, 2004). This fits my specific conceptual goals; additionally, the Brazilian archives that I explore confirm that in these correspondences and unpublished materials, one finds elements to assess the weight, influence and dissemination range of these scholars' ideas that one cannot find through a work limited to their published texts.

Regarding the places of internationalism, French scholarship has considered the *histoire croisée* (crossed history) as a conceptual tool to overcome a simple comparative approach between 'national schools' (Werner & Zimmermann, 2004), questioning the idea of unilateral cultural influence to address the material contacts among the actors of the circulation of knowledge (Espagne, 2013). Works by Marie-Claire Robic on the international geographical congresses have shown that scholarly life is not 'naturally' international: indeed, it is a complex matter that requires consideration of 'material spatialities, made of places and encounters, of networks where ideas and people circulate, which occurs at different scales of scientific life' (Robic, 2013, p. 39). This matches Hodder's argument that 'internationalism, and "the international", was not a given category or scale, but a way of encasing different conceptions of the world which were tied to the places in which it was debated and sustained' (Hodder, 2015, p. 40). Thus, a first answer to the question of placing internationalism is that internationalism has no simple place, and its networks need to be considered at different scales and temporalities, with a special consideration for places and contexts.

The arguments I address in this paper also extend recent scholarship on US policies in philanthropy and international development. David Nally and Stephen Taylor highlighted the paternalistic role philanthropy played in the 'long green revolution' and especially the programmes of the Foundation Rockefeller in Latin America such as 'Strategy for the Conquest of Hunger'. The authors argued that these programmes 'reflected Cold War logics ... Satisfying the immediate nutritional needs of hungry peasants was one method of silencing the pedlars of revolution, but the provision of handouts was never a sustainable strategy in the long-term ... rural development became a geopolitical imperative: to stave off a "Red Revolution" it was necessary to bring about a lasting "Green Revolution"' (Nally & Taylor, 2015, p. 57). This international paternalism 'from the North' was one of the targets of De Castro, De Andrade and Santos, who first countered neo-colonialism (Mançano Fernandes & Porto-Gonçalves, 2007; Ross, 2011). Works by Mona Domosh have likewise shown how 'some of the practices that characterize American international development have their roots in the early 20th century, particularly in the American South' (Domosh, 2015, p. 17). Imperial international politics were performed when 'corporate leaders imagined the

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