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L'International: The World's First International Journal
and the Possibilities and Limits of International Studies

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Abstract

L'International, a journal published in Paris in the 1840s that brought together an international team of intellectuals aiming to advance international studies, represents not only a forgotten milestone in the development of international studies but also provides an important case study shedding light on the challenges that need to be overcome in the development of international studies as a distinctive area of research. This article considers both the potential and the limits of the approach to international studies set out in *L'International* with a view to further understanding the potential and limits of international studies today. It elucidates four features of the approach taken in *L'International* pertinent to debates in today's discipline: (i) the boundaries of international studies; (ii) the nature of a scientific approach to the subject; (iii) the role of race, gender, and class; and (iv) the relationship between international studies and the policy sector. While its contributors were notable for putting forward a pluralist approach to the subject, their efforts were marred by their consideration of a limited set of interests.

Keywords

History, International Studies, International Theory, Internationalism, Social Science

Introduction

Seven decades before the launch of the first US-based journals of international studies,¹ a varied international team of scholars, “men of letters,” and polymaths contributed to the publication in Europe of the earliest journal to have the explicit objective of advancing what they considered to be “scientific discussion” of the “international” (Palet 1842a, 2). While there is a rich and growing body of literature on the evolution of international studies (Ashworth 2014; Groom, Barrinha and Olson 2019; Guilhot 2017), this journal, simply entitled *L’International* and published in Paris in the early 1840s, has never before been considered. As this article will highlight, *L’International* is significant not only for being the first international journal, published at the time the word was entering common usage (Suganami 1978, 232), but also for its relevance to understanding the potential and limits of international studies today. The journal is a notable case study of an effort to develop the international as a wide-ranging domain of study extending beyond state-centric power politics that was set back by its concentration on the interests of a narrow elite, a problem which remains pertinent for the international studies community to address in the present day (Thies 2020, 265). This article therefore serves the dual purpose of filling a gap in the historical literature while elucidating its significance for the contemporary field that faces similar challenges.

The study of international relations has traditionally been interpreted as “an American social science,” developing through the twentieth century (Hoffmann 1977, 41). The European founders of *L’International*, by contrast, saw the study of the international as part of the emerging “social sciences” of the early nineteenth century. Yet while it is increasingly acknowledged that “social science disciplines were not invented in fin-de-siècle America” (Porter 2003, 38), consideration of the journal

¹ The first US-based journal of international studies is often considered to be the *Journal of Race Development*, established in 1910 and renamed *Journal of International Relations* after 1919, following the suggestion of Koelsch (1987, 70).

is absent not only in Anglophone literature, but also Francophone accounts of the evolution in France of international studies (Battistella 2015; Franck 2012) and political science (Favre 1989; Delmas 2006). While the contributions to international studies of early nineteenth century French authors such as Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier are widely acknowledged (Franck 2012, 455, 594; Knutsen 1997, 153), the international interdisciplinary efforts of the contributors to *L'International* deserve greater recognition. The diverse contributors to *L'International* encompassing historians, humanitarians, political economists, medics, and lawyers among others offer a significant counterpoint to narrow understandings of the canon contributing to the development of international thought at the time.

Forty-five issues of *L'International* were published across two volumes in 1842-3. They were distributed to a wide international audience, with subscriptions available not only in twenty-two European cities spanning London to St Petersburg, but also further afield including in New York and Havana (Luthereau 1843b, 27-8). Its contributors and correspondents were located across Europe and in imperial territories including Macao and Tunis (Bonnellier 1842a, 2). The idea for the journal was put forward by Spanish writer and emissary Sebastian Palet in December 1841, and its inaugural issue was published on 20 January 1842 (Palet 1842a, 2). The first editor was French polymath Hippolyte Bonnellier, who was succeeded by historian Jean Guillaume Antoine Luthereau in September 1842. The last issue was published on 9 April 1843.

The contributors to *L'International* included prominent figures who were highly regarded for their analysis of the international sphere. Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, for instance, was a leading political economist, widely considered progenitor of the term “industrial revolution”, who served as director of what is now ESCP Europe (Jones 2004, 163). Another contributor, Jean Alexandre Buchon, was founder of the *Panthéon littéraire* and a distinguished historian whose work remains influential in

historical analysis (Lock 2013, 18). Since they helped set the intellectual agenda for the journal their contributions are a core focus in this article.

As Guilhot (2011, 2-3) has argued, one must be sensitive to the contrasts between understandings of International Relations today and efforts to study the international that predate the attempts to demarcate a “discipline” of International Relations in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, consideration of earlier efforts to understand the international can both help us better to understand the evolution of international theorization and its context, and reveal contrasts with later approaches that assist in evaluating present concerns (Hurrell 2001, 493-4).

Much of the empirical theorization considered by the contributors to *L'International* involved discussions of features now interpreted as aspects of interdependence, international cooperation, and global governance. In considering the approaches to these issues in *L'International*, this article will consider continuities and contrasts with earlier and later thought on these topics. It highlights the role of the journal in the shifts from religious towards interest-based approaches to international cooperation and from federal ideals towards empirically-grounded confederal approaches to international governance, and it elucidates previously neglected contributions of transnational humanitarianism to these shifts.

The article also sheds light on the problematic relationship that has been highlighted between the evolution of international thought and imperialism, Eurocentrism, race (Henderson 2013), and marginalization of women (Tickner and True 2018). It evaluates how efforts in this journal to develop a purportedly rational and scientific approach to the study of international relations reflected gendered and imperialist understandings and the concerns of a privileged group of European men that were counterproductive even in the context of the early nineteenth century.

Although much is known of the role of peace associations in the development of international thought in the early nineteenth century (Ceadel 2000), more attention needs to be paid to the role of

wider international associations in the development of alternative approaches to international theory in this period. This article considers the relationship between the journal and the international association that sponsored it, the *Société Internationale des Naufrages* (International Shipwreck Society), a transnational humanitarian association that simultaneously aimed to serve as an intellectual circle (Davies 2018, 466), which considered its relationship with the journal to support its international and intellectual credibility (Godde 1842, 3). Through its interrogation of the consequences of the links between the development of international studies in this journal and the association that supported it, this article sheds historical light on the contemporary debate concerning the academic study of international relations and links to the policy sector (Jahn 2017).

This article begins by introducing *L'International*, and its context, before evaluating the ways in which its contributors understood the nature of international studies and aimed to advance a “scientific” approach. The article considers in turn the progressive possibilities put forward by the journal’s contributors, and the limits of their approaches on account of their neglect of fragmentary processes and consideration of a narrow set of interests delimited by imperial, class, racial, and gender divisions. The consequences of the journal’s relationship with its sponsoring association are outlined to understand the limitations of its relationship with the policy sector. The article concludes by elaborating the implications of the limitations of *L'International* for today’s international thought. The approach adopted in this article is interpretive, and the discussion is based on the surviving documentation of *L'International* in the National Library of France, which consists not only of the published issues of the journal but also the documentation of its sponsoring organization. Although the handwritten correspondence of the journal is unavailable – and although much of the archival documentation of the period was lost to fire during the Paris Commune of 1871 – significant correspondence was published in the journal.

***L'International* in context**

By virtue of the journal's international focus, its editor considered *L'International* to fill “an immense gap” among the publications of the period (Bonnellier 1842a, 1). More than one hundred articles were published in the journal consisting of both longer contributions of around 6000 words (Buchon 1842c), and shorter pieces of approximately 2000 words (Sanson 1842b). The contributors came from multiple – predominantly European – countries, and the journal featured an international editorial board divided into “interior” and “exterior” sections consisting respectively of twenty-seven French-located members and twenty-seven international members spanning ten nationalities (Bonnellier 1842a, 2).

Reflecting the fluid boundary between professional and amateur scholarship at the time (Ashworth 2014, 74), the journal's contributors included but were not limited to university professors such as Blanqui, Buchon, and the historian Alfred de Martonne. The contributors also included various “men of letters” such as the Comte de Chateauvillard, famous for codifying the rules of duels, public health physician Alphonse Sanson, lawyer to the French royal court Constant Lamarque, romanticist Roger de Beauvoir, and German missionary and historian of China Karl Gützlaff (Bonnellier 1842a, 2). The backgrounds of the journal's correspondents were extremely diverse, encompassing such figures as the chief medical officer of Greece and the director of the observatory at Fano, besides political economists, lawyers, historians and other professions more commonly associated with international studies. The journal's director Palet (1842a, 2) believed that by serving at the same time as the official organ of the *Société Internationale des Naufrages*, *L'International* could reach more effectively a global audience by exploiting the international recognition and networks of this society.

L'International was established in Paris in January 1842 in the context of France under the July monarchy (1830-48), which has been described as a “classically bourgeois liberal regime” (Cassels

1996, 52), and which in its early years had seen considerable opening up of associational and press freedoms, albeit much restricted from 1834 (Beecher 1986, 410). As Staum (1996, 226-30) has noted, the July monarchy provided a facilitative context for the revival in the 1830s of moral and political sciences in France. Their institutionalization was evident in the refoundation of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in 1832 (Delmas 2006); and Weisz (1983, 30) has noted that “the July monarchy was something of a golden age” for French academia. The journal’s director Palet (1842a, 2) asserted further advantages of its Paris location for an internationally-oriented publication, since Paris was seen to be a hub of European intellectual life, boasting a central geographical location and a language widely spoken among intellectual circles in many countries. Paris was the location of earlier journals that had touched on cross-border topics, such as those of Jullien of Paris and the Saint Simonians, and it had also served as a centre for internationally-oriented intellectual clubs such as the “Encyclopedic Society” and the “Society of Civilization” (Davies 2014b, 29). Beyond its scientific aims, therefore, *L’International* also aimed “to correspond with all the intellectual societies of the world” (Bonnelier 1842a, 2).

The intellectual standpoint of many of the contributors to *L’International* was significantly influenced by the development of liberal political economy in France, said to have been promoted by “a ‘sect of economists’ obsessed by the idea of free trade” who “held almost all the chairs” not only in political economy but also in related fields (Charbit 2009, 51). Among the most prominent of these was Blanqui, who helped set the intellectual agenda for *L’International* while serving as the first editor of the *Journal des Économistes*, one of the earliest and most important journals of political economy (Lutfalla 1972, 497). In contrast to *L’International*, the *Journal des Économistes* was to last into the twentieth century, and the reasons for the failure of *L’International* to develop international studies on a comparably sustainable basis are considered later in this article.

Besides the influence of liberal political economy, the perspectives put forward in *L'International* also need to be understood in the context of the early development of the social sciences. Over the course of the 1830s and completed in the year *L'International* was launched, Auguste Comte had assembled his *Course in Positive Philosophy* in which he expounded the need for “a wholly new order of scientific conceptions” to understand the social and political world (Levine 2012, 43). As is well known, variations on this perspective had immense influence in later US-based study of international relations (Kurki 2008). Less well known is the influence such ideas had on those aiming to advance study of the international at the time Comte wrote, and who contributed to *L'International*. Comtean ideas are to be found not only in the purportedly “scientific” aims of the journal in explaining general principles, but also the claims of its editor that the journal’s contents would study and advance “social progress” (Bonnellier 1842a, 1-2). Comte was one of many influences on the “scientific” approach of the contributors to the journal, who acknowledged deeper influences ranging from scientific pioneers such as Pascal (Luthereau 1843a, 26) through to more recent advocates of social science such as Saint Simon (De Martonne 1843).

Defining the international in *L'International*

By the time *L'International* was launched, the term “international” was coming into increasingly regular usage in both the English and the French languages. It had been introduced by Bentham to distinguish “international” law *between* nations from “internal” law *within* nations (Suganami 1978, 231), but up to this point the label “international” had rarely been applied beyond studies of *jus inter gentes*. For the editors and contributors to *L'International*, by contrast, it was a label that could be applied to any activities between and across nations. Although in places analysis of the “international” in this journal involved interpreting relations between sovereign states (Buchon 1842b), it also involved analysis of interactions beyond states by private enterprises and voluntary associations (Blanqui 1842a; Buchon

1842a; Monbrion 1843). Unlike so much of the later – especially Cold War era – study of international relations, the scope of *L'International* was far from exclusively state-centric. Moreover, unlike much later international theorization, the scope of this journal's concerns extended beyond issues of diplomacy, war and peace to include a vast array of sectors of social and political life including the economy, trade, class relations, religion, public health, and charity (De Martonne 1843; Luthereau 1842c; Monbrion 1842a; Palet 1842c; Sanson 1842).

Like the concept “international,” the phrase “international relations” had also entered discourse by the time *L'International* was published. It had tended to be used primarily in respect of discussions of “the balance of power and the general system of international relations,” reflecting a limited interpretation centred on state-centric diplomacy and military power (Brougham 1803, 345). Use of the term “international relations” in *L'International*, on the other hand, reflected the significantly broader definition of “international” adopted by its contributors, including commercial and social relations between and across states (Blanqui 1842a; Buchon 1842a), an approach Blanqui had pioneered in the late 1830s (Schou 1963, 237). In one article on the river Rhône in international relations, for instance, discussion considered commerce both between European nations and between them and other continents (Luthereau 1842a, 1).

In the present day, the phrase “international organization” tends most commonly to be applied to intergovernmental organizations, with cross-border non-state actors often placed in a separate category (Barnett and Finnemore 2004, 2). By contrast, the “international” organizations considered in the pages of *L'International* tended not to be intergovernmental organizations – of which there were very few at this point – but private associations operating in multiple countries (Blanqui 1842a; Monbrion 1843). This was hardly surprising given the name of the society that sponsored the journal, which had changed its name from “general” to “international” as a reflection of both its composition

of branches in many countries and a normative understanding of its functioning “for the benefit of all regardless of what country they are from” (Conseil Supérieur 1841, 26).

Although the term “globalization” did not appear in *L’International* and is of later origin, there were considerable references to the “globe”, “all parts” of which were intended to be reached by the journal (Palet 1842a, 2). Moreover, its aims included discussion of “social progress” and the “tendency towards the union of all” (Bonnellier 1842a, 2; Palet 1842a, 2). Authors in the journal remarked on themes that would now be considered aspects of the study of globalization and interdependence, with Buchon (1842a, 2) observing the development “between all peoples” of “a sort of solidarity”, and Blanqui (1842b, 2) claiming “the moment is not far off when there will be no other politics in the world than that of common interests of all states”.

A particularly strong focus for the journal was on questions of social economy and political economy, which constituted approximately one third of the articles that it published. *The Internatioanal* carried discussions of the ideas of prominent writers such as Charles Fourier (De Martonne 1842), Friedrich List (Luthereau 1842b), Robert Owen, and Henri de Saint Simon (De Martonne 1843). There was acute awareness of the importance of what would now be termed transnational corporations with their “immense capital” trading with both colonies and other countries around the world (Monbrion 1843, 1). There was also concern at the “malaise and breakdown manifesting itself among the working classes in many states”, the inadequacy of philanthropy in addressing this, and the need to study the causes, effects and solutions to “the profound misery” and “complete abjectness” of industrial workers (Palet 1842c, 1).

Articles on more traditional international relations subjects such as diplomatic history and international law were also carried in *L’International* (Buchon 1842b). However, these would commonly focus on less state-centric dimensions of these topics, such as the history of commercial treaties and maritime insurance law (Buchon 1842c; Lamarque 1842). There were also discussions of

contemporary conflict, including “the extraordinary battle between two powers at opposite extremes of the world” between the British Empire and China (Monbrion 1842b, 1). While the journal carried several studies of British imperialism, references to French conquests such as Algeria were remarkably limited. Given the numerous medical doctors on the editorial board, the journal also carried articles on international public health, including discussions of governments’ duties to promote public health and the need to overcome national, ideological and religious differences to advance human well-being and longevity (Sanson 1842a). Some articles reflected a concern to learn from beyond Europe, including on humanitarianism, armed forces, and the press in China (Bonnellier 1842b; Palet 1842b).

The efforts to establish an international intellectual community through *L’International* therefore anticipated the immense breadth and diversity that is seen in twenty-first century international relations scholarship that explores a wide range of economic, social, military, cultural, and political relations involving state and non-state actors considered from a diverse array of intellectual approaches. As Ashworth (2014, 72) has highlighted, there was a mid-nineteenth century perception that “an increasingly shrinking, industrial and interdependent world required a new liberal outlook”: many of the pages of *L’International* conformed to such a view, but the perspectives in this journal were not limited exclusively to such an approach.

Theorizing the international in *L’International*

Understandings of the scope of the study of international relations today are divided between those considering it to be a sub-field of political science, and those viewing it “as an imperial discipline” dealing with the international dimension of “all of the other social sciences and History” (Albert and Buzan 2017, 902). A similar tension existed in the contributions to *L’International*. On the one hand, the journal carried articles encompassing, inter alia, history, political economy, “social economy”, public health, and law. On the other hand, Palet, Bonnellier, Blanqui and Buchon who aimed to set

its intellectual agenda put forward proposals for a distinctive “scientific” field of study of the “international”.

The founders of *L'International* drew a contrast between their approach to theorization and previous approaches. They emphasised rejection of “the *passions*” and traditional religious world views, which they sought to replace with a “religion shared by all ... in service of greater and truer *interests*” (Bonnellier 1842a, 1, emphasis added). This perspective built on diverse traditions, notably the rejection of the passions in favour of the interests as developed by liberal political economists such as Adam Smith, who was acknowledged as influential in early nineteenth century French political economy (Ruyssen 1961, 451). It also built on the rejection of theological world views in favour of a positivist approach centred on human experience as put forward by Comte (1830). In this manner, the contributors to *L'International* distinguished their approach to international theory from perspectives grounded in principles of Christian morality such as those that were put forward in the publications of early nineteenth century Christian pacifist groups and philanthropic societies such as the *Société de la Morale Chrétienne* (Schou 1963, 91).

The agenda-setting contributions to *L'International* emphasised what they considered to be a more scientific approach, embracing the search for “deep truth in the political sciences” as well as in the commercial and economic sciences (Buchon 1842a, 4). Bonnellier (1842a, 1-2) stressed the importance to the project of the development “universal ... principles”, echoing Comte’s (1830) emphasis on general laws. If one is to conceive of the approach put forward in *L'International* in terms of a “great debate” of the time, it was embodied in the efforts of its contributors to replace what they considered to be a traditional superstitious world view with what they claimed was a more rational, interest-based, and scientific approach. The limits of this approach as practiced in the journal are considered in the final section of this article.

The “scientific” approach put forward by the founders of *L’International* anticipated in certain respects the four “modes of theorizing” identified in present-day international relations – meta-theoretical, ontological, normative, and empirical (Guzzini 2013, 533-5). As outlined in the previous section, the early issues of *L’International* paid especial attention to seeking to define the boundaries of the international as a terrain of inquiry, in line with Guzzini’s (2013, 533-4) observation that in the early stages of theorization especial attention is needed to defining “the building blocks and fundamentals” (meta-theorization), and theorizing “what constitutes a phenomenon” (ontological theorizing). There was also a normative dimension to the research agenda Bonnellier put forward, in that the discussions in *L’International* were intended to unite those familiar with moral theory in the development of universal principles and to “advance the well-being of peoples” (Bonnellier 1842a, 1-2).

A core concern for Bonnellier (1842a, 2) was problem solving, addressing “the most serious questions” across varied international topics, including rule-making, trade, and health. Empirical theorization, including “attempts to explain events by providing an account of causes in a temporal sequence” (Dunne et al. 2013, 409) was especially significant to early contributors to the journal such as Blanqui (1842a) and Buchon (1842b). As will be outlined in the next section of this article, their contributions considered explanations for international co-operation, and for developments now understood to involve interdependence, spill-over effects, and globalization. A further category of theorization identified by Dunne et al. (2013, 410) – critical approaches with “the avowed intent of criticizing particular social arrangements and/or outcomes” – was less prominent in the journal, although some social problems were critiqued, such as inadequacies of existing efforts to address the vulnerabilities of the working classes (Palet 1842c, De Martonne 1843).

The director and the editor of *L’International* sought to publish letters and articles addressing international questions using diverse methodological approaches, including from the emerging

economic, political, and social sciences, law and history (Palet 1842a, Bonnellier 1842a). Little effort was made towards integrating insights from these perspectives: instead, the contributions to *L'International* represent what Dunne et al. (2013, 407) have termed “disengaged pluralism,” each contribution addressing its topic on its own terms.

Despite the plural nature of the perspectives of the contributors, the journal’s leading figures considered them to be part of a common intellectual community united by “immutable principles of fellowship” and a shared aim better to understand the international sphere (Palet 1842a, 2). Bonnellier (1842a, 1-2) considered the journal’s “scientific” standards to be upheld both by the contributors’ adherence to principles serving “greater and truer interests of civilization” and the oversight of the journal by the “great names and fine skills” of those who had agreed to collaborate in the interior (French) and exterior (international) sections of its board. On this basis, Bonnellier (1842a, 2) argued that “never before has an intellectual operation been organized under such sincere and broad conditions to achieve internationality”.

The journal’s director and editor were keen to ensure that *L'International* was accessible to a wide audience and that its theoretical content would “explain theories and principles that all can appreciate and adopt” (Bonnellier 1842a, 1). They also aimed to engage policy-makers, and Bonnellier (1842a, 2) hoped that “all executive powers, regardless of national flag” would recognize the relevance of the journal’s contents given their claimed role in the advancement of “the common interests of civilized peoples”. In this manner, the founders of *L'International* showed awareness of demands to be relevant both to the general public and to policy-makers, the importance of which is increasingly asserted in international studies today (Jahn 2017). However, the journal’s editorial team recognised from the outset that establishing relevance to governments came at a price, with Bonnellier (1842a, 2) noting that in exchange for gaining the attention of governments the journal would avoid challenging their authority and the principles on which their authority was founded. As will be elucidated at the

end of the article, the limitations of the journal's links to the policy sector were also to be evident in its relationship with its sponsoring association, which was to be the immediate-term cause of the journal's collapse in 1843.

Progressivist theorization in *L'International*

The journal's editor and its leading contributors who aimed to set its intellectual agenda such as Blanqui and Buchon put forward a classical liberal approach emphasizing the possibilities of rational progress and eschewing factors with the potential to undermine and reverse that progress. Several strands of classical liberal thought appeared in *L'International*. The most common was a commercial liberal perspective emphasizing international harmony of economic interests and the promotion of free trade, which was the principal theme of the work of Blanqui (1842a; Todd 2015, 63-4). Here, the predominant influence was the French liberal school of political economy and the work of Jean-Baptiste Say, Blanqui's predecessor as chair of political economy at the *Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers*. There was, however, a sharp contrast between the uncompromising laissez-faire approach in this work, and the contributions of other authors – such as de Martonne (1842; 1843) – who stressed similarly anti-statist but more communitarian Owenite and Fourierian perspectives. The national-oriented perspectives of what were termed “German economists” such as List, however, were marginalized in the journal, with one author alleging that the “logical consequence” of such perspectives was “the destruction not only of commerce, but of agriculture in all countries,” as well as of manufacturing (De Martonne 1842b, 2).

Besides commercial liberal approaches, contributions to the journal included those promoting what has since been termed an ideational liberal perspective – one that emphasizes social identities and values (Moravcsik 2003, 168) – which was evident in aspects of Buchon's work where he emphasized the development of universal moral values (Buchon 1842a, 2). The journal's director Palet

(1842a, 2), on the other hand, emphasized the progressive role of cross-border philanthropic organizations, resonating with the emphasis on transnational associations in later sociological liberal work. The regulatory liberal emphasis on the constraining effects of international rules was also anticipated in contributions to the journal, including not only those from international lawyers (Lamarque, 1842) but also those from social scientists such as Blanqui (1842b). Republican liberalism with its emphasis on democratic institutions, however, was largely absent from the journal.

Uniting many of the early “scientific” contributions to *L’International* was emphasis on the scale of international co-operation that appeared to them to be possible. In his opening contribution, Blanqui (1842a, 4) claimed that international relations in the mid-nineteenth century were of “an entirely new character.” He drew a contrast between the old alliances of the past and the new international agreements among states that “were not contracted to dominate peoples, but to unite them,” consisting of international cooperative arrangements such as “commercial treaties, postal conventions, and customs unions,” entered into irrespective of “differences of religion or prejudices of national pride.” This “variety of co-operative problem-solving arrangements” constituted early dimensions of what is now referred to as international governance (Weiss 2013, 32). As with recent understandings of global governance, for contributors to *L’International* including Blanqui (1842a, 4) and Buchon (1842a, 2), both private (non-state) and public (intergovernmental) actors provided these arrangements. This emphasis on both public and private international associations in overcoming national differences was later evident in the work of Paul Otlet and Henri LaFontaine in the first decade of the twentieth century, which was subsequently taken forward by authors such as Leonard Woolf and Alfred Zimmern (Davies 2017).

In contrast to earlier Kantian and Saint-Simonian perspectives promoting international federation among nations as an ideal, Blanqui and Buchon put forward an empirically grounded approach to international cooperation among nations emphasising the new international arrangements

that had developed in practice by the 1840s such as commercial treaties and postal unions. These arrangements fell short of international federalism but represented what were subsequently termed confederal approaches to internationalism in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emphasising intergovernmental arrangements with more limited constraints on states' independence (Ceadel 1991, 171).

Building on the work of authors including Montesquieu, Say, and Cobden, both Blanqui (1842a) and Buchon (1842a) also advanced early versions of what in the twentieth century came to be referred to as interdependence theory, which studies “reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries” (Keohane and Nye 2012, 8). Buchon’s (1842a, 2) initial contribution to the journal, for example, put forward an understanding of international relations emphasizing reciprocal effects, claiming that “with the growing activity of international relations, advances in the political, economic and commercial sciences cannot appear in any one part of the world without also benefiting every other part of the world.” He asserted that “having overcome the barriers to their internal unity ... states, whose horizons have expanded with their fortunes, have piece by piece removed their exterior barriers,” such that “the world no longer consists of a confused agglomeration of little countries with divergent and hostile interests” (Buchon 1842a, 2). In asserting the substitution of previous competitive military arrangements by the mutual benefits of cooperative economic relations, Blanqui and Buchon put forward a teleological view of interdependence. As with later understandings of complex interdependence (Keohane and Nye 2012, 19), Blanqui and Buchon emphasized the importance of non-state in addition to intergovernmental actors, and the apparent diminishing significance of military in comparison with economic power, a phenomenon which Cobden had observed in 1836 (Hobson 1919, 34).

A central pillar of interdependence liberalism is the assertion that economic interdependence renders war less profitable such that, as Norman Angell argued, “even annexation would not lead to

economic gain” due to the costs of conquest and administration (Ceadel 2011, 1674). Writing a month before Cobden (1842, 267) famously espoused free trade as “the only human means of effecting universal and permanent peace”, Blanqui (1842a, 4) anticipated Angell’s claim, asserting that in war “victory now costs almost as much as defeat,” while Buchon (1842a, 2) asserted that the increased linkage among countries “renders wars so difficult.” These arguments, which have antecedents in the work of Montesquieu, were subsequently taken forward in the later 1840s by Bastiat and the *Journal des Économistes*, which helped put interest-based arguments for war prevention on the agenda of the 1848 international peace congress, where the international peace movement moved away from its earlier Christian pacifist orientation (Lincoln 2013, 49, 53). A similar approach was later propounded by the Manchester Peace Conference Committee in the 1850s, the International Arbitration and Peace Association in the 1880s, and Jacques Novicow in the 1890s before being advanced by Angell in 1911 (Ceadel 2000, 180).

Today’s explanations of growing interdependence and globalization have commonly involved reference to a range of factors including the repercussions of technological advances (Baldwin 2016), as well as contrasting rationalist and reflectivist perspectives emphasizing respectively the rational pursuit of mutual interests and the development of shared values and identities across national boundaries (Keohane 1988). Two centuries ago, both Blanqui and Buchon remarked on the significance of technological developments in driving international cooperation: Blanqui (1842b, 2) argued that “steam navigation and the railways contribute every day to promote these developments, by shortening distances”, while Buchon (1842a, 2) emphasized the speed that they facilitated. Both of these authors also remarked on the importance of the development of cross-border sentiments and identities, with Buchon (1842a, 2) claiming that there had been “a veritable moral revolution in the feelings of peoples towards one another” and that “common thought of humanity” had emerged such that “among all peoples there had developed a sort of solidarity in relation to right and wrong.” For

Blanqui (1842b, 2), cooperation was in part explained by “sentiments of universal benevolence” which ensured that “no misfortune in one part of the world would fail to be felt in another.” In this regard, Buchon and Blanqui took forward the developing international humanitarian approach pioneered by the humane societies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which had been the inspiration for the society that sponsored *L’International* (Moniz 2016).

Most prominent of all in their explanations, however, was emphasis on the importance of common *interests* in facilitating growing cross-border cooperation and mutual dependence, taking forward the approach of Say and the French liberal school. Bonnellier’s (1842a, 2) vision for the journal emphasized the facilitation of progress through rational discussion of the “shared interests of civilized peoples” in place of the passions. Reflecting this, Blanqui (1842a, 4) laid special emphasis on his claim that “the marked trend of the current epoch is the solidarity of interests among peoples.” Buchon (1842a, 2) argued that economic interests, in particular, drove wider cooperation, stating: “commercial and industrial linkages require the closest attention” due to their potential to “alter, hamper or promote linkages more generally.” After *L’International* ceased publication, this perspective was advanced in journals such as the *Journal des Économistes* and reference works including the *Dictionnaire d’Économie Politique* (Lincoln 2013, 53).

In their emphasis on the capacity of cooperation in one area to contribute towards further cooperation in others, Buchon and Blanqui put forward ideas anticipating features of later functionalist theory including the notion of spill-over, which – as Andersson (2016, 41) notes – has roots in nineteenth century liberal thought. For Blanqui (1842a, 4), international cooperation was non-governmental as well as intergovernmental. He therefore used an example of a private international organization – the journal’s sponsor – to illustrate what would now be termed spill-over effects: “you start by saving the shipwrecked, and you finish by helping each other in thousands of different ways.” “Governments”, he claimed, “are paying attention to this point in a providential manner” such that

eventually, as quoted earlier, “there would be no other politics than that of their common interests.” This process was central to his claim that “the rapprochement of all civilized peoples under the guarantee of peace and work” would ultimately prevail over all other “great social features.” In this manner, Blanqui’s arguments occupy an intermediate stage between earlier thought such as that of Owen that emphasised learning processes in expanding functional cooperation among non-state actors (Davies 2014a, 736-737), and later functionalist authors who emphasised their operation in relation to states (Mitrany 1943).

Although they claimed to be advancing a “scientific” approach to studying international cooperation, contributors to *L’International* including Blanqui and Buchon lacked specificity with respect to their methods, and adopted an anecdotal approach to supporting evidence rather than developing methods of hypothesis testing comparable to later US-based studies. In their elaboration of the dynamics of international cooperation and progress they also tended to blend diverse factors and arguments without paying sufficient attention to their consistency and coherence. As a result, their discussions included tensions, inconsistencies, and tautologies. Blanqui’s (1842a, 4) opening contribution to the journal, for instance, contains a tension between his emphasis on mutual interests and shared values driving cooperation and in turn rendering war less profitable on the one hand, and his assertion at the same time that this cooperation was “due to the peace that Europe has enjoyed over the last twenty-five years” since the Congress of Vienna. Further tensions in the contributors’ approaches are explored in the next section.

Blanqui (1842b, 2) argued that the interdependence he observed “would become ever more irresistible in correlation with the demise of the causes of discord that had previously separated them for too long.” However, there was a lack of attention in his and other contributions to the journal to the fragmentary processes that are now asserted potentially to accompany processes of integration (Lundestad 2004). As Margalit (2012, 496) claims, integrative processes may be resisted on account of

perceived threats not only to the economic position of certain groups, but also to their values and traditional practices and identities. The potential for such resistance was largely overlooked in *L'International*.

The limits of international theorization in *L'International*

Although Bonnellier (1842a, 1-2) asserted a sweeping agenda for the journal encompassing “from one corner of the world to another ... the union of all,” the boundaries to the scope of the international thought set out in the contributions to this journal were significantly limited along imperial, racial, class, and gender lines. Despite their emphasis on common interests the journal’s contributors narrowly delimited their scope with respect to exactly whose interests were shared. As the subtitle given to the journal by Blanqui (1842a, 4) indicated, this journal claimed to be “the journal of the common interests of *civilized* peoples.” Limiting the reach of shared interests in international relations to those who were purportedly “civilized” is a recurring theme in *L'International*, reflecting civilizational understandings of the boundaries of international law common at the time (Pitts 2018).

China was a common target in *L'International*, critiqued for a variety of perceived inadequacies such as lacking comparable freedoms to those in Europe (Palet 1842b, 2), and a reluctance to reform its practices in contravention of precedents set by ancient institutions (Gützlaff 1842, 3). Contributors to the journal also expressed their approval of the notion of a civilizing mission, with Blanqui (1842a, 4) stating admiration for “the work of our pious missionaries in faraway places where at risk to their lives they carry the benefits of civilization and religion.”

There was a significant tension between the claims to be advancing “scientific rationality” in the journal, and the advancement of the agenda of religious missionaries. There was also a tension among the contributions to *L'International* between the claim on the one hand to be promoting shared values to facilitate eventual universal cooperation, and on the other hand the presentation elsewhere

in the journal of non-European territories as open to economic exploitation. For Bonnellier (1842a, 2) “the union of all” took place “through the sovereign advancement of the common interests of civilized peoples,” leaving open the possibility that this could be at the expense of the interests of those not considered to be “civilized.” One discussion of free trade in the journal even complained that British efforts to promote abolition of the slave trade were supposedly “ruining the colonies of others” (Luthereau 1842c, 2). Other articles gave advice on techniques of imperialism: one article, for instance, was dedicated to outlining how to exploit colonies in the production of sugars (Monbrion 1842a), while another discussed imperial trading companies of some European empires as models for emulation (Monbrion 1843). These examples illustrate that the advancement of processes of integration within Europe was combined in *L’International* with the advancement of processes of exploitation elsewhere. There was a notable contrast between the condemnation of colonialism by British economic pacifists at the time, and the imperialist approach of liberal political economists in France (Lincoln 2013, 63).

Bonnellier (1842c, 1) argued that “the mutuality of moral and civilizing interests” required the dispelling of notions of there being a single superior race. However, in its reiteration of preconceived ideas concerning the contrasts between supposedly “civilized” and “barbarous” peoples, *L’International* may be interpreted as serving as a step towards the more assertively racist social Darwinist and eugenicist debates that developed subsequently in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Sterling-Folker 2006). Significant strands of earlier international thought – such as Owenite internationalism (Davies, 2014a) – had not been based on such distinctions, and the content of *L’International* may be considered to represent a step backwards from these perspectives towards the sharper distinction between “civilized” international society and “barbarous” peoples put forward in the later nineteenth century work of authors including T. H. Green, Herbert Spencer and Henry

Sidgwick (Bell and Sylvest 2006), with Spencer in particular often understood to have drawn influence from early nineteenth century French international thought (Schou 1963, 282).

The “common interests” which the journal considered were limited not only by imperial hierarchies but also by gender: in introducing the journal’s aims, Bonnellier (1842a, 1) stated that the journal was intended as a mouthpiece “for all *men* from one end of the world to the other” who wished to advance civilization (emphasis added). There were no women members of the editorial team (Bonnellier 1842a, 2), and whereas the status of certain categories of men – such as male industrial workers – was discussed in the journal, the status of women was a subject entirely neglected. *L’International* was no exception to Tickner and True’s (2018, 1) claim that “international relations came late to feminism.” In the case of *L’International*, women appear to have been actively excluded from this early effort to develop international studies as a “scientific” field of study, reflecting a gendered understanding of scientific rationality that persisted into later debates (Tickner 1992). The journal’s gendered understanding of scientific rationality was reflected in the sharp contrast between the purportedly “scientific” topics on which male authorship was attributed and the discussion of Athenian legend attributed to a female author (Rivry 1843).

Even among the European men whose interests the journal considered, it was principally only one category of such men – the educated elite who comprised its contributors, readers, and sponsors – that it represented. *L’International* carried some articles acknowledging “public misery” and the “malaise and breakdown manifesting itself among the working classes in many states” (Palet 1842c, 1) and discussed utopian socialist ideas of authors such as Fourier, Owen, and Saint Simon (De Martonne 1842, 1843). However, the preponderant approach among the journal’s principal contributors on political economy reflected the free-trade liberal perspective common among Paris’ *grande bourgeoisie* that dominated politics in France in the July monarchy era (Lhomme 1960). Much of this work was based on assumptions of a harmony of interests and the perceived inevitability of prosperity for all

through free trade, while neglecting the plight of the industrial classes. It was especially characteristic of Blanqui's (1842b, 2) work, in which like Say he viewed existing trends as leading towards "the guarantee of peace and of work" for all, without requiring intervention.

The contrast between the purportedly universal reach of *L'International's* claims with respect to the unity of the world, and the relatively limited social circle whose interests were effectively promoted in the journal was problematic for the journal's long-term sustainability. The world view of the *grande bourgeoisie* aligned to the July monarchy expressed in the journal fell increasingly out of favour as the 1840s progressed, culminating in the "springtime of nations" of 1848 (Stearns 1974). The nationalist and worker-oriented sentiments put forward in these uprisings challenged the elitist internationalist vision of *L'International*, but – in contrast to the later "American social science of international relations" that was concerned with defending liberalism in the face of external threats (Williams 2013, 655) – little attention was given in this journal to addressing potential challenges. The integrationist processes set out in *L'International* were assumed to be following a path of inexorable progress, and the potential appeal of alternative visions emphasizing national and traditional values to those groups whose interests were largely neglected in the journal was eschewed by the journal's contributors. Other journals considering political affairs of the time – such as *Revue des Deux Mondes* – frequently published contributions on the developing nationalist movements of the period, in contrast to the pages of *L'International*, while Paris-based contemporaries emphasizing a national approach to political economy such as List became increasingly influential.

In *L'International's* final months, the journal's leadership itself became overwhelmed by competing patriotisms: its Spanish director Palet was accused by the French head of the society that sponsored the journal of being "an agent of the Spanish regent," at the same time as Palet accused the society's leadership of corruption (Godde 1842, 2). This dispute within the organization appeared to reflect a wider dispute between the association's patron, the King of France Louis Philippe, and the

Spanish regent Baldomero Espartero, whom Palet was alleged to represent, since Louis Philippe at the time supported an alternative contender for leadership in Spain. According to Godde (1865, 11) this rupture led Louis Philippe to drop his support for the society and “sacrifice it with all the luxury of an avenging monarch”, a blow from which the society and in turn the journal were unable to recover: owing to loss of revenue, both folded in mid-1843 (Luthereau 1843b, 27).

The journal was simultaneously too close to external interests in that its fortunes fell with the demise of its sponsoring organization, and too remote from them in that it failed to consider the full spectrum of interests and passions beyond those of the *grande bourgeoisie*. The journal had sought the support of its sponsoring organization as a means to reach a geographically dispersed and influential readership, but this led it to be too vulnerable to the trajectory of the political connections of that society. At the same time, the journal’s leadership had failed effectively to take into consideration in its pages the interests of others who might have facilitated its continued publication. In this sense, it may be considered an early example of an approach to international studies that failed to step back sufficiently from narrow connections to the policy sector.

The failure of *L’International’s* contributors effectively to consider the fragmentary dynamics that may accompany the integrative processes that they observed contributed towards the journal’s content being neglected in subsequent years, as nationalist perspectives advanced over internationalist positions in 1840s Europe (Körner 2000, 4). Other journals that were not subject to the same political ties as *L’International* such as the *Journal des Économistes*, and those that considered alternatives to internationalism such as the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, were better able to adjust to changed circumstances and survived into the twentieth century.

Reflecting the broader reorientation from cosmopolitan towards national priorities, Bonnellier went on to become editor in chief of *La France Administrative*, a journal concerning French public administration which was to become notorious for its campaigns for exclusion of women from

employment (Bachrach 1984, 13), while Blanqui and Buchon pursued their work through alternative outlets including the *Journal des Économistes* and the *Panthéon Littéraire*, respectively. Debates previously pursued in *L'International* were continued through periodicals such as these, but they were much more specialised around particular areas of inquiry such as political economy and history, in contrast to *L'International's* pluralist approach. *L'International* had no direct successor, and the next periodical adopting the title *L'International* was an unrelated publication published in Madrid in October to December 1843 for the French community in Spain, which lacked the intellectual and internationalist aims of its more ambitious predecessor (Díaz Lage 2019, 44).

Conclusion

L'International represents a forgotten landmark in the development of international studies. It was the first journal explicitly dedicated to understanding the emerging concept of the “international” at the time its usage was starting to extend beyond studies of international law and was entering wider discourse. In contrast to some subsequent narrower interpretations of international studies concentrating on diplomatic and military relations exclusively between states, for the editors and contributors to *L'International*, their international subject matter comprised a diverse array of governmental and non-governmental actors, economic, social and political issues, and international and transnational processes. In doing so, they helped to develop understandings of the international extending significantly further than the state-centric perspectives of contemporaries such as François Guizot (Schou 1963, 95).

As with many of the globalization debates of the post-Cold War era, the possibilities for global cooperation and integration appeared to the journal's contributors to be far-reaching. This in part reflected the influence of the transnational humanitarian organization which sponsored the journal, and the previously overlooked role of associations such as this in the development of international

studies is an important counterpoint to the approaches of better-studied peace associations of the period.

Significant to the journal's editorial team and contributors was the claim that they were developing the "scientific" study of their international subject matter. Although the "scientific" study of international relations was to develop more elaborate techniques of hypothesis testing in the twentieth century, the experience of *L'International* is a notable episode in promoting the international arena as one to which purportedly "scientific" methods were considered to be applicable. In its advancement of a "scientific" and interest-based approach to international thought, the journal was an important step away from the religious orientation of some earlier international thought, such as that of the Christian peace movement, and *L'International* played a part in the displacement of religious internationalism by interest-based internationalism during the 1840s.

This article has also highlighted how the journal was pioneering in its identification of processes now referred to as interdependence, globalization, spillover, and global governance, with approaches put forward in the journal taken further in later nineteenth-century discussions including those concerning international confederalism and the repercussions of international trade for international peace. Although *L'International* was not to survive beyond 1843, approaches it had advanced on interdependence were subsequently developed in publications including the *Journal des Économistes* and the *Dictionnaire d'Économie Politique*, and in the transformed orientation of the international peace movement away from Christian morality towards interest-based justifications for war prevention.

However, there were limitations to the approaches to international studies in the contributions to this journal. These consisted not only of the failure of its contributors to develop precise methods for analyzing their subject matter, but more significantly their espousal of a teleological view of world politics that paid insufficient attention to fragmentary dynamics accompanying the cooperative and

integrative processes that they elaborated: they underestimated the appeal of nationalism and of traditional values that were to challenge integrative processes as the 1840s progressed. This neglect of fragmentary dynamics reflected a more fundamental problem: *L'International's* elitist and exclusionary world view that marginalized groups other than the bourgeois European men that contributed to and read the journal. Their constricted focus helps to explain the disregard for this journal in subsequent years as international studies grew again as a field of inquiry in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Even in the circumstances of the nineteenth century, failure to consider perspectives beyond those of a small elite was in this case counterproductive for inquiry into international studies.

The failure of *L'International* to set out understandings of the international which represented a wider range of interests, ideas, and emotions beyond those of bourgeois white men provides a salutary lesson for today's scholars of international relations if they are to avoid the same fate. Those claiming to be promoting "scientific" approaches, interrogating apparent integrative processes, or purporting to be setting forth universal ideas need to consider carefully those who may be excluded. It is therefore hoped that this article has not only shed light on an important missing milestone in the evolution of international studies, but also highlighted significant ways in which the early nineteenth century experience can help us reflect on approaches to international studies today.

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