

**Project Proposal Application**

To be completed by the lead proposed supervisor,  
with input from the non-HE Partner Organisation(s).



Arts and  
Humanities  
Research Council

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY AND APPLICANT DETAILS			
<b>Proposed Project Title:</b>	Ethnographies of Border Mapping: Retracing the Field through the Geographical Archive		
<b>Project Summary:</b> <i>(Maximum 100 words)</i>	The researcher will draw on border expertise at Durham’s Centre for Borders Research and expertise in the history of cartography at Queen’s Belfast to analyse archival data from when the Royal Geographical Society’s was a leader in boundary delimitation (ca 19 <sup>th</sup> -early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries). Through developing a methodology of ‘cartographic ethnography’, the researcher will produce insights on: relations between cartographic and other knowledge systems; how boundary maps are produced through processes that articulate across a range of media; and how the intersection of maps, knowledge, and media are mobilised to construct ideals of state territory amidst the practicalities of political bordering. [100 words]		
<b>Host University:</b>	Durham University		
<b>Name of Non-HE Partner Organisation(s):</b> <i>(Add more lines if needed)</i>			
1. Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)			
2.			
<b>Contact(s) at Non-HE Partner Organisation(s):</b> <i>(Add more lines if needed)</i>			
Name:	Katie Parker	Email:	k.parker@rgs.org
Name:		Email:	
<b>Primary AHRC Subject Area:</b> <i>Select one subject area from the list here. Do not add or amend subjects - there will not be a corresponding Subject Area panel to assess the application.</i>	Cultural Geography		
Does the project include a Creative Practice component?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Do you consider the project to be interdisciplinary?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If you consider the project to be interdisciplinary, please state why:</b> <i>(Maximum 100 words. Note, all applications will be assessed by the appropriate primary subject area cross-institutional panel.)</i>			

As the project is rooted in the history of cartography and will develop methodologies for archival work around mapping practices, it has interdisciplinary overlap with **history**. Additionally, since findings will contribute to our knowledge of bordering practices that are as relevant to state practice today as when the archived maps were first drawn, there is also strong overlap with **political science and international studies**.

[64 words]

## SECTION 2: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CASE FOR SUPPORT

**Please provide full details of the proposal and make your case for support below:**

*(Maximum 750 words)*

Many border treaties end with a map, defining and delimiting territory and sovereignty. But what lies behind the map? This proposal addresses this key question, focusing on the textual, visual, and epistemological practices that underpin the calculative fieldwork of border mapping. In so doing, it places ‘the field’ at the core of the research, as a site of encounter between surveyor and surveyed, between coloniser and colonised, between outsider and insider.

The negotiated process of border mapping is embedded in the archive: in the papers, notes, reports, and maps that document connections between field and office as boundaries are surveyed and demarcated on the ground, communicated on the map, and materialised through everyday practice. To explore this multi-sited, multi-faceted archive, the proposed research will excavate ethnographies of border mapping through a studentship that fuses Durham University’s expertise in the technical practices of boundary delimitation and Queen’s Belfast’s expertise in the history of cartography with the rich collections of maps and other materials from boundary negotiations held at the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).

The project will address four objectives:

1. Gain insights on the norms and objectives that British authorities established as they implemented and promoted systems for mapping the world’s international borders.
2. Develop a methodology for integrating into historical cartographic analysis texts used and produced by cartographers and surveyors.
3. Contextualise the above two findings within the overall policies and practices of the British Empire, to gain new insights into the administration of Empire.
4. Enhance understanding of the role local participants played in border mapping practices as mediated through cartographers’ textual, as well as cartographic, outputs.

Scholars of cartographic and imperial history have long understood that the production of maps by colonial powers involves more than just surveying the land and transferring notations to paper (and then back to landscape) (e.g., Burnett, 2000; Edney, 1997). It also involves privileging some knowledges, diminishing others, and integrating still others into colonisers’ perspectives on politics, space, and power. These efforts occur within, but also beyond, the mapping process, through diary notations, letters to government officials, supportive photographs and drawings, legal interventions, and positions taken in negotiations. When mapping involves the delimitation of a border, these ‘extra-cartographic’ aspects of the map take on an especially present role, as maps are used to communicate and construct power amidst an ensemble of knowledge relations. To address this project’s objectives, the appointed postgraduate researcher will undertake a close analysis of border mapping practices, looking not just at the map as final product but at cartographic practices implemented in the field, as evidenced through drafts of maps, annotations, field-notes, etc.

The RGS-IBG is the ideal partner for this project, due to its record sponsoring academic researchers and its extensive archives in British colonial mapping in the service of boundary making. As a result of its close historical ties to government, the RGS-IBG hosts considerable cartographic, photographic, and textual materials relating to boundary commissions and expeditions throughout South America, Africa, and Asia from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The accounts found in these archives ‘open up the map’ and reveal specialised and locally embedded knowledges that, in many instances, end up ‘silenced’ in the finished map. Addressing this silencing of the local and the Other in maps and map-making speaks to wider theoretical and critical concerns in the history of empire, boundaries, and geography, as contemporary scholars seek to decolonise not only the map but the mapping *process*.

The methodology will involve drawing out ‘cartographic ethnographies’ for particular sites, analysing the biographies of those involved in these field and mapping practices, and piecing together their spatial networks and cultural milieu

at differing scales (Lilley, 2021). This approach requires testing and refinement by the researcher, and a key contribution of the research will be to formalise a transferable approach to this emergent methodology for use in cultural, historical, and political geography (Objective 2). Selection of case studies will be an important part of this exercise, undertaken in consultation with the RGS-IBG, and reflecting too the particular interests and linguistic skills of the researcher. It will involve UK-based archival and library study at the RGS-IBG, as well as field and archival work in other locations specific to the case studies. This is a further dimension of the ethnographic approach, in seeking critical reflection on being a researcher, working between the archive and the landscape, as well as engaging with local networks and expertise in case study locations where feasible.

[745 words]

**Provide details of any resources and facilities, including equipment, fieldwork, training, etc., that will be required to complete the project successfully. NBC has limited Research Training Support Grant funding, which may affect the feasibility of high-cost projects. Please note where you might also secure additional funding, (e.g. partner organisations; department or school).**

**Include estimated costs:**

*(Maximum 200 words)*

No specialised equipment or facilities will be required for this research. Relevant archives are centralised in London, at the RGS and also at The National Archives, which has informally invited the researcher, if successfully funded, to access its holdings in diplomatic correspondence and illustrations relevant to the maps that the researcher will be analysing at the RGS. Thus, aside from conference participation and possible bespoke training costs, the main cost of the research will be limited to travel to London, which should be covered by the standard RTSG allocation. If the candidate requires international travel to view mapped locations or access overseas archives (and it cannot be known at this stage if this will be necessary, since case study selection and assessment of London-based resources on that case study will be part of the research), these visits will be relatively brief and funding will be sought from Northern Bridge international fieldwork funds. Supervision meetings will be held online wherever possible, to minimise travel costs between Durham, London, and Belfast.

[169 words]

**Outline the arrangements for communication between the non-HE partner organisation and the academic host institution in regard to project management and monitoring academic progress:**

*(Maximum 200 words)*

During Year 1, the candidate will be based in Durham and have bimonthly online meetings with the 3 HE supervisors and the non-HE supervisor to discuss the development of conceptual focus. During this time, there will also be more frequent meetings with the lead supervisor as the student proceeds through the normal Durham Geography progression and, during a 2-month Year-1 scoping residency at the RGS-IBG, frequent meetings with the non-HE supervisor. Year 2 will include a 9-month residency at the RGS-IBG, during which the bimonthly all-team meetings will continue, with day-to-day supervision largely undertaken by the non-HE partner. Also during this period, each of the three HE supervisors will make at least one visit to London for an *in situ* presentation of the candidate's findings to date, as well as engaging in joint supervision with the non-HE supervisor. In Year 3, the researcher will return to Durham and have meetings at least every three months with the full supervisory team, as well as making several follow-up trips to London (adding up to 2-3 months). Throughout the process, all four supervisors will remain engaged and available for consultation as needed between formal supervisory sessions.

[193 words]

**What benefits will there be for the candidate and the non-HE partner organisation as a result of your collaboration?**

*(Maximum 300 words)*

The proposed research will be of direct benefit to the partner institution (RGS-IBG), as it will involve the researcher 1) cataloguing border-related maps and supporting documents in the archives, 2) developing a methodology for integrating cartographic and other material in the analysis of these documents, and 3) contributing to our overall understanding of mapping practices and how the process of border mapping has elevated, silenced, and re-articulated knowledge systems. Thus, the research will contribute to the RGS-IBG's institutional commitment to narrating the past in the present. It aligns with ongoing efforts to (re)interpret the collections using decolonial and inclusive methodologies, an effort overseen by the Collections Advisory Group and reflected in other initiatives like the House interpretation project.

The candidate will provide interpretation for a significant part of the RGS-IBG's collections which is currently less known and therefore under-utilized by scholars and little engaged by the public. The RGS-IBG will facilitate the candidate sharing findings in public lectures, educational workshops, and learning materials that can be accessed in-person and via the RGS-IBG's online resource banks. Depending on the candidate's interests and skill sets, they would

also be encouraged to collaboratively plan programming around their research topic, including exhibitions, symposia, or similar.

Conversely, the candidate will gain training in librarianship and cataloguing skills, as well as public history experience in working with the RGS-IBG's Education, Research and Higher Education, and Collections teams. Students who are jointly-supervised by RGS-IBG staff members are encouraged to explore their professional interests while researching at the institution, with opportunities provided across the Society's activities to prepare the candidate for whatever affiliated field they wish to pursue. RGS-IBG staff can also assist in editing research for scholarly and public-facing publications, as well as helping to locate and apply to venues for sharing research with various audiences.  
[299 words]

**State what financial (if any) or in-kind contribution the non-HE partner organisation will be making over the duration of the award:**

*(Maximum 100 words. A financial contribution is **not** a requirement. However, the AHRC expect that **non-HE partners based overseas** will make a financial contribution to the costs of the student's return travel and accommodation when visiting.)*

The RGS-IBG provides its doctoral students with full access to its research facilities and staff in the Foyle Reading Room, as well as, where necessary, in specialist consultation spaces and stores. This includes on-site and at-home access to the digitized resources of the Society's materials in the Wiley Digital Archive as well as training and development activities provided for PhD students and the Collections team. The student will have in-person and virtual access to their supervisor throughout their research, including regular and ad hoc meetings. The RGS-IBG supervisor is fully committed to providing feedback on draft work-in-progress.  
[97 words]

**Describe the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the activities the candidate will be undertaking with the non-HE partner organisation:**

*(Maximum 300 words)*

The candidate is encouraged to take an active role in the research and public engagement work of the RGS-IBG, in line with their interests and so long as it does not interfere with progress toward their degree. This could include, but is not limited to, enhancing catalogue entries, consulting on collections organization and storage, designing temporary exhibitions (virtual and in-person), writing blog posts, assembling a policy brief for the Collections Advisory Group, giving a talk in the 'Be Inspired' lecture series, and designing educational workshops.

While archival research schedules vary across the PhD, the RGS-IBG expects that the candidate will spend about two months there during Year 1, conducting scoping activities over the course of two visits. During Year 2, the candidate would engage in an extended, 9-month placement at the RGS-IBG, wherein the candidate will contribute directly to the RGS-IBG's work while also gathering necessary data for their thesis. During Year 3, the candidate will make a number of follow-up visits to the RGS-IBG (totally 2-3 months in residency), to finalise data acquisition and engage in outreach (e.g. public presentation of findings through exhibitions, lectures, etc). This estimated schedule assumes full-time study and can be adjusted if a part-time candidate is chosen.

The RGS-IBG supervisor will ensure that there is consistent, timely communication about the project and RGS-IBG activities with the candidate. They will also work closely with the other supervisors to ensure a sensible schedule of supervision meetings that meet the candidate's needs.  
[245 words]

### SECTION 3: SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

**Primary (or Co-) Supervisor:** Prof Philip Steinberg

School or Department:	Department of Geography, Durham University	Email Address:	Philip.steinberg@durham.ac.uk
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**Secondary (or Co-) Supervisor:** Dr Léonie Newhouse

School or Department:	Department of Geography, Durham University	Email Address:	leonie.s.newhouse@durham.ac.uk
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**Name of the Advisor based at the Non-HE Partner Organisation:** Dr Katie Parker

Organisation/Institution:	Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)	Email Address:	k.parker@rgs.org
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Organisation/Institution:		Email Address:	
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**Name of Additional Internal or External Advisors or Academic Supervisors, if any:** Prof Keith Lilley

Organisation/Institution:	School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen’s University Belfast	Email Address:	k.lilley@qub.ac.uk
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**Explain how the expertise of the supervisory team and external advisor(s) will allow them to support the proposed project and the selected candidate:**  
(Maximum 500 words)

**Prof Philip Steinberg** is UArctic Chair in Political Geography at Durham, where he directs IBRU: Durham University’s Centre for Borders Research. Prof Steinberg is widely published in key areas relevant to the proposed project, including the legal and technical context of surveying and boundary delimitation (from the 16<sup>th</sup> century through the present), the aesthetics of imperial cartographic practice, and the politics of bordering. He has supervised 17 PhD students to completion and is presently supervising 7. In his role as director of IBRU, he, together with Dr Parker, have facilitated the integration of RGS cartographic holdings into IBRU’s instructional courses on using archival maps in boundary research, and he is also presently working with Prof Lilley to co-supervise a Northern Bridge-funded QUB PhD student researching maps and global networks.

**Dr Léonie Newhouse** (Durham University) brings cross-regional (Latin America / Africa) perspectives on post-conflict transitions, including the implementation of peace accords and the re-negotiation of political authority over land and resource rights after wars end. She has worked ethnographically in border regions of South Sudan, where both internal and international boundaries are hotly contested, bringing insight into how maps, cartography and oral histories of surveying shape contemporary claims over land and territory. She will support the work to develop the method of cartographic ethnography. Dr. Newhouse currently supervises 2 PhD students and has a track record of both formal and informal mentoring and supervision of doctoral students (25) and post-docs (14).

**Prof Keith Lilley** (Queen’s University Belfast) brings expertise in historical-cultural geography / history of cartography to the project. Prof Lilley has led projects on the colonial impacts and legacies of field-survey and map-making and is widely published on landscape research and histories of maps and mapping. His expertise covers colonial contexts including Ireland and India, with a particular interest in the practices of survey and map making in the long-nineteenth century. His subject knowledge is of direct relevance to the proposed research, as is his geographical training in field and landscape interpretation and observation. His research networks are global and international in scope and will provide the project with a strong comparative basis, with a reach that encompasses disciplines beyond geography, including especially archaeology and history.

**Dr Katie Parker** is Cartographic Collections Manager at the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), where she preserves and promotes one of the world’s largest private map collections. She teaches a history of maps and mapping course at the London Rare Book School (Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study) and has also supervised postgraduate students enrolled in the Institute’s History of the Book programme. Her research focuses on the European imperial production of geographic knowledge about the Pacific region in the long-eighteenth century, for which she has conducted interdisciplinary archival research in Britain, Spain, France, and the United States, and she is co-Editor of *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography*.  
[486 words]

## SECTION 4: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Please provide details about the research environment the selected candidate will be joining and its suitability:

*(Maximum 500 words)*

The 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) ranked **Durham University's Department of Geography** first in the UK for overall quality of research. The quality of the research environment has been further confirmed by recent league table rankings (e.g. fourteenth in the world in the QS World University Rankings by Subject (2023)). The department's postgraduates are members of a vibrant community, interacting with over 30 Human Geography academics in addition to postdoctoral researchers, frequent international visiting scholars (usually over 6 per annum) and visiting international students (at least 3 per annum). The candidate will belong to the Politics-State-Space research cluster, which sponsors seminars, reading groups, field trips, and other activities.

The candidate will also benefit from interaction with **IBRU: Durham University's Centre for Borders Research**. For over 30 years, IBRU has been providing research, consulting, and professional training services in international boundary surveying, delimitation, negotiation, and management. IBRU's library, which contains maps and other artefacts from boundary delimitations, attracts frequent visits from researcher-practitioners, further contributing to the Durham research environment. IBRU has a history of cooperation with the RGS, and staff from both institutions are eager to work with the candidate in exploring the institutions' complementarities.

**Geography at Queen's University Belfast** is a fertile and vibrant place for researchers engaged in historical and cultural geography, with a critical mass of REF-returned academic staff with expertise in cultures of science, exploration, cartography, and landscape. Prof Lilley convenes the Places, Archaeologies, Societies, Time (PAST) cross-disciplinary research cluster within Geography at QUB, that straddles cultural geography and cultural/historical archaeology. There is a supportive graduate research culture in Geography, with a reading group for PhD students and academic staff and PDRAs to meet to discuss the latest research papers and also to offer informal feedback and ideas on doctoral research in progress. Prof Lilley also convenes the Heritage Hub @ QUB with strong transdisciplinary links across the University, especially in History and Anthropology as well as external links with partners such as National Museums Northern Ireland and Public Record Office Northern Ireland.

**The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)** is the UK's learned society and professional body for geography. It houses a collection of two million items that tell the history of geography, exploration, and empire, with a particular strength in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collection has Designated Status from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council which identifies it as of nationally- and internationally-significant importance. The collections span a variety of materials including artwork, photographs, films, books and journals, manuscript materials (journal manuscripts, letters, diaries, logbooks, etc.), artefacts, and maps, atlases, and globes. The cartographic objects make up just over half of the overall collection, forming one of the world's largest private assemblages. The Society's Foyle Reading Room welcomes hundreds of researchers each year from around the world. Society staff have supported various collaborative research initiatives in the past two decades, including collaborative doctoral projects; the candidate would join a cohort of four PhD students already at work with the Society.

[500 words]

## SECTION 5: RECRUITMENT INFORMATION

In the event that your project is successful it will be advertised on the Northern Bridge Consortium website to aid recruitment: <http://www.northernbridge.ac.uk/applyforstudentship/cda/>

Please therefore complete the following Applicant Criteria so that advertising can begin immediately following the outcome of the competition:

<i>For further information about this Collaborative Doctoral Award and to submit an Expression of Interest, please contact:</i>	
<b>Lead Supervisor (or Alternative Contact):</b>	Prof Philip Steinberg
<b>Email:</b>	Philip.steinberg@durham.ac.uk
<b>Expressions of Interest must be received no later than:</b>	15 January 2025
<b>Expressions of Interest must take the following format:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a 500-word personal statement</li> <li>• 2-page CV</li> <li>• 2 letters of reference</li> </ul>	
<b>Interviews for shortlisted candidates are expected to take place:</b>	Week commencing 3 March 2025

### APPLICANT CRITERIA

*Candidates must also meet the criteria for acceptance on a doctoral programme as set out by the host institution's Postgraduate Admissions Service. The successful candidate will be required to submit a postgraduate application to their host institution following notification that they are to be awarded a conditional CDA studentship, and meet the conditions of the offer of a place on the doctoral programme.*

<b>Education and Professional Qualifications</b>	Essential Criteria	2 <sup>nd</sup> -class (or equivalent) bachelor's degree
	Desirable Criteria	1 <sup>st</sup> -class (or equivalent) bachelor's degree; master's degree in a related discipline (e.g. geography, history, politics); technical training in cartography or surveying
<b>Research and Impact Experience and Training</b>	Essential Criteria	Experience conducting historical/archival research
	Desirable Criteria	Experience with boundary delimitation, surveying, cartography
<b>Professional Practice and Job-related Experience</b>	Essential Criteria	---
	Desirable Criteria	Professional experience in cartography, surveying, historical research, or archive/museum/library curation
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>	Essential Criteria	Excellent writing and oral communication skills



	Desirable Criteria	Multilingual communication skills
<b>Other Factors</b>	Essential Criteria	
	Desirable Criteria	