

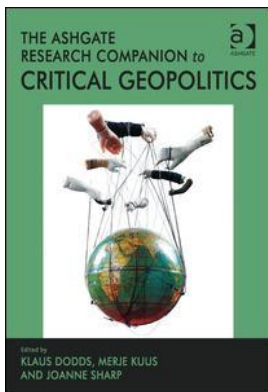
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### Violence and Peace

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# Violence and Peace

Nick Megoran

## Introduction

In 1907 US President Theodore Roosevelt ordered a newly upgraded fleet to circumnavigate the globe to impress upon the world – and in particular Germany and Japan – the newfound US status as a world power able to project military force anywhere it chose. When the fleet returned, Roosevelt greeted its vessels and seamen as ‘the best of all possible ambassadors and heralds of peace’ (Houweling and Amineh 2004: 37).

It would be easy to dismiss Roosevelt’s statement as cynical: but it is more productive to use its unintended irony to illuminate the pluriformity of the idea of ‘peace’ and to interrogate its multiple deployments and relationships with the idea of ‘violence’. The purpose of this chapter is to do just that with reference to the geographical tradition of geopolitics. The association of the term ‘geopolitics’ with violence is common, but linking it to ‘peace’ may be more surprising. This chapter shows that the history of geopolitics as a term is not one simply obsessed with war, violence and zero-sum game planning, but that there are schools of geopolitical thought which provide an archive for us to recover more pacific ways of thinking and doing international relations. Proceeding in two stages, it uses the broader literature to unpack meanings of the terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence’, and then investigates how these terms have been used in a number of ‘schools’ of geopolitical thought.

## Peace and violence

How have students of geopolitics defined peace and violence? The short answer is: generally, they haven’t. Williams and McConnell argue that geographers in general remain unclear about ‘what peace looks like, and how to research it’ (2011: 927; see also Megoran 2011). This is largely as true of geopolitics as of other branches of geographical enquiry. However, in their calls for geographers to stop

assuming what is meant by 'peace', both these interventions, ironically, assume an understanding of 'violence', a term they use but leave undefined.

Williams and McConnell and I are not alone in this. In a recent article on 'disaggregating violence', Toal neither conceptualises nor defines violence, but instead offers a list of atrocities that the term includes for the purpose of his article (2010: 259). Gregory and Pred feel able to introduce their book on 'violent geographies' without explicitly telling the reader what they or their contributors mean by 'violence' (2007).

Political geography's focus on male, weaponised, militarised, bodily violations – with peace as their absence – has allowed students of geopolitics to assume a shared understanding of what violence and peace are so that definitions are implicitly deemed unnecessary. But, as both words haunt all writing on geopolitics, we cannot ultimately avoid confronting what they mean and how they relate to each other.

## Peace

What does 'peace' mean? A useful way to begin is to corral a number of what might be termed 'regimes of peace' fixed historically on geographical coordinates (building on Richmond 2008: 7–8). Thus Rome's 'Carthaginian Peace' refers to a strategy of preventing future violent conflict by razing and salting Carthage; Westphalian, to a system of territorial state sovereignty; Pax Britannica and Pax Americana, to hegemonic leadership of the global capitalist system enforced by naval power; The Hague and Geneva conferences codified the development of the laws of war over previous centuries to limit its destructiveness; Paris was where the 1919 Peace Treaty created a nascent international system of obligations binding members to act for collective security; Rome was where the 1956 Treaty fused warring European states into 'ever closer' economic and political unity that would make future war unthinkable; and so on. Each of these regimes of peace reflects different understandings of how the world works and for whom it should work. Peace, clearly, is pluriform.

Richmond demonstrates this pluriformity in his authoritative study of how different theoretical traditions within international relations (IR) have conceived of peace. Idealism yearns for an unobtainable world of complete social harmony. Realism posits temporally limited and geographically bounded spaces of order in an anarchic world of competing states. For liberalism, international institutions and organisations representing universal norms make peace achievable, albeit alongside enduring threats such as terrorism and inequality. Marxist versions of IR theorise peace as achievable based on equality between states after the abolition of class and economic hierarchies in the international system. Feminist IR pursues the unmasking of power relations that marginalise women and critiques minimalist and gender-blind versions of peace offered by the inter-state systems. Finally, critical

theorists and poststructuralists seek an emancipatory peace, with the latter wary of the universalising tendencies and assumptions of the former (Richmond 2008).

Although peace may be pluriform, these ways of thinking about it all have a common thread: that peace is a relationship manifesting the absence of conflict. To be sure, the understanding of how far conflict may be absent is dependent upon theoretical assumptions about how the international system works. Each definition of peace, likewise, has different ways of thinking about power and its relative distribution in that relationship. But in each case, peacefulness is challenged or established by assaults on the integrity of one or more entities in that relationship. That is to say: it is not possible to think clearly about peace without explicitly reflecting on violence.

## Violence

For many working within the fields of international studies, violence is 'the deliberate infliction of harm on people' that aims at 'intentional and direct physical' damage (Kalyvas 2006: 19–20). Kalyvas chose this definition because of its lack of ambiguity in studying African civil wars, but recognises that 'violence' is 'a conceptual minefield ... a multifaceted social phenomenon' (2006: 19). Other thinkers have advanced more sophisticated taxonomies of violence. Mead contends that although some societies have never invented warfare as a social practice, they may exhibit other forms of violence, such as male on female violence (1964 [1940]).

Galtung has provided one of the richest conceptualisations of violence. For him, 'violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations' (Galtung 1969: 168). Violence may be 'personal' (directed against an individual by another individual) or 'structural' – when, in the absence of personal intention, it 'is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as un-equal life chances' (Galtung 1969: 171). By this definition, dying of a preventable disease such as tuberculosis or 'starving when this is objectively avoidable' is violence (Galtung 1969: 168, 171). Gorsevski extends Galtung's concept of 'cultural violence' and defines it as a rhetorical climate when 'our social modes of thinking or behaving cause harm to individuals belonging to ostracized groups, such as gays, lesbians, or members of a minority race' (Gorsevski 2004: 30). The goal of peace research, then, should be to work for the elimination of both personal and structural violence (Galtung 1969: 183).

## Peace, violence and geopolitics

Peace and violence are clearly contested and overlapping terms. The purpose of this chapter is to ask how, using the definitions considered above, 'peace' and 'violence' figure in some of the key thinkers and schools in the geopolitical tradition.

In keeping with the focus of this collection, the subsequent exploration confines itself only to geopolitics and does not consider political geography in general. There is slippage between these terms, and some writers use them synonymously, but for the purposes of this chapter it is helpful to distinguish between them. Political geography is a broad sub-discipline of human geography concerned with the spatiality of the exercise of political power. Geopolitics is one sub-field of political geography, being the visual practice of the spatialisation of global or regional politics as a dynamic drama characterised by particular types of places, people and processes. Other traditional sub-fields of political geography, such as migration, elections, state structure/morphology, citizenship, diplomacy and international boundaries, may or may not have geopolitical elements. As Flint helpfully clarifies, geopolitics is not the same as the political geography of international politics (2005).

Using these definitions, the chapter begins with Halford Mackinder's thinking as an exemplar of classical geopolitics. It then considers a series of alternative 'critical' responses: humanised, critical, anti-, feminist, progressive, alter- and pacific geopolitics. The chapter is primarily intended to describe and analyse how 'peace' and 'violence' figure within each 'school' considered. In so doing it will problematise simplistic assumptions that classical geopolitics is 'for violence' and critical alternatives somehow 'for peace'. Just as there are multiple forms of violence, peace too is pluriform, and no single school of geopolitical thought has a monopoly on it.

## Classical geopolitics

In what still remains one of the best expositions of classical geopolitics, Hans Weigert defined geopolitics as 'political geography applied to national power politics and its actual strategy in peace and war' (1942: 14). However, Weigert clearly believed classical geopolitics emphasised the latter term to the virtual exclusion of the former, contending that 'in this world of power politics and political biology the word "peace" has been erased' (1942: 107). Weigert was here referring to Rudolf Kjellén, but a more nuanced realist conception of peace is fleshed out in Halford Mackinder's thought. Mackinder had much of interest to say about peace. The advantage of conceptualising peace and violence, as we are doing here, is that it allows us to inquire into what type of peace he was committed to.

It would be a mistake to dismiss Mackinder as hopelessly martial. In his famous 1935 address on the history of British geography, he said evocatively: 'The shadows cast before us by threatened events are among the major causes of the present troubles of mankind' and thus the reason for geographers to provide 'a

fresh insight into the present and a new vision of the future' (Mackinder 1935: 5). His writings towards the end and after the First World War were concerned with what he called 'the future peace of Europe' (Mackinder 1917: 5). In one of his last papers, he said that although geographers have been good at considering the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere, they needed to explore how the 'psychosphere' – mankind's geographical imagination – can be developed to catch up with the new picture of a closed, interconnected world, rather than dividing itself into untrusting and competing entities (Mackinder 1937: 179–80).

Thus Mackinder was 'for peace': but what type of peace? 'Europe can have peace', he wrote, if there are enough strong buffer states around Germany to check 'the temptation to German ambition' (Mackinder 1917: 2). For Mackinder, British imperialism had brought 'internal and external peace' to India (1907: 344), and, by active deterrence, the Royal Navy had secured peace without combat (1905: 138). In a 1919 report to London, when serving as High Commissioner for South Russia, he advocated British military support for anti-Bolshevik forces, saying 'peace with the Soviet at this moment would be universally construed as a decisive victory for Bolshevism'.<sup>1</sup> He hoped that after the Second World War the USA, China and India would help produce a 'balanced globe of human beings. And happy, because balanced and thus free' (Mackinder 1943: 605). But this was precarious. He said in what may be his last published words, a report of his 1944 acceptance speech of an Association of American Geographer's medal: 'May our idealists, when it comes to making peace, not refuse to reckon with the realities of power' (Mackinder 1944: 132).

In a 1906 pamphlet that provides perhaps his clearest statement on the relationship between peace and violence, he wrote that 'the world's peace' depends on 'Power'. For Mackinder – who exalted its efficacy by capitalising the word – 'Power' meant both the use of military force and maintaining the capacity and readiness to use it at all times. He gave examples of how he claimed that parading the threat of naval power (what might be called 'gunboat diplomacy', although Mackinder did not use the term) had protected British commercial and territorial interests around the world and actually prevented full-scale warfare. Thus for Mackinder peace and violence were not opposites, but rather the former was a product of the correct use of the latter: 'we must regard the exercise of Power in foreign affairs', he wrote, 'as a normal and peaceful function of the national life, to be steadily provided for' (1906: 5). The geographer's role thus became to assist the state's effective use of power by providing a correct understanding of the geographical aspects of international politics and their modification by currently existing military technologies. It was unsurprising that when Mackinder began teaching at Oxford in 1887 he was reportedly opposed by liberal thinkers who claimed his geography 'promoted strategical, that is to say militarist and imperialist, ways of thinking' (Gilbert 1947: 95).

1 'Report on the Situation in South Russia by Sir H. Mackinder, M.P.', 21 Jan. 1920; cited in Kearns forthcoming.

Mackinder's concept of peace was essentially one of a precarious balance of power between competing empires. It left little room for justice between them. He showed more concern for justice within the British Empire, but his thinking here was riven with contradiction and simplification. For example, he professed to despise the teaching in British schools of that kind of imperialism that took joy in possession, an attitude he thought led to despotism. Instead, he wanted the empire to be a 'league of equals', with the British currently acting as the 'trustees for half-civilised millions', a trusteeship that would produce 'world peace' (Mackinder 1907: 35, 41). Britain was best able to preserve the existence of the empire by redistributing resources within it more evenly and by rejecting racism, seeing Indians and others as equal – 'you can only peacefully conquer by self-abnegation', he said (Mackinder 1907: 35). But in the meantime, the 'lower races' had to be kept in check through 'active and spirited interference' (Mackinder 1907: 42). Likewise, Mackinder was unfriendly to the redistribution of wealth within the UK, except for the purpose of moulding an efficient imperial workforce. Opposing women's electoral franchise, he was also hostile to rebalancing power between the sexes.

Peace for Mackinder was thus the maintenance of the status quo that protected the position of the British Empire against potential rivals. It was a resource that could be 'won' through the creation of complex alliances backed by military force in an international balance of power. Justice between and within states featured only dimly in his writings. He indicated opaquely his hope for some more enduring future 'world peace', but in the meantime a balance of power that constricts resurgent heartland powers like Germany or Russia was the best that could be expected. This is classic realist peace: temporary truces between alliances of untrusting states in an anarchic world system, with little place for considering justice. Nonetheless, it is still a way of thinking about peace and does provide some purchase on the nature of the inter-state system and the shortcomings of idealist visions of peace. Mackinder believed in democracy and was anxious about its (in)ability to grasp the nature of the threat to it presented by non-democratic regimes: a concern amply demonstrated by the appeasement of Hitler. But Mackinder, like other classical geopolitical thinkers, yields meagre resources for peace.

## Humanised geopolitics

The pessimistic realism of classical geopolitics has persisted down to the present day, in its various neoclassical reincarnations (Megoran 2010a). However, it has never been uncontested. When the USA entered the Second World War, a school of critique emerged that might, after Weigert, be called 'humanized geopolitics' (Weigert 1942: 258). This sought to place human welfare, not the growth and survival of states, at the heart of its thinking. In a searing attack on classical geopolitics – especially its German variety – Weigert accused it of losing all 'reverence for the dignity of human life' (1942: 240). In these schemes, he wrote, 'the last bit of humanity was sacrificed' such that 'the individual with his sentimental dreams of

happiness' no longer exists: indeed, 'in this world of power politics and political biology the word "peace" has been erased' (Weigert 1942: 106, 226, 107).

Humanised geopolitics was attentive to different meanings of 'peace', and contested classical geopolitics' realist idea of peace as only a temporary interlude of non-combat: 'To its prophets peace means only a breathing spell to organize forces with which to win a Third World War' (Weigert 1942: 247). Instead, humanised geopolitics looked to reorganise the geopolitical map of the world by creating new frameworks that would serve human well-being by checking the nationalistic imperialism of expansionist states. Proposals generally focused on using geographical knowledge of the distribution of ethnic/cultural groups and natural resources to reorganise political life at levels greater than the nation-state. Van Valkenburg proposed the world be divided into eight regional blocs (1942: ch. 9). Highlighting the violence of Italian Fascist cultural genocide of minorities on the Italo-Yugoslav boundary, Moodie, in a prescient anticipation of what is now the EU, called for new forms of political organisation with more porous boundary management, achieved by moving away from geopolitical visions such as the Monroe doctrine and imperial nationalism (Moodie 1945: 231). However, most of these schemes were long on grand statements but short on details. Whittlesey advocated 'local autonomy within a larger frame of pooled but restricted authority' to avoid the frightening rise in even bigger, warring entities that would occur 'if power politics is allowed to run amuck' (n.d.: 190–91). However he had no idea what this would look like, simply expressing the hope that when geographers gained 'a sure knowledge of the whole earth', humanity would be able to erect a political framework enabling it 'to live true to its noblest traditions and in harmony with the ideals of humanity's ethical leaders of all ages and countries' (Whittlesey n.d.: 191).

Humanised geopolitics had a more sophisticated understanding of violence than the 1930s idealism that preceded it. Gone was the naivety of Atwood's assurance that proper geographical education could create 'good will among nations' and 'remove all vestiges of hatred' (1935: 15). Instead, humanised geopolitics recognised a need to address the inequalities in resources that lay behind many wars. Its solutions, however, were also naive. Thus in suggesting that future war in Europe could be avoided by dividing the continent into four autarkic units, Taylor lacked the critical appreciation of capitalism's role in creating and perpetuating the violence of the inter-state system, an appreciation that Horrabin's contemporary socialist geography would provide (Taylor 1946: ch. 13; Horrabin 1943). Likewise, because humanised geopolitics was primarily concerned with 'peace' as keeping the lid on great-power competition, justice was not seen as integral. Thus although Van Valkenburg proposed an 'international board' to rule on boundary disputes, his scheme envisioned not the freedom of colonies but their 'pooling' under 'international trusteeship' with their raw material resources made 'equally available to all countries' (1942: 265, 273–4).

Humanised geopolitics' clearest contribution to our understanding of peace and violence was in demonstrating and documenting at great length how 'the natural "science" of geopolitics forges arms for the next world war' (Weigert 1942:



247). Some recognised that this was true not only of German *Geopolitik* but also the 'American geopolitics' of writers like Spykman who 'became enchanted by what they mistook to be the melodies of geopolitics, but which were in fact the savage dissonance of inhuman power politics' (Weigert 1942: 245). However, this insight was not pushed as far as it could have been: for example, Weigert declared himself to be 'in great awe of Sir Halford Mackinder's genius' (1942: ix), overlooking Mackinder's explicit and implicit politics of imperialism that Ó Tuathail would later call 'imperial incitement' (1996: ch. 3). Indeed, it was not until the development of critical geopolitical theory half a century later that geographers were able to advance on humanised geopolitics' critique of classical geopolitics.

## Critical geopolitics

In a 1983 landmark article on Allied bombing of urban places during the Second World War, Hewitt complained that geographers have 'given almost no treatment' to war (1983: 258). That was beginning to change by the end of the decade with the emergence of 'critical geopolitics' as a critique of US geopolitical designations of global and regional politics in the 'second Cold War' (Ó Tuathail 1986; Dalby 1990). Critical geopolitics used poststructural theories of international relations to develop humanised geopolitics' earlier insight that classical geopolitics' geographical imagination was itself productive of violence.

Critical geopolitics has arguably made a greater contribution to our understanding of violence than to peace. Take, for example, its study of how geopolitical framings of the world are produced, circulated and consumed within the film industry (Power and Crampton 2007). Such contributions provide cogent critiques of violence, but generally do not dedicate the same level of critical attention to scripts that explore peace and non-violence. In her book on rhetoric and non-violence, Gorsevski shows how this might be done. Drawing on well-rehearsed critiques of Hollywood as constantly reaffirming violence as the only possible solution to endangerment or injustice, she observes how films that downplay violence and explore creative alternatives get marginalised as 'women's films' (Gorsevski 2004: ch. 4). She devotes much of her chapter to unpacking ideas about violence and peace in one such film, *Spitfire Grill*, arguing it demonstrates 'how people can cooperate to fight both structural violence and personal violence' (Gorsevski 2004: 69). Critical geopolitics has immersed itself in the study of films that perpetuate a worldview of people as essentially sexual and aggressive bodies rather than primarily creative human beings. It is therefore unsurprising that it has thus had much to say about violence and little about peace.

Critical geopolitics has thought more clearly about what it is against rather than what it is for. A lack of consistency in considering ethical responses to war means that in some circumstances critical geopolitical interventions even position themselves as incitements to neo-imperial military violence (Megoran 2008). Toal has recently called for a 'grounded localized critical geopolitics' that recovers

older traditions of regional fieldwork in political geography that were displaced by the 'largely reactive' theoretical/political critiques of critical geopolitics (2010: 263, 257). This is promising, but its contribution to peace is yet to be seen: it is still generally the case that critical geopolitics offers 'neither a clear characterisation of a better society nor a specific road map for attaining' it (Kelly 2006: 43). The following sections will examine a number of projects that work with, around or out of critical geopolitics to articulate clearer commitments to peace.

## Anti-geopolitics

If critical geopolitics can be faulted for a weak engagement with normative questions, the same charge cannot be made of 'anti-geopolitics'. Through his editorship of the 'anti-geopolitics' section of the *Geopolitics Reader*, Paul Routledge has stamped a particularly influential meaning on the term. Here, we shall consider his editorial introduction and the readings he corrals. Routledge defines anti-geopolitics as 'an ambiguous political and cultural force within civil society' that challenges both the '*material* (economic and military) geopolitical power of states and global institutions' and '*the representations* imposed by political elites upon the world ... to serve their geopolitical interests' (2006: 233). This definition is vague, and clarification is further hindered by Routledge's failure to define 'geopolitics': he effectively uses it to mean elite political and economic power. It is easier to grasp what Routledge means by looking at the examples he gives. They embrace an array of interventions including academic analyses, armed uprisings and non-violent mass activism. From the US civil rights movement to al-Qaeda; from the Lithuanian secessionist struggle to Mexico's Zapatistas; from the Iranian Islamic revolution to books by academics such as Franz Fanon and Edward Said. Anti-geopolitics would appear to be efforts by non-state actors to liberate themselves from what they regard as oppressive state or international non-state actor domination.

Because of this oppositional emphasis, Routledge's writing on violence is clear, considered and searching. His basic taxonomy is of violence as a materially destructive force directed against property, military targets or civilians (Routledge 2006: 234). Such violence may be deployed directly, for example, by Latin American peasant guerrilla movements challenging authoritarian regimes, or indirectly, for example, by the USA training, arming and financing the counter-insurgents and paramilitaries that oppose them (Routledge 2006: 236). To these he adds various structures of violence. A thread running through many of the movements he identifies is resistance to the unjust ways in which the powers that be create and maintain economic inequality. More than this, observing that violent nationalist movements are themselves 'often deeply patriarchal and repressive of minorities' and an anti-geopolitics movement like al-Qaeda may be 'anti-Semitic, homophobic and sexist' (Routledge 2006: 234, 243), he recognises that violence is also the bodily harm and personal and social suppression of marginalised groups. Likewise, colonialism's violence rested upon 'a profound alienation of colonized peoples'

and geopolitical divisions of the world. Although he does not use the term, what he is describing might be called 'representational violence', and Routledge is clear that it is used by the colonizers to dehumanize the colonized 'in order to legitimize their control and exploitation' (2006: 236). He is aware of the dynamics of violence: that 'violence on one side engenders violence from the other' (Routledge 2006: 244). Thus anti-geopolitics articulates a sophisticated, nuanced and broad understanding of violence.

In contrast, Routledge has little to say about peace insofar as it relates to his vision of geopolitics. His earlier work on social movements in India explored the role of space in constituting different practices of non-violent resistance in different locales. Observing that 'while there is abundant historical material on violent struggles, there is far less information on nonviolent struggles' (Routledge 1993: xvi), his work made an important contribution towards rebalancing that focus. However, Routledge does not make clear and sustained connections between non-violence/peace and his later work on anti-geopolitics. There, 'the peace movement' is held up as an example of anti-geopolitical resistance to the Cold War (Routledge 2006: 239). Otherwise, non-violence is considered as an anti-geopolitical tactic, which may be deployed as an alternative to or in concert with violent approaches. Thus he observes that 'armed struggle' is frequently used by guerrilla movements 'in concert with non-violent sanctions such as strikes and civil disobedience conducted by the population at large' (Routledge 2006: 235). Peace remains under-theorised in Routledge's vision of anti-geopolitics.

This is hardly surprising. Anti-geopolitics is defined by what it is against, not what it is for. Therefore it has a rich understanding of violence, but an underdeveloped vision of peace. This would perhaps be impossible for a concept that lumps together movements and tactics as diverse as Gandhian non-violence, US civil rights, al-Qaeda suicide terrorism and apartheid-backed Renamo. It is true that all scholarly labels are exogenous devices, but it may be the case that although anti-geopolitics advances political geography's understanding of violence, it is too contrived a notion to frame a coherent research agenda around a positive concept of peace. Routledge reprints an essay by Jennifer Hyndman as an example of anti-geopolitics: and it is to the 'feminist geopolitics' with which Hyndman is associated that we can turn for clearer vision of what 'peace' might mean for geopolitics.

## Feminist geopolitics

Feminist geopolitics began by bringing long-standing feminist political and epistemological concerns into an engagement with critical geopolitics. In a defining text, Dowler and Sharp recognised critical geopolitics as offering 'an important critical intervention', but faulted it for offering 'little sense of alternative possibilities' (2001: 167). Although it began by indicting 'the historical reasoning of geopolitical arguments as masculinist' and 'the relative absence of women' in political geography (Dowler and Sharp 2001: 165), it has always been about far more than

gender. As they continue, 'it offers a lens through which the everyday experiences of the disenfranchised can be made more visible' (Dowler and Sharp 2001: 169). Crucial to this has been a preoccupation with the body: rewriting women's bodies into accounts of international relations; insisting that every theorist is located and writes from somewhere; emphasising the agency of bodies and the materiality of violence; and identifying common corporeality as the basis for a contextual politics of empathy. In this sense it echoes the basic move of humanised geopolitics although, somewhat surprisingly, does not engage with its predecessor.

Jennifer Hyndman has produced the most sustained corpus of work under the rubric of feminist geopolitics. Her analytical starting point is 'the human body's vulnerability to violence' (Hyndman 2010: 254). This vulnerability allows her to suggest an equivalence between the violence of the al-Qaeda attacks on the USA in September 2001, and that of the US and UK attacks on Afghanistan in October 2001 (Hyndman 2003: 2). It is the basis for contesting constructions of international relations that depend on an erasure of the corporeal scale. She is thus able to show how practical geopolitical designations are complicit in violence, by claiming that media 'cartographies of peopleless places, mostly in Afghanistan, have mobilized consent for more violence in subtle ways' (Hyndman 2003: 7). In showing how this vulnerability manifests itself in uneven experiences of violence, Hyndman can demonstrate the interlinking between injustice and violence because 'inequitable and violent relationships of power' are frequently inseparable (2003: 7). In short, feminist geopolitics' foregrounding of 'the body' gives it a unique and insightful optic on violence.

Hyndman juxtaposes her critique of violence in the 'war on terror' with condemnation of the corporeal violence enacted both by al-Qaeda and the USA (2003: 2). A feminist geopolitics works with 'a more accountable and embodied notion of politics' that 'contests the militarization of states and societies' and 'eschews violence as a legitimate means to political ends' (Hyndman 2003: 3). This is a clearer statement of 'peace by peaceful means' than is found in humanised, critical, anti- or progressive geopolitics (see below). However it remains underdeveloped.

For instance, in her most recent statement on feminist geopolitics, Hyndman restates the case that feminist geopolitical analyses move beyond critique of discourse 'to generate more embodied ways of seeing and doing politics on the ground' (Hyndman 2010: 249), but the example she gives is of how the category of 'child soldier' is constructed. She chronicles how Sierra Leonean teenager Ismael Beah was orphaned in the country's civil war and fought for a paramilitary group before being rehabilitated by UNICEF and celebrated as a redeemed former 'child soldier'. In contrast, Canadian teenager Omar Khadir was captured in Afghanistan and sent to Guantanamo Bay for allegedly killing a US soldier in combat. Hyndman's powerfully drawn contrast shows how Beah was excused by being labelled a 'child soldier' and thus a victim, whereas, by being classified as an 'enemy combatant', Khadir was put beyond official sympathy and the normal operation of the law (Hyndman 2010: 251-4). This is a compelling argument, but it is difficult to see how it can avoid falling foul of the standard critiques of critical geopolitics for not advancing alternatives. To find clearer outlines of practical feminist alternatives

to war-making and violence, we have to look beyond feminist geopolitics to work such as Elise Boulding's 'feminist peacemaking' that uncovers the 'extraordinary creativity' women have shown in making space for peaceful interaction in the midst of violence (Boulding 2000: ch. 5; for a critique of this general approach from a more radical feminist perspective, see Bates 2000). Cockburn's activist research on women and trans-boundary peacemaking on the island of Cyprus is an exemplary contribution (2004).

Although identifying with feminist geopolitics herself, Koopman is disappointed with what she sees as this failure to move beyond critique. 'From violence to what?' she asks pointedly. Recalling Dowler and Sharp's earlier statement that feminist geopolitics critiqued critical geopolitics for offering 'little sense of alternative possibilities', she turns it on itself by contending that 'feminist geopolitics has so far given little sense of the many alternatives being worked out on "the streets"' (Koopman 2011: 277). Feminist geopolitics' focus on corporeal vulnerability enables an original and insightful theorisation of violence and is a reminder that the transformative projects of peace materialise through and beyond bodies. But it has not, apparently, facilitated much thinking about peace.

Why has feminist geopolitics thus far not grappled as explicitly with concrete alternatives for peaceful transformation as might be expected? It may be that the shared corporeality of 'the body' is too fragile to ground transformative projects of peace. 'The body' simply begs the question: why is a human body worth protecting from violence? Countless civilisations down the ages have concluded that it is not, and in recent times radical modernist projects have regarded them as so much dispensable fodder for building grand social projects for the perceived greater good. Kearns implies that epistemological concerns of feminist thought hinders it from talking about 'what sort of home we want to make of the Earth' (in Agnew et al. 2011: 57). As we shall consider in the next section, no such reticence holds Kearns back from advocating a more specific set of alternatives to classical geopolitics.

## Progressive geopolitics

In an important book, Kearns considered the contention that inequality is inevitable and force is necessary in international relations (2009). Classical and neoclassical geopolitics think that it is; Kearns thinks that it is not. This argument is fleshed out by comparing and contrasting Mackinder and his neoclassical advocates, on the one hand, and their critics, on the other.

Although Kearns' interest in Mackinder predates the rise of critical and feminist geopolitics, he engages with them in framing a 'brief prospectus' of progressive geopolitics. He expresses dissatisfaction that critical geopolitics has failed to provide sufficient 'critical accounts of international relations' (Kearns in Agnew et al. 2011). Against the concerns of feminist geopoliticians such as Sharp (2011) about the epistemological difficulties of making truth claims, Kearns insists that geographers should 'talk about what sort of home we want to make of the Earth and

the ways that geographical studies direct our attention to the forces and capacities that might help or hinder making such a home' (in Agnew et al. 2011: 57).

Although not expressly articulated as such, Kearns has a clear conceptualisation of what counts as violence in geopolitics: the ways in which imperialism uses force to create and sustain inequalities. For example, in discussing the dispossession of indigenous peoples he writes that 'globalization' is the latest term for 'the ongoing violent processes associated with European contact that have more than decimated aboriginal populations through disease, murder, theft of resources, and disruption of indigenous social, cultural, and economic systems' (Kearns 2009: 292). In integrating personal and structural violence and showing how they are both tools and effects of imperialisms that create and maintain inequalities, Kearns demonstrates the link between violence and injustice.

In contrast, Kearns' account conceptualises peace less clearly. Counterposing it to his definition of imperialist violence, he tries to show that it is not only states, force and capitalism that matter in the global order but also international institutions, non-force and the supply of goods and services other than as commodities through unregulated trade (Kearns 2009: 266). This is an important conceptual step in linking peace to justice: 'justice, rather than force, is the salve for many conflicts' (Kearns 2009: 280).

However, because Kearns builds up an idea of peace by seeking negations to the definition of imperialist violence that is at the core of his book, rather than by theorising peace itself, 'peace' rapidly becomes contradictory. For example, although claiming that progressive geopolitics 'must build upon and articulate the values of non-violence if it is to serve the cause of making a better world', he also seems sympathetic to 'humanitarian intervention', which is another type of military force usually deployed by imperialistic powers (Kearns 2009: 295, 279). Similarly, he sets great store on the agency of international organisations as alternatives to geopolitics' concentration on states. Implying that Kearns is naive in holding up international organisations as a more progressive vehicle for global politics, Jeffrey opines that Kearns 'relies too heavily on a sanitised account of NGO practice that overlooks the ways in which these organisations are at times a necessary symptom of conservative geopolitics rather than the possibility for an alternative' (Jeffrey 2011: 722).

Both these difficulties occur because Kearns lacks a clear formulation of what 'peace' means and therefore fails to engage with the contradictions and tensions of what Richmond terms 'the liberal peace' — likeminded states coexisting in an order of democracy, market capitalism, human rights, development and civil society, maintained by force. This liberal peace empowers an epistemic community legitimately able to transfer knowledge of this peace to those who do not have it. It is a form of victors' peace, reliant on dominant states and the hegemony of the state system, but makes strong claims to be emancipatory (Richmond 2008). It is far from clear that the 'liberal peace' is progressive: but the NGOs, humanitarian interventions and other aspects of Kearns' progressive geopolitics are embedded within its project.

Kearns' progressive geopolitics develops geopolitical scholarship on peace and violence by moving beyond critical and feminist geopolitics' failures to think consistently through alternatives. Its conceptualisation of violence is a particular advance of the literature. However, its concomitant failure to think through consistently what peace means reduces its potential to frame a coherent research or political programme. That is not true of the next alternative vision of geopolitics which we will consider, Alter-geopolitics.

## Alter-geopolitics

Koopman critiques critical geopolitics for its focus on the production of elite geographical imaginations. Although accepting that this 'continues to be important', she considers that it does not leave enough space 'for everyone having access to re-envisioning and reworking both the map and its rules' (Koopman 2011: 275). Likewise anti-geopolitics' attention to localised social movements is faulted for leaving little space for exploring transnational activism that goes beyond simple resistance to specific injustices. She finds feminist geopolitics' sensitivity and everyday responses to international dramas more productive, yet is disappointed that Hyndman's passing references to 'non-violence' remain undeveloped. Feminist geopolitics, Koopman argues, should be not simply pointing to, but non-violently 'creating' alternatives – or rather looking to where people are already doing this. This she terms 'alter-geopolitics'.

In setting out her argument, Koopman moves between two examples of alter-geopolitics. The first was her 1980s childhood involvement with the faith-based Sanctuary Movement that created an underground network to protect refugees fleeing violence in Central America (Golden and McConnell 1986). The second is her doctoral work on the Fellowship of Reconciliation's 'protective accompaniment' programme in Colombia, where US and other foreign nationals shield Colombian peace activists from murder by government or paramilitary forces. In both cases, people formed international solidarity networks to sustain creative new geopolitical imaginaries that demonstrated that 'other securities are happening'.

For Koopman, alter-geopolitics is 'geopolitics being *done* differently' (2011: 280). It weaves together elements of critical, anti- and feminist geopolitics, but has two key markers. First, it goes beyond the academic critique at which she considers feminist geopolitics generally stops: it works with and writes about actually existing alternative geopolitical practices. The second characteristic that distinguishes it from, say, Kearns' progressive geopolitics, is that it is non-violent and 'tries to live the change it seeks in the world' by working 'to build and live alternatives to the (in)security of violence' (Koopman 2011: 281). It advances a vision of peace as actively resisting structures of violence, but doing so in a way that fosters solidarity between peoples in different places and is always non-violent. However, in following anti-geopolitics and exclusively studying non-state actors, it misses important processes and potentialities at other scales. The final alternative

geopolitical project that we shall thus consider, pacific geopolitics, recognises that geopolitics can be done differently in settings other than grassroots activism.

## Pacific geopolitics

Pacific geopolitics is ‘the study of how ways of thinking geographically about world politics can promote peaceful and mutually enriching human coexistence’ (Megoran 2010b: 385). Whereas critical geopolitics has focused on exposing how geopolitical visions are constitutive of violence, pacific geopolitics extends critical geopolitics to explore how ‘spatialising and ordering the world in imaginative geographies can contribute towards more harmonious relations between states and other human groupings’ (Megoran 2010b: 385). It seeks concrete examples of how geopolitical visions can be reformulated to produce new ways of making peace, using as an example the transformative effects of apologies for the Crusades on Christian missionaries in the Middle East (Megoran 2010b) and reconciliation-focused ‘Holy Land’ tours (Megoran 2011).

With classical geopolitics, pacific geopolitics considers war and peace legitimate topics of geographical research. With humanised geopolitics, it departs from classical geopolitics’ desire to put geographical knowledge at the service of war-makers. With critical geopolitics, it recognises that many of these geographical projects set up as alternatives to German *Geopolitik* were themselves examples of British or American ‘imperial incitement’. Although adopting the methods and approaches of critical geopolitics, it goes beyond simply exposing ‘militarist mappings of global space’ and challenging ‘how contexts are constructed to justify violence’ (Dalby 2010: 281) – vital though this endeavour remains for a fuller geography of peace. With anti-geopolitics it seeks the identification of alternatives, but joins feminist geopolitics in insisting that they be non-violent. With alter-geopolitics, it extends feminist geopolitics by valorising the study of actually existing alternative ways of doing geopolitics. However, it is too limiting simply to focus upon grassroots activism: with progressive geopolitics, therefore, it recognises that states, and the systems of inter-governmental law and government that their elites can produce, may also be productive of more pacific ways of organising the human social life of our planet.

Pacific geopolitics draws upon the work of Galtung and others to conceive of peace as ‘okayness’ (Yoder 1987), a relationship manifesting in the first place the absence of conflict but ideally an inclusive transformation of society to ensure just and non-violent social relationships, not only between states, but between sexes, ethnicities and other social groups within those states. Peace is not a once-for-all outcome, but a continuously negotiated social relationship: thus questions of power are crucial. Eschewing the pursuit of peace through violence, it avows a commitment to non-violence as a platform for a progressive political geography of peace. It frames a specific research agenda that first interrogates how peace is



conceptualised and, second, makes a commitment to peace through the intersection of academic research and activism within a normative agenda (Megoran 2011).

However, thus far it lacks a proper conceptualisation of 'violence'; reversing the charge that can be made against most of the alternative projects outlined, it is clearer about what it is for than what it is against. If, as argued at the start of this chapter, then it is not possible to think about the two terms in isolation, then this is potentially a serious shortcoming in pacific geopolitics. The geopolitical study of peace and violence is still in need of both conceptual clarification and detailed empirical research.

## Conclusion

In 1983 theologian and prominent anti-apartheid activist, Allan Boesak, discovered that he was the target of a foiled assassination plot by the *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (Afrikaner Resistance Movement). In a sermon, Boesak opined that their murderous hatred was explicable when 'racist laws, racist structures, racist attitudes emphasize in a thousand ways the sub-human status of black people in South Africa' (1983: 46). Declaring that Jesus 'did not come to bring a superficial kind of peace', he rejected the option of 'cheap reconciliation' which 'denies justice, and which compromises the God-given dignity of black people' (Boesak 1983: 42, 46–7). Instead, he said, he would work for 'true peace' between black and white, which was only possible when both the oppressed had been freed from apartheid's denial of their rights and humanity and also when the oppressors were liberated from their oppression. This was to be pursued through civil disobedience rather than violence.

Boesak's African liberation theology incorporated a rigorous theorisation of violence with a clear vision of a just and peaceful future obtainable by peaceful means and practical application in the messy context of a localised struggle. For both analytical purchase and practical value, geopolitical thought likewise needs to think clearly and rigorously about how it understands violence and peace, and how this informs practical action for peace in a given context.

Classical geopolitics has done this, with thinkers such as Halford Mackinder articulating a realist understanding of peace as the temporary cessation of hostilities between alliances of highly militarised states in a fragile balance of power. Humanised geopolitics reacted against classical geopolitics' service of war-makers, but its ambitious yet naive alternatives failed to get to grips with enduring structures of violence. Critical geopolitics went some way to rectifying this by adding greater theoretical insight to humanised geopolitics' critique of the violence of classical geopolitics. Anti-geopolitics and feminist geopolitics have provided even more developed conceptualisations of violence. But none of these alternatives to classical geopolitics has got to grips with what 'peace' might mean and how it might be built. More recently, alter-, progressive and pacific geopolitics have begun to think through more rigorously what peace means.

The task for critical variants of geopolitics is, as I have argued elsewhere for geography in general, twofold (Megoran 2011). The first is to conceptualise peace – to be clear about what geopolitical scholars and actors have meant by the term over time, and to be clear about what we mean by it. The second is to commit to it. This is a commitment to researching how geopolitical visions and actions have actually created spaces for peace. But it also means critical involvement with and care for the movements we study, and emphasising peace in our teaching and public engagement.

This chapter has shown that the history of geopolitics as a term is not one simply obsessed with war, violence and zero-sum game planning but that there are schools of geopolitical thought which provide an archive for us to recover more pacific ways of thinking and doing international relations. It is vital that we keep in mind – and keep reminding the world – that although violence appears pervasive, it does not have to be that way, will not always be that way, and in fact is not actually that way. Put simply, critical geopolitics should be for peace.

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