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INTRODUCTION

Making Geographies of Peace and Conflict

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Questions of war and peace dominate the headlines. They are also pressing questions for students in university classrooms and scholars forming research agendas. The war between Russia and Ukraine raised the specter of another European war, or even escalation into a wider conflagration. Post–Cold War optimism now seems naïve. The persistence of terrorism, including attacks perpetuated by groups proclaiming a brand of Islamic fundamentalism, and the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, indicate that the violence within the War on Terror persists. These dramatic events came on top of long-term tensions, especially the Western focus on China’s growing power through the twin strategies of the Belt and Road Initiative and creating a blue-water navy. On the other hand, we see that steps toward peace are possible. Violence has remained in abeyance in Northern Ireland, despite post-Brexit tensions. Diplomacy and dialog have come to the fore within Western Europe to sustain what had appeared to be a creaky trans-Atlanticism. The Black Lives Matter movement has been successful in making racial justice and postcolonialism a central concern in many aspects of life. In sum, intertwined processes of peace and conflict are ongoing. In 2003, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, then Vice President Cheney argued, “9/11 changed everything.” Perhaps so, but not in the ways expected and not forever. Geopolitics remains a process, a state of flux, rather than a state of stasis. The flux is manifest in a tapestry of geographies of war and peace that can only be understood by identifying interlinked spaces and the simultaneity of processes of peacebuilding and conflict making.

It was not just the practices of war that were changed by “9/11.” The discipline of geography, especially the subfield of political geography, changed too.

Surprising as it may seem now, war was not a topic of interest to most political geographers in 2001. There was a dearth of literature for academics to turn to for teaching materials or intellectual debate. But now war and conflict are a strong focus for political geographers (Mamadouh 2004 and this volume). Most significantly, the topic of peace has emerged as of equal importance as a way of understanding the processes, scalar experiences, and engagements of political geography (Megoran 2011; Williams and McConnell 2011).

Geographic scholarship and its critical framing of conflict and peace are particularly relevant, rich, and provocative. It has produced many different approaches and insights. This book offers educators and students a single volume that illustrates the diversity of current geographies ontologies, engagements, and epistemologies of peace and conflict. In addition, the book will explore interactions with scholars in other disciplines who have discovered and implemented a “spatial turn” to peacebuilding (Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistal 2016; Björkdahl and Kappler 2021) and those who are exploring innovative approaches to understanding peace but would benefit from further consideration of the geographic perspective (MacGinty 2021). In sum, we hope the volume will highlight the value of the geographic perspective in understanding the processes of peacebuilding and conflict, and strengthen bridges with related disciplines.

The world has experienced changes in the practices and geographies of war-making and peacebuilding, and the way geographers understand and engage these practices. The purpose of the book is to showcase how current geographic thought informs the new geopolitical context.

Geographic Framings of Peace and War

Though certainly not the focus of his comment, Vice President Dick Cheney’s comment about the change brought about by “9/11” certainly rang true for the discipline of geography. Prior to the proclamation of the War on Terror just two edited volumes on the geography of war were available: *The Geography of War and Peace* edited by David Pepper and Alan Jenkins (1985) and *The Political Geography of Conflict and Peace* edited by Nurit Kliot and Stanley Waterman (1991). The foci of these books were the Cold War and ethno-nationalist conflicts, particularly Israel-Palestine. The world had changed, and geographers had not reacted.

However, the reaction was swift and comprehensive. Colin Flint’s *The Geography of War and Peace* (2004) was an attempt to collect a set of essays on war and peace that addressed the new geopolitical context. Though in some ways well received, it was rightly criticized for being too focused on war rather than peace. Soon to follow were other monographs and edited volumes on war and violence that were centered upon the dynamics of the War on Terror. Key edited volumes included *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror, and Political Violence*

edited by Derek Gregory and Allan Pred (2007) and *War, Citizenship, and Territory* edited by Deborah Cowen and Emily Gilbert (2008). John Morrissey's (2017) monograph *The Long War* described the growth of U.S. military presence in the Middle East.

The renewed interest in war soon developed into processes of conflict and violence that were not directly tied to the War on Terror. The world as a violent place came to the fore of geographic inquiry. The pervasiveness of the military in the construction of society and geographic landscapes was brought in to focus by Rachel Woodward's *Military Geographies* (2004) and *Military Legacies* by James Tyner (2009). The violent nature of globalization was illustrated by Deborah Cowen's (2014) *The Deadly Life of Logistics*. The violent and competitive nature of development was discussed by Marcus Power (2019) in *Geopolitics and Development*. The overarching processes of global warming were connected to topics of war and peace (see Simon Dalby's (2020) *Anthropocene Geopolitics*). The context of an age of refugee crises and struggles over the control of borders catalyzed key books such as *Border Wars* by Klaus Dodds (2021), and the work of Reece Jones on *Violent Borders* (2016).

The emphasis upon intersecting forms of conflict and agencies of peacebuilding has recently come to the fore. Nicole Laliberté (2016) investigated how gender, race, and class perspectives shape discriminatory politics and visions of peacebuilding work among international, national, and regional actors. Also, Dresse et al. (2019) explored how environmental peacebuilding is fostered by the assumption that global environmental change may provide incentives for global cooperation and peace. Kara E. Dempsey's *Geopolitics of Conflict, Nationalism and Reconciliation* (2022) traced the production of spaces of peace that emerge as peacebuilders navigate violent conflicts, especially when states actors fail to do so.

The renewed focus on war sparked a new field of geographic inquiry; geographies of peace and pacific geopolitics. Important scholarly articles and chapters have established geographies of peace as a topic in and of itself (Williams and McConnell 2011; Williams 2013; Megoran 2010 and 2011; Koopman 2011a, 2011b, 2018). Philippa Williams' *Everyday Peace* (2015) elucidated ways in which ordinary people forge peace through citizenship practices, tolerance, and civility. Coherence and energy were given to the rally toward geographies of peace through the edited volume *Geographies of Peace* edited by Fiona McConnell, Nick Megoran, and Philippa Williams (2014).

This brief discussion is by no means exhaustive. It merely shows that the topics of war and peace were largely, and surprisingly, ignored by political geographers. Yet the last twenty years have seen a resurgence of interest, and the important call to give equal focus to processes of peace and not let conversations about war be dominant. For a full discussion of the discipline of geography's torrid engagement with war and empire, and also peace, see the work of Virginie Mamadouh (2004 and this volume). Political geography and related

disciplines are now very focused on peace and conflict. Numerous monographs and journal articles advance our conceptual understanding of peace and war. This volume builds upon this new literature to illustrate the breadth and depth of contemporary work on the geography of peace and conflict for educators and students. We give equal prominence to geographies of peace and war, and the intersections between peace and conflict, while reflecting the current geopolitical context that involves much more than the War on Terror.

Peace, Conflict, and the Making of Geographies

The essence of the book's logic is that war and peace are manifestations of the *intertwined* construction of geographies and politics (Boulding 2000; Kirsch and Flint 2011). Indeed, peace is never completely distinct from war. Each chapter in the book will demonstrate understandings of how the myriad spaces of war and peace are forged by multiple agencies, some possibly contradictory. The goals of these agents vary as peace and war are relational, place-specific processes. The temporal scope and legacies of the agency are multiple, from simultaneity to the *longue durée*.

As a heuristic device, we can initially think of two continuums: place-specific processes of peace and manifestations of war (e.g., absolute) and simultaneity to the *longue durée*, and the intersection of the two continuums. The politics of the interaction is driven by multiple forms of agents (from individuals to multinational organizations) and multiple forms of agency (from active and conscious peacebuilding to purposeful war-making). The multiplicity of agents and their agency form (and are framed by) multiple spaces and scales.

Although there is a continuum in the *expressions* of time, the *operation* of time is not linear or unidirectional. Instead, time is a combination of simultaneity of actions, with short- to long-term implications, within relative structural constants of the *longue durée*. Some actions are banal and serve to maintain existing power relations and geographic circumstances. Other actions are transformative and can move the needle from war to peacebuilding, or vice versa, and in the process rearrange spatial relations and contexts. The multitude of processes of peace and conflict moves in different temporal directions. More importantly, conditions of peace and war often exist simultaneously in the same geographic setting. Some conditions may progress from war to peace, while others may regress from peace to war; though it is best not to think of peace and conflict as binary and separate processes but as ongoing and intertwined forms of agency (Flint 2011). In sum, peace and war are not thought of as a dichotomy but as an ongoing dynamic that continually makes and re-makes multiple geographies.

From our entry point of continuums, we can interrogate through their interaction via multiple agencies a set of spatial-temporal contexts that develop, regress, twist and turn, reinforce, and challenge each other. We come to a

kaleidoscope of spaces/arenas/scales displaying different forms of peacebuilding and war-making forms of agency.

To advance the debates and make sense of the dynamic kaleidoscopic patterns of spaces of peace and war, the chapters will focus on a range of engagements, mechanisms, agents, and forms of agency that occur within, and rearrange different geographic contexts or articulations. Agencies of war may be anything from enacting global war to internment. Agencies of peace are (re)-produced in everyday dimensions, multi-scalar politics of power, and as tools of statecraft. They may span from decolonization to the creation of twin-cities. They also include processes that “peaceweave” elements of a just society to foster social justice and equity, community engagement, and shared governance (e.g., Shields and Soeters 2017). But agency is never straightforward in its intentions and outcomes. An act of agency by an individual, social group, country, or alliance may invoke actions of war (such as dropping nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki) to end World War Two and create a negative peace. Similarly, an act of agency to promote peace (such as free movement of people within the European Union) has created a violent external border.

All forms of agency occur within temporal and geographic contexts. Agency may maintain the dominant political relations of a given time, or they may be transformative. It may implement geographic understanding as a tool to achieve peace. Similarly, agency may utilize geographic arrangements that establish a set of power relations, or create new territorial and scalar settings with different power relations. The times and spaces that are made may tend toward stable peace or absolute war.

Through critical reflections on the power relations and the spatialities of war and peace, the book illustrates multiple agencies (some possible contradictory), in a myriad of spaces, with goals that range in a conceptual continuum from stable peace to global war, with varied temporal-relations from simultaneity to the *longue durée* and a combination of peace and conflict making forms of agency. The value of an edited volume is the perspective offered by different scholars on the manifold possibilities of the intersections of agency, space, and time requires multiple ontologies. The many forms of agency and the spaces that are made require multiple ontologies and epistemologies, or ways we perceive the way the world works and how to investigate it. Bringing together a range of recent engagements and authors helps the reader explore the complexity and dynamism of the many contemporary geographies of peace and war.

Consistent Themes through the Book

Current approaches to the topics of peace and war in the discipline of geography, and related disciplines, are as eclectic as they are vibrant. This is a positive

development. The pursuit of peace and concern about conflict is shared by scholars, whatever their approach to studying the world. This volume allows those different approaches to be showcased. However, we also recognize that students and scholars (sometimes in their role as teachers) would like to identify threads of ideas throughout our discussion of peace and war to help with the learning process. With that concern in mind, coherence through the individual chapters may be found through the identification of consistent themes. Not every chapter will address each of these themes, but in sum we hope the volume will allow you to explore their value in understanding contemporary circumstances of peace and war.

The key themes are:

Agency: Peacebuilding and conflict-making are the outcomes of intersecting social processes at multiple scales initiated and conducted by various actors.

Mutual construction of politics and space: The agency of peacebuilding and conflict-making is situated in, and simultaneously re-creates and re-arranges, geographic settings. The settings provide opportunities and constraints for agents.

Multiple scales: All geographical settings are multi-scalar in that the global and the local, and all intervening scales, are mutually constructed through processes that operate primarily within, but also transcend, any particular scale.

Multiple geographies: There are many forms of geographical settings, but the prominent ones are places (arenas of activity and identity), territories, networks, and scales.

The twin dynamics of empathy/othering and inclusivity/partitioning: Identities based on geographical identities and attachments (including but not limited to countries and regions) and membership in social groups (class, race, religion, gender, and sexuality) can foster a sense of difference and separation that may fuel conflict or a sense of shared experience or concern that can enable empathy and peacebuilding.

Resistance/militarism: The essentially militaristic nature of capitalism and states provokes actions of resistance. Some of these actions may be anti-systemic and engender fundamental social change. Other actions may re-create the same forms of violence and militarism but in new ways; such as many cases of national separatism or the criminal actions of terrorist and fundamentalist groups.

Geographic Scale and Forms of Peace and Violence

As British women's rights activist Emmeline Pethick Lawrence argued, it is war that is negative, while peace "is the highest effort of the human brain applied

to the organization of the life and being of the peoples of the world on the basis of cooperation” (Pethick Lawrence 1972 [1915], 143; see also Addams 1907/2007). In other words, peace is uneven and multifaceted. This statement can be seen as an initial search for a concept and form of politics that has become known as positive peace (Shields and Soeters 2017). Johan Galtung’s distinctions between negative and positive peace, and the concepts of structural and cultural violence, are seminal ideas that underlie the geographic investigation of peace and war.

The absence of direct violence, either interpersonal or at any scale up to global war, is known as negative peace (Galtung 1965, 233). An increase in wealth and well-being that is implicitly understood as nurturing peaceful circumstances, social justice, and a growing sense of security, is known as positive peace (Galtung 1965, 233). Structural violence is the harm imposed upon people through living in situations of poverty and exploitation (Galtung 1969, 170). The difference in life expectancy and life chances from wealthy to poor areas are visible manifestations of structural violence. These gross disparities are ugly and uncomfortable for those lucky enough to live in relative prosperity and security. Hence, the disparities are justified by cultural violence, or the use of cultural representations used to justify structural or direct violence (Galtung 1990).

Our geographic inquiry into intertwined processes of war and peace is an engagement with structural and cultural violence, and positive and negative peace. We can consider the connections between these forms of peace and violence through a focus on geographic scale. For example, conceptualizing a pyramid of peace helps us explore the interaction of scales, time-periods, and forms of peace (Adolf 2009, 236–238). The scale of the body is the site of corporeal peace, and household and community settings are the scales of sanctuarial peace. The former is access to adequate nutrition, shelter and sanitation, healthcare, and education. These are the basic needs that allow an individual to survive and are the foundation for a person to fulfill themselves in a complete lifepath. Hence, it is the individual’s ability to engage in the provision and benefits of social peace. However, it is only a viable route for an individual’s lifepath if they also experience sanctuarial peace, or minimal harm from other people, the state, political and economic inequality and deprivation, and a nontoxic environment.

Absence of interpersonal harm is a form of negative peace, whether it be from armed groups (gangs or state forces) or a relative. The other forms of sanctuarial peace are more closely related to positive peace, the operation of society that provides for people and enables them to achieve their goals. These forms of peace are a function of relations within the home, the neighborhood, and village, town, or city. Only when these two forms of peace are being experienced can a person’s inner peace, their spiritual and intellectual sense of self and calm, be attained.

Inner peace and corporeal peace, or their absence, are experienced on a daily, or even hourly basis and within the scales of the home and place of settlement. They imply, or even demand, that a person has a place of settlement to experience these types of peace. A refugee or someone made homeless by economic deprivation will struggle to find these forms of peace. To fully understand their presence and absence requires us to consider the geographic scale and temporal scope of two other forms of peace: socioeconomic and world peace. We usually consider socioeconomic peace at the national scale. Disparities of wealth, all types of discrimination, and access to employment that is not enforced, are commonly associated with national economies and the way a country is governed. Our emphasis on geographic scale means that national circumstances, and those at subnational scales, must be considered within a global context.

Galtung and Adolf point to the intertwined nature of forms of peace, in different sites and scales, involving different agents and structures. Our framework and themes hope to shed light on the complexity of the duality of peace-violence in various forms and settings.

Chapter Summaries

The first three chapters of the book provide reviews of the considerable amount of writing on issues of war and peace that have been published in the last twenty years or so. Virginie Mamdouh's chapter builds on the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historical foundations of the discipline of geography as a means of informing states in the endeavors of building empire and making war. In contrast, the recent academic literature has been largely critical of state practices of war and has developed an explicit focus on peace. Nerve V. Macaspac and Adam Moore develop the discussion on the literature addressing the geography of peace. Specifically, they identify four themes: peace as a set of place-specific processes; political practices and ideologies that animate peace projects; the development of a holistic peace agenda; and everyday peace. The development of transdisciplinary research is highlighted by Annika Björkdahl in Chapter 4. She discusses the "spatial turn" in peace and conflict research and how this has promoted new understandings of peace such as everyday peace, mobile peace, urban peace, and trans-scalar peace.

The following two chapters provide overviews of the changing dynamics of the geographies of conflict and peacebuilding, respectively. Chapter 5, by James A. Tyner, begins with the deceptively simple definitions of negative peace and positive peace to explore the complex entanglement of overlapping geographies of war and peace. Chapter 6, by Kara E. Dempsey, focuses on the spatial practices of peacebuilding. The chapter uses the example of Northern Ireland and the construction of "shared" spaces to illustrate how building a politics of cooperation, respect, and deep listening necessarily requires the making of new geographies.

Chapter 7, by Colin Flint, takes a macro-view to illustrate how foundational relations between what is commonly referred to as the Global North and Global South are structural context that has fostered forms of direct and indirect violence. This pervasive context has also provided opportunities for promoting new visions of peace and effective campaigns. Chapter 8, by Christian C. Lentz and Scott Kirsch, develop the idea of Global North–Global South relations through the examination of postcolonial conflict in Southeast Asia by interrogating the idea of the “shatterbelt” through the idea of colonial rupture.

The following two chapters discuss the visions and practices that may build peace. In Chapter 9, Orhon Myadar and Tony Colella use a discussion of cultural representation through movies to explore the construction of empathy, or the lack of it. Geographies of victimization are often created in a way that justifies power and militarism. These imagined geographies must be challenged to create new visions of peace. In Chapter 10, Sara Koopman uses examples of peace activism in Colombia and Ukraine to show how everyday practice can create spaces of negative peace and pathways toward positive peace – even within contexts of ongoing violence.

Chapters 11 and 12 may be read together to illustrate the interconnected geographies of territory and networks in the practices of peace and conflict. Md Azmeary Ferdoush uses the example of borders in postcolonial South Asia to show how borders are a violent practice of compartmentalization and separation. However, everyday practices of “peacework” are challenging the way borders inhibit the pursuit of positive peace. In Chapter 12, Ian Slesinger discusses the use of digital technologies in practices of war and peace. Especially, the ambiguity of digital violence shows the fluidity of practices of conflict and peacemaking, and the complexity of the spaces they make.

Chapters 13 and 14 may also be read together to consider the role of the environment and global climate change in geographies of peace and conflict. In Chapter 13, Shannon O’Lear highlights the term “slow violence” to show how particular geographies of the environment, specifically geographies of enclosure, are a form of violence. However, in some contexts new geographies of environmental practices may foster peaceful collaboration. In Chapter 14, Andrew Linke and Clionadh Raleigh emphasize the value of the geographic approach by challenging the value of generalizations that see climate change as national security threat stemming from a direct connection between weather patterns and violence. Instead, they take a human security approach that illustrates the relative stability of social systems in particular places as interacting with the impacts of climate change.

Finally, Chapter 15 by Mark Ortiz, María Belén Noroña, Lorraine Dowler, and Joshua Inwood draw our attention to the importance of teaching peace. They identify spatial-pedagogical practices that allow students and instructors to engage positive peace. These practices include recognizing that progress toward positive peace requires questioning and challenging ways institutions reinforce structural violence.

Conclusion

A conclusion to an introduction to a set of essays authored by different scholars is an invitation to read ahead rather than stop reading with a new set of ideas. We hope you enjoy your pathway through the following essays. Of course, they were written at a certain moment of world history. Yet, we hope they endure as a catalyst to think about processes of peace and conflict from a geographic perspective. Building peace and making war are complex processes. Any claim to a simple framework should be addressed with a jaundiced eye. However, the job of social science is to offer a way to think about complexity, and we hope the themes in this book, and the way they are employed differently by the authors, are a means for you to tackle the causes of whatever conflict may be raging at the time you are reading, and to consider possibilities of peacebuilding. Understanding conflict is a necessary component of working toward pathways to a just and sustainable peace. We hope we offer at least some guidance for you along that pathway.

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