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Geopolitics and Peace: A Century of Change in the Discipline of Geography

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ABSTRACT

Peace has re-emerged as a theme in political geography in the past few years, but it has a longer history in the discipline. Different positions on peace are epitomized by both the International Geographical Union, whose founding was proposed in London exactly a century ago, and by Halford Mackinder. That historical discussion, related to what was often called 'political realism', has been overtaken in recent years by a different disciplinary focus on geographies of peace understood as about much more than conditions of non-war between states. This insists that space and place are not the mere stage on which the real political dramas unfurl, but are active ingredients in peace. However, some critics claim these new studies don't adequately deal with the geographies of contemporary peacemaking in particular. Simultaneously current global politics suggests that authoritarian conflict management is the emerging global pattern that emphasizes maintaining the existing order, rather than dealing with larger issues of justice and the sources of violence. Inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr's global geographical ethic of peace, we consider how, looking forward, these contemporary issues are now especially pertinent for political geographers as accelerating environmental changes pose new challenges to the possibilities for peaceful societal transformation in the next phase of the Anthropocene.

Introduction: Geographies and Geopolitics of Peace?

In 1956 a US federal judge handed down an edict forbidding the University of Alabama from continuing to exclude people on grounds of race. A young woman and civil rights activist, Autherine Lucy, promptly enrolled as the first black student. On her first day on campus, she was 'welcomed' by a vicious white mob throwing eggs and bricks at her, burning crosses and attacking the car in which she was riding. The university management barred her from campus 'for her own safety and the safety of the university'. The next day the

local newspaper ran an article, which headlined, 'There is peace on the campus of the University of Alabama'.

That Sunday, a furious Baptist minister, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., recently propelled to the forefront of the leadership of the ongoing Montgomery bus boycott, preached a typically eloquent sermon on Christ's enigmatic statement in Matthew 10: 34 that 'I came not to bring peace, but a sword'. King said:

> Yes, there was peace on the campus, but it was peace at a great price: it was peace that had been purchased at the exorbitant price of an inept trustee board succumbing to the whims and caprices of a vicious mob. It was peace that had been purchased at the price of allowing mobocracy to reign supreme over democracy. It was peace that had been purchased at the price of capitulating to the force of darkness. This is the type of peace that all men of goodwill hate. It is the type of peace that is obnoxious. It is the type of peace that stinks in the nostrils of the Almighty God. (King 1956)

In terms that would go on to be appropriated by Johan Galtung as the basic concepts of peace studies (Galtung 1964, 1969), King said he didn't want this 'negative peace' but instead a 'positive peace' marked by the presence of 'justice' and 'goodwill'.

It is precisely this realization that peace can be defined in different ways, by different actors, for the benefit of different groups – that is to say, questions of meaning and power – that have animated the recent resurgence of peace as a major theme of political geographical enquiry. Its emergence involves efforts to get political geographers to do more than critically engage in matters of war and violence, but also think seriously about what 'peace' might look like if it is understood as more than the antithesis of war.

Following King's formulations, peace research offers notions of 'positive' and recently Peter Wallensteen's 'quality' peace, which relate to justice and permanent arrangements designed to forestall the reversion to violence in situations prone to conflict (Wallensteen 2015). But until fairly recently there has been a limited engagement by the current generation of political geographers with themes of peace, and in particular geographies of peace. That is not to say, by any means, that geographical writing has ignored peace. As Mamadouh showed in her impressive 2005 overview, geographers have long been interested in peace – although this was usually an under-theorized view of negative peace as the absence, prevention or mitigation of armed conflict (Mamadouh 2005).

This lack of theoretical engagement has changed noticeably in the second decade of this century. In 2011, apparently coincidentally, three articles were published which all made similar arguments – by Williams and McConnell (2011), Megoran (2011), and Inwood and Tyner (2011). All three papers agreed that the neglect of peace in the geographical literature needed to be addressed, and that to do this it was necessary to problematize what is meant

by peace, and explore how its definitions get caught up in power relations. The first two further argued that geographical contributions to peace research required not only critical theorization, but also detailed, focused and intentional empirical investigation as peace is place-specific. In addition, the second two contended that geography must be repositioned as a pro-peace discipline with an explicit political commitment to peace, including critical reflection on how geography is practiced. These arguments were brought together in 2014 with the first book-length text devoted solely to *Geographies of Peace*, edited by McConnell, Megoran and Williams (2014).

The shortcoming of at least some of this literature is that although it has a focus on theorizing from particular situations, and on how geography matters, small-scale studies are always in danger of overlooking the larger geopolitical contexts within which they are situated. Detailed fieldwork and research on particular conflict situations and their resolution is needed, especially to look at the local dynamics that may lead to a resumption of conflict, and hence need attention by would-be peacemakers to head off future possible hostilities. But understanding the local is not enough in studying geographies of peace, especially when external actors, be they United Nations (UN) peacekeeping efforts or a presence on the ground by regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States, are part of the local situation. Many efforts at peacemaking, and in the current jargon, 'nation building' fail not only because of their externally driven ideological agendas, but also because of inadequate understanding of local social-, environmental- and resource-related dynamics. Intervention is a tricky business, which may help or hinder long-term peace efforts (Mitchell 2014). Geographical scale matters! Thus, there are complex overlays of regional and global factors that play out in particular contexts, and integrating them into the discussion of particular places is both difficult and necessary if contextual analysis is to be suitably comprehensive. Likewise, historical contexts matter; the situation facing geographers working on peace a century ago, and in the early days of the International Geographical Union (IGU), has some parallels with contemporary research; but there are important differences too.

To tease out some of these difficulties and put them in the longer history of the IGU this paper starts first with some of the classical geopolitical discussions, and Halford Mackinder in particular who, contrary to popular misconceptions, wrote much about matters of peace, albeit understood in particular imperial ways. We then move on to consider alternative visions of geopolitics and peace, as represented by the IGU and in particular the International Map of the World (IMW) project, championed by German geographer and climatologist Albrecht Penck. These were understood as contributions to international co-operation and peace, but repeatedly ran afoul of international rivalries (Pearson and Heffernan 2014). Despite much

work on peacemaking and its meaning, norms of the post-Cold War liberal peace have increasingly been contested by paradigms of authoritarian conflict management (ACM), which pose difficult questions about whose politics matters where and how contemporary peacemaking might be different from Mackinderian and earlier 'Realist' formulations. But we do not accept the pessimistic surrender of geopolitical reflection on peacemaking to those who would see it primarily in negative terms.

While geographical factors, and climate in particular concerned Penck a century ago, now as anthropogenic climate change accelerates, the discussion of Anthropocene politics poses questions of how people cope with increasingly unpredictable weather, water supplies and access to agricultural land. As this lecture was presented in La Paz in 2017, it is appropriate to invoke the case of Bolivia as an illustrative case to show that although climate is a factor in human affairs, contrary to the fears of many security planners in the US in particular, resource shortages and environmental difficulties are not necessarily the cause of political violence, even in such extreme cases as major water shortages in such places as La Paz. Key to all this now is how decisions are made about the future configuration of crucial ecological factors in the Earth System, and who decides.

Realism, Idealism and Anarchism

Although the exuberance of a sustained geographical interest in peace that is both theoretical and empirical is recent, it would be a major error to assume that the interest of political geography in peace is new. It is a thread which has always been woven through the garment of the discipline, even if only thinly. This is particularly striking at the dawn of the modern discipline as an organized body and practice of scientific knowledge, appearing as a discipline in Europe when social movements actively sought peaceful futures for the continent (Cooper 1991). In the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries 'peace' was an important theme in the three main theoretical approaches to geopolitics: realism, liberalism and, although often erased from these histories, anarchism. In this section, we draw on Richmond's landmark *Peace in International Relations* as a model of how to identify broad theoretical traditions within International Relations (IR), such as realism, liberalism, Marxism, post-structuralism and feminism, and identify how peace works differently within each of them (Richmond 2008). Richmond argues that each tradition conceptualizes the causes of violence differently and therefore has different meanings of 'peace' and how it can be achieved. Thus, for example, realism posits a chaotic world of competing states with the best that can be hoped for peace being the temporary cessation of armed hostilities. 'Peace' therefore is limited temporally and geographically, requiring a strong military hegemon. In contrast, Marxism sees

peace as achievable given social justice and equality between states and actors, after massive and probably revolutionary upheaval in the international system and class and economic hierarchies. Richmond encourages us to look at what 'peace' means in different theoretical traditions. This has been attempted with the geopolitical tradition elsewhere (Megoran 2013), but here we use it to sketch out some different meanings of peace in geography at the time the IGU was founded.

Jones et al. (2015, 5) term the period roughly between 1875 and 1945 as 'the era of ascendency', when political geographers had significant influence in governments – or at least access to those holding the levers of power. The competition of imperial powers for control of territories to both yield raw resources and act as exclusive, captive markets for industrial exports posed obvious threats to peace, culminating as they did in the two World Wars (Agnew and Corbridge 1995). How to avert these impending disasters – how to ensure 'peace' – was perhaps the key geopolitical question of this period for peace activists and pacifists of the time.

Anarchist geographers provided arguably the most searching critiques of the violence of the imperial state system, and the most radical alternative proposals for peace. Drawing on a range of human and non-human social structures and practices, Kropotkin argued that violence was produced by the exercise of hierarchical (especially state) power, and that it was on grass-roots alternatives to the imperial state system that the foundations of a genuine peace could be laid (Kropotkin 1972). In his striking 1885 intervention on 'what geography ought to be', Kropotkin wrote:

> In our time of wars, of national self-conceit, of national jealousies and hatreds ably nourished by people who pursue their own egotistic, personal or class interests, geography must be – in so far as the school may do anything to counterbalance hostile influences – a means of dissipating these prejudices and of creating other feelings more worthy of humanity. (Kropotkin 1885, 956)

However, as Kearns argues, even a prominent anarchist geographer such as Reclus supported forms of European settler colonialism as progressive (Kearns 2009). Kearns may be right that 'anarchist studies in geography remain a hope rather than a reality', but anarchism (in its various flavours) arguably provides the boldest and most radical visions of peace in geography today (Kearns 2017a; Megoran 2014; Springer 2016).[1]

The second major geographical approach to the problem of peace at this time was realism, represented most clearly in geography by Halford Mackinder. It might be surprising to consider Mackinder as an advocate of 'peace'. A substantial body of critical geographical scholarship has demonstrated the prevalence of violence in his geographical thought, writing and practice. We fully accept the conclusions of this work: it is indisputable that Mackinder was an unapologetic apologist for empire. But Mackinder –

perhaps ironically an early advocate for 'critical' approaches to geography[2] – spoke repeatedly about peace (Megoran 2013). This was a peace that could best be secured by naked military violence, or what he euphemistically called 'Power' with a capitalized 'P'. He argued, 'We must regard the exercise of Power in foreign affairs as a normal and peaceful function of the national life' (Mackinder 1906). He listed various incidents where he claimed the mere threat of British naval power had secured 'peace' without a shot being fired (Mackinder 1905). He wrote specially of India in this regard, believing that a blessing of the British Empire to India was its gift of '[i]nternal and external peace' (Mackinder 1907, 33–4). Indeed, like 'Power', he capitalized 'Peace' in discussing what he described as 'the British Peace in India' (Mackinder 1914, 232). For Mackinder, peace was a resource that Britain could win through the vigilant maintenance of a balance of military powers (Mackinder 1943), or lose if the democratic 'idealists' blindly 'refused [to] reckon with the realities' of geography (Monthly Record 1944, 132). Peace for Mackinder was thus the maintenance of the status quo that protected the position of the British Empire against potential rivals. There was no consideration of justice, unity, brotherhood and sisterhood – the best that could be expected was temporary truces between alliances of untrusting states in an unruly world system. This is a vision of peace: but it is a grim one. It yields only meagre resources for the building of hopeful human futures, justifies the violence of imperialism and postpones indefinitely the just redistribution of power and resources.

Although realism in geography had powerful advocates, it was not 'the only game in town'. Liberalism – the belief that military conflict could be overcome through the creation of international architectures of co-operation founded on rational science, trade, shared interests and the advance of civilization – was powerfully represented in geography. And the IGU can be seen as epitomizing this. Formed in 1922, its purpose is 'to promote Geography through initiating and coordinating geographical research and teaching in all countries of the world'.

The IGU itself can be regarded as the continuation of the International Geographical Congresses – the first of which was held in Antwerp 1871. In an address to the Royal Geographical Society in 1928, Charles Close surveyed the history of the congresses and the IGU to date. Following Ritter, Ratzel and other German geographers, he defined geography as 'that department of knowledge which studies the varied features of the Earth's surface as the environment of mankind' (Close 1928, 106; see also Pearson and Heffernan 2014). He insisted that the multinational approach to scholarship embodied by the IGU and congresses was crucial because 'science is essentially international' (Close 1928, 100).

The IGU's key legacy from this period was undoubtedly the grand project to create an IMW at the scale of 1:1m. The IMW was humanity's first attempt at mapping the entire land surface of the earth at a uniform scale

and in detail. It was originally proposed by Professor Albrecht Penck, the German geographer whose particular interests lay in oceanography and climatology, at the first Geographical Congress in 1871. Penck wanted the collaborative production of a map of world to the same standards and cartographic conventions as the basis for scientific research. The IMW was, as Nekola argues, also 'envisioned by some geographers and cartographers as a component of the peace' (Nekola 2013, 27). Indeed, Penck himself wrote of the value of the IMW's internationalist perspective in producing 'maps which shall show a country not merely as a piece of land limited by political boundaries, but as a region in the frame of its natural surroundings' (Penck 1893, 254). Although the IGU never formally owned the IMW, it was championed at its congresses.

But we should exercise caution in an attempt to position the IGU and IWM as enlightened, liberal projects counterposed to a reactionary realist geopolitics. For example, the formation of the IGU was first mooted in London, 1918, by geographers from the allied powers, excluding those from the Central Powers (H. 1922). They remained excluded as late as the 1925 Cairo Geographical Congress. In the second half of the twentieth century, support for the IMW project struggled with Cold War tensions, even though responsibility was being taken by the UN (Close 1928, 114; Pearson and Heffernan 2014). In 1928 the IGU was held in Cambridge, and Mackinder served as one of the sectional heads. In an address on the IGU in advance of the meeting, Charles Close, President of the Royal Geographical Society, declared that 'geography and the military art go hand in hand' (Close 1928, 97). Earlier, at a previous International Geographical Congress in London in 1895, John Scott Keltie and his allies in the Royal Geographical Society advanced the 'crusade' for the development of geography in Britain along the lines sketched out by Mackinder (Wise 1986, 376). This was not merely nasty realists hitching a ride on the back of duped liberals. Penck himself justified the IMW project not only in scientific but also in utilitarian, state-centric terms. '[C]ommercial interests, missionary undertakings, and colonial enterprise create a demand for maps of foreign countries … especially for nations having considerable colonial possessions.' He added:

> A uniform map of the world would be at the same time a uniform map of the British Empire, showing not only the actual territory under British authority, but also the sphere of British commercial activity, and would serve the varied purposes of administration, navigation, and commerce. (Penck 1893, 254)

Pearson and Heffernan may be correct to claim that this passage was merely Penck's 'attempt to persuade his British colleagues' to take part in the project by nodding to 'traditional geopolitical concerns and ambitions' (Pearson and Heffernan 2014, 59). Sales pitch or not, it justifies and normalizes exactly the type of imperialism that produced the World Wars.

The intertwining of colonial and imperial themes in the IGU and IMW should alert us to the truth that the distinction between 'realism' and 'idealism', so beloved by the trench warfare of scholars in twentieth-century International Relations thinking, may be as much a contrivance of text book writers as a clear dichotomy between thinkers or schools of thought (Ashworth 2014). The simple argument that relative power among states is all that counts, supposedly the classical realist position, is often contrasted with idealist views that argue that international institutions to perpetuate peaceful arrangements are what is needed. All of which has become more complicated in the last few decades as the structural realist arguments of Kenneth Waltz have confused matters by narrowly focusing on state-to-state interactions at the expense of more expansive understandings of the operation of power in political matters, many of which spill over territorial boundaries (Waltz 1979). Geographers have been wisely reluctant to write their disciplinary histories in such terms.

In many ways, the 'idealist' position when linking international institutions with supposedly homogenous political communities within territorial states may be more dangerous precisely because of its insistence that this is how the world ought to be organized, where in fact geographies are rarely anything like as simple as this template suggests. Insofar as idealism leads to ambitious attempts to impose this order on complicated geographic arrangements it is a source of violence rather than a solution to it. The violence of ethnic cleansing and xenophobic nationalism, the causes of much strife in the contemporary world, occur in part because of this view of national self-determination as the appropriate organizational principle for human affairs, one that so frequently runs counter to the geographical context within which conflict plays out (Jones 2016). While anti-colonial struggles historically invoked the principle of national self-determination as an anti-imperial struggle for very good reasons, as historical attempts in Europe to match peoples with territories demonstrate repeatedly the messy material geographies of human affairs rarely coincide with these neatly imagined geographies of separate spaces for autonomous peoples. The same problem persists with attempts to impose geographical solutions on the ground in contemporary international peacemaking interventions, which in many cases end up with 'ethnic cleansing', a truly appalling neologism of modernity, segregating peoples rather than resolving the underlying causes of conflict.

Further problems with the assumptions that realism and classical geopolitics can be easily linked as a guide to contemporary politics include the basic point that Friedrich Ratzel and others argued that, in what was portrayed as a conflictual situation of rivalry, states either grew or they died. This organicist formulation is obviously belied by the historical experience of the second half of the twentieth century when the approximately 60 states that were extant in 1945, when the UN organization was formed in the latter

stages of World War II, had increased to nearly 200 by the end of the twentieth century. The growing number of states in the international system as the European empires lost their colonies clearly suggests that more is involved in the arrangements of international politics than nineteenth century formulations encompassed. The Montevideo Convention in 1933 on state duties, while initially a matter for the Americas, effectively became the blueprint for the sovereign system of states that emerged as formal empires were superseded in the UN system.

The territorial fixity norm has become an entrenched part of the UN system, and one that has solved at least most of the problems of warfare by making territorial aggrandizement anathema (Zacher 2001). The international tensions since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its involvement in the violence in the Eastern Ukraine exemplify the operation of this norm, and in the process, offer little prospect of an early resolution to these political difficulties. Likewise, many of the biggest problems facing humanity, including climate change and other global environmental issues, are not amenable to territorial solutions (Harris 2013). Hence the irony that governance arrangements designed to solve twentieth-century problems by a set of universally recognized principles are often ill-equipped to deal with twenty-first-century problems (Dalby 2013).

Geographies of Peace and Peacemaking/Peacebuilding

The preceding discussion demonstrates the intellectual importance of critically evaluating what is meant by 'peace' in the geographical tradition. Although the IR approach of delineating broad traditions and asking how each conceptualizes peace can be a productive place to start, as the example of the IGU shows this breaks down in practice. Clearly, therefore, a geography of peace must pay careful attention to *geographies* of peace: how peace is conceptualized, by who and for whom, in specific places and contexts. These arguments have been taken up widely in a plethora of publications, with 'geographies of peace' now established in reference volumes such as *Oxford Bibliographies* (Koopman 2017a) and *The International Encyclopaedia of Geography* (Koopman 2017b).

Nonetheless, the general direction of geographies of peace has been subject to a cogent critique by Björkdahl and Kappler, writing from the political science/peace studies tradition. They welcome the increased attention that geographers are giving to peace but question whether spatiality has been taken seriously enough in this literature (Björkdahl and Kappler 2017). They fault it for failing to think about peacemaking and the specifics of space and place. In particular, they propose that it is productive to think about *agency* in peacemaking, which they argue is situated in what they posit as the tension between place and space. This they see as twofold, space-making and place-making. The former is the capacity

to transform place into space through the (re-)creation of its meanings and possibilities on the one hand, and the latter being the capacity to transform space into place, by rendering ideas into material reality, on the other hand.

Their argument is made in relation to a number of examples – Kosovo, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Northern Ireland and South Africa. The Cyprus example is used to open Björkdahl and Kappler's book. A decade on from inter-communal violence that led to the 1964 establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission, a fascist coup in Cyprus in 1974 (backed by the junta that had seized power in Greece) precipitated the Turkish military intervention that led to the current division of the island between competing Greek and Turkish Cypriot polities. Symbolic of these dramatic events of 1974, the remains of a Hawker Trident airplane sit on the tarmac of the abandoned Nicosia airfield to this day (see Figure 1). Its final flight was as Cyprus Airways Flight 317 from London to Nicosia via Rome, the last scheduled service to land in Nicosia's international airport on 20 July 1974. Caught in the conflict, it never took off again. The plane, and this space, can be seen as a metonym of the Cyprus war: archetypal both as a political geographical dispute with two groups producing conflicting historiographies to claim the same territory (Bryant and Papadakis 2012), but also as the archetypal 'frozen conflict', where, despite massive militarization, there have only been 10 deaths since 1974, and no one has been killed since 1996 (International Crisis Group 2014, 11). Both the whole island, and the capital Nicosia, are divided by a UN-controlled buffer zone whose effects Papadakis poignantly evokes by naming it 'the dead zone' (Papadakis 2005).

Figure 1. Newcastle University geography students by the Hawker Trident airplane, Cyprus Airways Flight 317, UN buffer zone, Nicosia airport. Photograph: Nick Megoran, used with the permission of United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

Although it is hard to be optimistic after numerous failed peace talks over the decades, Björkdahl and Kappler pick out particular examples to illustrate the 'spatial transformations' they identify as crucial to peacebuilding. For 'place making' they consider the 'Nicosia master plan walk' (Björkdahl and Kappler 2017, 43–44). This map of Nicosia, shown in Figure 2, is almost the only single map of Nicosia's old city that can be found in the city. This is surprising as the hendecagonal medieval walled city was self-evidently an organic whole, separate from the sprawling new urban neighbourhoods that have grown out from around it. Yet Greek authorities in the 'Republic of Cyprus' regard the northern part as under enemy Turkish occupation, so omit it from their maps; and, similarly, the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' regards the southern polity as illegitimately claiming to represent both communities on the whole island, and so do not include it in their tourist maps of the city. Yet co-operation there must be, not least because both sides of the city share a sewage system predating the modern division. Building on what might be termed this alliance of conveniences, and following the opening of the crossings over the buffer zone in 2003, the mayors of both sides of the city created a 'master plan walking tour', criss-crossing the buffer zone at various points. With walking tours led by groups committed to inter-communal peaceful interaction, and intended also to lead to urban regeneration of the decrepit 'dead zone', Björkdahl and Kappler view the idea of reconnecting the two parts of the old city through the spatial practice of walking as place-making: turning abstract spaces of separation into specific places of meeting and peace.

Figure 2. The Nicosia master plan walk. Photograph: Nick Megoran.

Figure 3. 'The buffer zone is the first place to be united in Cyprus'. Photograph: Nick Megoran.

As a counterpart, Björkdahl and Kappler use the global 2011 'occupy' movement as an example agency in peacebuilding through space-making. The buffer zone has, in recent years, become the site of regular youth protests against the division of Cyprus. Typically, groups of young people from both sides will, at pre-arranged times, meet in the buffer zone on one of the legal crossing points, break out along it, stage a protest under the watchful eyes of UN troops, and then disperse. Figure 3 depicts graffiti in the buffer zone, typical of such protests. In their Cyprus chapter, Björkdahl and Kappler discuss the most significant such incursion – the 2011 'occupy' protest that camped in the buffer zone. They wanted to reclaim this 'dead' space for the people of Cyprus and were objecting to the division of the island and the continued presence of UN peacekeepers. Although eventually evicted by the UN, Björkdahl and Kappler interpret their actions as showing that the meaning of the buffer zone must not be monopolized by powerful actors but could be redefined with wider symbolic relevance for Cyprus as a whole (Björkdahl and Kappler 2017, 47–48).

We appreciate Björkdahl and Kappler's challenge to think through systematically the relationships between space, place and agency. But their work – like that of much in the recent geographies of peace – cannot be read as an exhaustive account of peacemaking in contexts like Cyprus or elsewhere. What it cannot be a substitute for, and what it arguably underplays, is geopolitics, and the role of external actors. In Cyprus, three powers - Britain, Greece and Turkey have been formally recognized as 'guarantors'. The politics of (de)-colonization, nationalism, fascism and authoritarianism in these states – not to mention the role of the US in more recent decades – have been, and remain, crucial in understanding the divisions in Cyprus and

the obstacles to peace (Hitchens 1997). More recently, as a relatively new geopolitical actor, the EU both framed the possibilities for reunification in referenda of 2004, yet totally squandered the opportunity by allowing the Greek Cypriot polity to join the EU without making accession conditional on negotiated reunification, thus removing a major incentive to real progress (Michális 2007; Richmond 2002).

Crucial to many imposed peace agreements, or at least imposed ceasefire agreements, is the imposition of these by external powers. In terms of security thinking the larger context of overlays by regional and global powers are part of the process of stopping overt conflict and imposing order. Security is usually a matter of complex interlinkages among actors at a variety of scales, and how local arrangements are supported and enforced, or not, requires thinking about these larger geopolitics too. In turn, these patterns have longer histories; conflicts happen in landscapes made over repeatedly by prior human activities. Not least this requires paying attention to the crucial importance of the history of European colonialism remaking much of the world as both a source of raw materials for the metropoles and as markets for industrial products too. The global patterns of trade wherein imperial practices constructed markets for metropolitan industries and shaped the landscapes of the colonies to facilitate plantation agriculture and mining activities in particular came in conjunction with the reworking of rural agricultural economies which, when harvests failed, frequently led to disastrous famines (Davis 2001). Much of development subsequently has built on these practices, reworking rural landscapes by extending commercial agriculture, most recently in practices that are called land grabbing. Globalization has accentuated these processes and fears about climate change disruptions to food supplies have further extended them in many places. So too have practices ostensibly about climate adaptation where rural transformation is explicitly facilitated by central state practices of expulsion and exclusion (Sovacool and Linner 2016).

Thus geographies of peace must attend to geopolitics: not instead of the fine-grained, local, thick descriptions of peace in specific places, but as well as this. This includes understanding and interrogating the multi-layered, nested geographies of geopolitical actors including states, regional blocs, global inter- and non-governmental organizations, Transnational Corporations (TNCs), the architectures of international finances, offshore territories and what Sassen calls 'assemblages' of these (Sassen 2006). As Gerry Kearns observes, it remains a striking omission from the literature that there are few book-length geopolitical studies of bodies such as the European Union or even the UN (Kearns 2017b). But, following the insights of critical geopolitics, this must also involve what Megoran has called the study of 'pacific geopolitics' (or, to avoid confusion with a certain large body of water, this might perhaps better be termed 'irenic geopolitics', from the Greek word for

'peace'). This is defined as 'the study of how ways of thinking geographically about world politics can promote peaceful and mutually enriching human coexistence' (Megoran 2010, 185). A classic example is provided by Dalby's study of late Cold War work on the geopolitics of superpower standoff. He demonstrates that forms of strategic thinking and planning in the US regarding the perceived threat of the USSR ratcheted up conflict and made what was a genuinely dangerous age, overshadowed by the existential threat to humanity posed by global thermonuclear war, even more dangerous (Dalby 1990/2016). But it also illuminates how European Nuclear Disarmament, a political movement seeking a nuclear weapons-free continent, sought to build a community of practice that mobilized different geopolitical visions to work for the removal of the threat of NATO–Warsaw Pact nuclear war from Europe, and create a new political space of East–West dialogue (Dalby 1991). In the case of New Zealand, peace activists in the 1980s, and eventually the government there, rearticulated national identity as a peaceful South Pacific state and removed the state from its nuclear alliance with the US as a gesture towards a world beyond blocs (Dalby 1993).

The key insight of critical geopolitics is that thinking about the world as divided into mutually exclusive, inherently hostile and necessarily dangerous places is actually productive of violent political realities rather than simply reflective of them. The logical counterpart to this, then, is an irenic geopolitics that insists similarly (but more hopefully) that changing the way we imagine global space can enable the production of societies marked by greater cooperation, sharing and – yes – love, what Martin Luther King called 'the beloved community', 'the worldwide neighbourhood' or 'the great world house' (Baldwin and Dekar 2013; Inwood 2009). An irenic geopolitics shifts emphasis from the deconstructions of fractious visions of global space (negative peace), to an explication of how we can live together more peacefully (positive peace). If it can add what Wallensteen terms 'quality peace' which removes the conditions likely to lead to resumed conflict in the future after a cessation of hostilities, then such an understanding of geopolitics is to be welcomed. But much of the recent discussion of peacemaking and peacebuilding doesn't necessarily deliver this desired state of affairs.

Authoritarian Conflict Management: The Post-Liberal Peace

On the biggest scale since the demise of the Cold War, global politics has been marked by international efforts to impose a liberal peace, one that equates the extension of economic globalization and its international trading scheme with the spreading of a liberal order antithetical to warfare. The assumption in much North American IR thinking in particular is that, following Immanuel Kant's formulations of perpetual peace and the

argument that republican states are unlikely to make war, democracies don't fight and hence remaking states along democratic lines is the best method of ensuring peace. In the Clinton administrations in the 1990s American foreign policy was explicitly about extending the remit of democracy to simultaneously expand the processes of globalization and in the process supposedly reduce the prevalence of warfare. Human rights, democracy and integration into the world trading system was supposed to bring peace and prosperity, an argument supported by studies that suggested that open societies in general fared much better in terms of security outcomes than those that opted relative isolation (Solingen 1998).

Updated in various iterations of the Bush doctrine the following decade, the arguments for military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq in particular invoked the need for regime change as a prerequisite for peaceful democratic rule and improved regional stability in the aftermath (Dalby 2007). But these were enforced political innovations, regimes designed to fit US views of what was good for societies, and very different from the ideological preoccupations that drove the administrators Washington sent to Baghdad and Kabul (Chandrasekaran 2006). The expansion of NATO was frequently understood in broadly analogous terms, and extension of a peaceful mode of civilization where participation in common defence arrangements implicitly pacified states by linking them together in the alliance system (Williams 2007). In this particular case the logic of this argument overlooked the fact that this region looks very different from Moscow, and the fateful decision in the NATO summit in 2008 to work towards extending membership of NATO to Ukraine and Georgia led to Russian responses in the Crimea and elsewhere subsequently, actions that have renewed geopolitical rivalries (Toal 2017). From a historical perspective, NATO expansion in the Caucasus and East Europe looked like Britain's anti-Bolshevik interventions in the 1919 Russian civil war that Halford Mackinder urged his government in Britain to support (Blouet 1976; Kearns 2013).

The reprise of Russia's role in former Soviet borderlands should not be seen through the post-Cold War lens of US strategic planners looking for a new enemy to replace the lost Soviet threat (Campbell 1998). Rather, it should be read both politically and theoretically as the retreat of the post-Cold War, 1990s paradigm of peacebuilding under liberal intervention, which itself was the high point of what has been known in IR literature as 'the liberal peace'.

Oliver Richmond locates liberal peace in the post-World War II vision of an institutional peace (via the United Nations Organisation) to provide international governance and guarantees, constitutional peace to ensure democracy and free-trade, and civil peace to ensure freedom and rights within society. It was thus, argues Richmond, a victor's peace (Richmond 2008, 7). This liberal peace, he suggests, can be seen as the hybridization of liberalism and realism:

the use of force, controlled by states, to underpin a democratic and liberal political, social and economic order, with structural social questions mainly dealt with in terms of 'democratization' rather than through the promotion of social justice (Richmond 2008, 13–14). Peace is thus peace-as-governance, universal and obtainable if correct methods are applied by a plethora of actors working on an agreed peacebuilding consensus (Richmond 2005, 183).

This model of liberal peacebuilding developed a sprawling institutional reality, embodied in the interaction of governments, international organizations, think tanks, scholars, and international and local NGOs, with its own hegemonic discourses, narratives and organizational structures – a world memorably labelled 'Peaceland' by Séverine Autesserre (2014). This alternative reality was harshly critiqued by those able to demonstrate the essentially 'virtual' nature of the peace it produced (Heathershaw 2009). As an alternative, a significant area of discussion has been 'hybrid peace', using post-colonialism to argue for a fusion of local and international practice and understandings (Richmond 2009). However, arguing from a feminist perspective, Patricia Daley suggests that this attempt to rescue Western models of theorizing peace fails to get to grips with realities of peace in non-Western contexts (Daley 2014, 72). Similarly, David Lewis *et al* contend that the concept itself lacks analytical clarity, often used as shorthand for almost any situation of political contestation between diverse social or ideological forces. Most significantly, they suggest, the concept of hybridity has tended to crowd out discussion of the most obvious lacuna in discussions of 'liberal' and 'post-liberal peace': situations in which cessation of armed violence is achieved in ways that are neither 'liberal' nor 'hybrid', but unashamedly authoritarian. These non-liberal forms of peacemaking have hardly been theorized or explored in detail yet (Lewis, Heathershaw and Megoran, 2018).

To address this lacuna, Lewis *et al* define ACM as the prevention, de-escalation or termination of organized armed rebellion or other mass social violence such as inter-communal riots through methods that eschew genuine negotiations among parties to the conflict, reject international mediation and constraints on the use of force, and rely instead on instruments of state coercion and hierarchical structures of power. The concept of ACM refers to a distinct set of norms and practices employed by political elites across three social levels – discourse, space and the economy – with the aim of establishing 'sustained hegemonic control' over a part of society perceived to be unstable or engaged in conflict. Rather than positing authoritarian actors as merely resisting a liberal peace, ACM explores their claims in their own terms. Writing of Central Asia, Owen *et al* argue, 'It is authoritarian governance, not the liberal peace, which is hegemonic' (Owen et al. 2018, 2).

The above examples of ACM have been developed largely in post-Soviet Central Asia. But the startling failure of the liberal peacebuilding project further afield – in Somalia, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere, and its complete rejection in

contexts like Sri Lanka (Lewis 2010) – is not merely hard-line regimes responding with violence to challenges to central authority. Rather, it is a rejection of 'the liberal peace' as an ambitious aspirant to hegemonic norms of socializing practice in the emerging, global, post-Cold War order. Nor should this be seen, in an Orientalist vision, of ACM referring to unenlightened practices in disordered, peripheral spaces – what Thomas Barnett maps as 'the gap' in 'the Pentagon's New Map' (Barnett 2004). In 2016 the election of Donald Trump to the White House and the UK's decision to leave the European Union can both be seen as a more mainstream pushing back against the liberal order that produced the liberal peace. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Brexit vote, UK Prime Minister Theresa May's government reached out for post-EU allies and trade deals not only to Trump, but also to Erdogan's authoritarian regime in Turkey. There is no teleological process of the triumph of liberal values, no Fukuyama-style 'end of history' with post-Cold War liberal democratic capitalism (Fukuyama 1989). Illiberal alternatives to the liberal peace are likely to become more important, not less so.

If ACM represents 'negative peace', does that mean the end of progressive, positive, critical theories of peace? No: we argue that these could be located in a geographical vision which steps beyond the state-centric focus of realist or liberal geopolitics and engages the emerging discussion of human life in the next stages of the Anthropocene.

Irenic Geopolitics in the Anthropocene: Lessons from Bolivia?

When Albrecht Penck was not advocating for the IMW project a century ago, he was investigating matters of global climate. He suggested that ice ages were in part a matter of the long-term changing of the obliquity of the earth's orbit and the resultant total heat supply of the earth (Penck 1914). While his observations made sense at the time he was writing, the scale of human activities over the last century in particular renders future climate variability a matter of human action. In what is widely understood as the Anthropocene, human actions are now key to the current and future fluctuations in the earth's climate. Where Penck was investigating the variations in snow lines at various altitudes and the consequences for this in terms of the changing size of glaciers, now human actions are causing melting and the retreat of glaciers in most parts of the world. The practical implications of this have numerous human consequences. In the Andes for example, the lack of a suitable practice space for the Bolivian national ski team following the final melting of the Mount Chacaltaya glacier in 2009 is notable, as are the crises of water shortage in La Paz where glaciers no longer feed the city water system reliably (BBC 2016).

Beyond the high-profile news stories of disappearing ski resorts and urban water shortages, Bolivia is an interesting place to think about the future, both in terms of the changing assumptions of states and nations and the

adaptations forced on the polity both by international political economy and the changing environmental conditions presaged by obvious manifestation of the Anthropocene in the changing rainfall and snowfall patterns and the disappearance of glaciers in the Andes. While Canadians, among others, might demur, Bolivia makes claim to be the first pluri-national state in which multiple nations can exist in the same space. With an indigenous president elected in 2005, and a 2009 constitution that extends rights to nature, it has been the source of alternative world meetings on climate change challenging the formal processes of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.

Latin American formulations of Vivir Bien, of living well, a broadly encompassing understanding of well-being, contrast to narrowly focused economic priorities in commercial arrangements and the logic of economic growth conventionally defined, have been widely cited. Nonetheless the resource extraction sector of the Bolivian economy continues to fund state expenditures (Gonzalez 2016). The contradictions here have been palpable, and resource nationalism as a source of revenue sits uneasily with environmentalist inclinations in many parts of the state. Explicit attempts to decolonize state practices have run up against state actions to enforce the extraction of resources and use these as a revenue source in ways that end up disciplining civil society (Ranta 2017). But in many ways these contradictions are a manifestation of the larger contradictions that confront humanity in the Anthropocene. Understanding the dramatically changed circumstances brought about by the rapid expansion of carboniferous capitalism requires a new set of geographical premises very different from those that Mackinder and Penck could take for granted as the backdrop of their analyses (Angus 2016).

While the difficulties over extractivism in the face of attempts to support indigenous rights in Bolivia has been a long-standing issue, innovations in other aspects of the society are taking place. A high-technology solution to the transportation difficulties in La Paz, a city built in extraordinarily challenging topography, is being implemented. A European-designed and -built cable car system is being strung across the city providing public transport in an innovation well suited to serve the topography where buses, streetcars and subways are impractical (Figure 4). The contradictions in the Bolivian polity, where aspirations to follow the principles of recognizing indigenous rights and attributing rights to nature in a gesture to indigenous cultural priorities run directly into state strategies of revenue generation by mining and petroleum extraction, are palpable. Nonetheless while notions of Vivir Bien are often violated by the resource extraction sector, none of this has led to the state collapse, insurgencies and support of international terrorist movements that so worries security planners in Washington and to a lesser extent in Europe (Hardt 2018). Struggles over access to water, and resistance to the

Figure 4. Cable car over La Paz, Bolivia. Photograph: Nick Megoran.

privatization of water supplies, in Cochabamba in particular, have suggested that matters of human rights and legal remedies to the worst corporate appropriations of resources may be the political struggles of the future (Baer 2015). This may be too optimistic in the long run, but the crucial point here is that it is a very different reading of potential adaptations to the Anthropocene than the fears of warfare that Northern security analysts, still it seems caught in classical geopolitical understandings of the dangers of rural peripheries to metropolitan control, often invoke as the backdrop for further militarization of global politics (CNA Military Advisory Board 2014).

The Anthropocene thus poses questions about peaceful transitions as societies already changing rapidly as a result of economic innovations face increasingly unpredictable weather patterns and more severe storms, droughts and precipitation. Earth system sciences make it clear that even if climate change in particular is tackled soon dramatic changes will be the context within which peaceful transformations will have to be shaped in coming decades (Dalby 2016). These are challenging traditional ways of planning infrastructure, and water supply systems in particular as the assumptions of stationarity, a condition where the past record allowed predictions of annual fluctuations within a fairly clearly specified range, no longer apply in many places. The melting of Andean glaciers is a case in point; water planners can no longer anticipate an annual melting season as part of their reservoir planning arrangements. La Paz effectively ran out of water late in 2016, and emergency measures to truck water into the city were necessary. Despite protests and minor altercations around water supply points, and the fact that the poorest part of the population suffered the worst difficulties, clearly such a fundamental disruption of key supplies did not cause major social conflict. Improvised adaptation came into play, and

however inadequate it may have been in places, contrary to many of the ominous warnings in Washington in particular, such resource shortages did not lead to serious violence much less insurgencies or attempts at regime change. The struggles over Vivir Bien, articulated in Bolivia as an alternative to capitalism and modernity, will continue.

The key questions such struggles pose are how societies will handle these contradictions. Will they double down on state controls of extraction, or will they rethink matters of distribution in the face of increasing environmental uncertainties? Will emphasis be put on prioritizing traditional economic patterns or instead on innovating to build flexibility into social systems to reduce the likelihood of conflict? Wallensteen's formulation of quality peace is important here because his efforts to think through not only the benefits of a positive peace in King and Galtung's terms but to do so in ways that actively seek to prevent conflict erupting are important if long-term ecologically manageable futures are taken seriously. This is a matter of thinking about peace as an integral part of social transformation rather than a matter of imposed order, a matter of, to use an old American military phrase, 'keeping a violent peace'. Once again geopolitical scales obscure practicalities on the ground; the Anthropocene makes us think of practical constructions at the small scale having global effects. Thus, although we critiqued them for downplaying geopolitics, Björkdahl and Kappler's insistence that we attend to agency in peace-making through spatial transformation remains invaluable. This brings us back full circle from Mackinder and his realist peace to the importance of critical geopolitical perspectives on peace. For geographers, this must inevitably involve a cartographic vision, but one that finds ways to map the interconnections across state boundaries and highlights the interconnectedness of humanity. Therefore, for all the ways in which it was compromised politically, the IGU's championing of Penck's attempt to think beyond national boundaries in the IMW remains a welcome alternative to the pessimistic negative peace of classical geopolitical thought.

Conclusion

In 1987 Gearóid Ó Tuathail wrote a commentary on John O'Loughlin and Herman van der Wusten's call for a new political geographical contribution to 'a stable peace' (van der Wusten and O'Loughlin 1986). Although welcoming their desire that geography take issues of war and peace more seriously, he critiqued what he termed their 'problem-solving theory' approach for failing to theorize what is meant by peace, for adopting a 'realpolitik' approach to international relations, and for taking the statist-driven world order as an uncontested given. He concluded by arguing that a political geography

informed by critical theories 'should also begin to explore the liberative potential of possible alternatives to statism' (Ó Tuathail 1987, 197).

Three decades on, these provocations remain relevant. Space and place are not the mere stage on which the real political dramas unfurl, but are active ingredients in peace. Geographers must carefully and critically theorize what is meant by 'peace' for, as King reminds us, 'peace' is deployed in different ways by different actors for different ends. At the same time, an irenic geopolitics must insist on the necessity of looking at the geopolitical contexts within which peacemaking operates. The post-Cold War rise of a hegemonic liberal peace and its subsequent eclipse (at least in some places) by an illiberal peace echo the debates amongst realist, liberal and anarchist geographers a century ago about what 'peace' means – and remind us too that there is no teleological process leading to the triumph of liberalism. But this is not a reason for pessimism.

The vision for an IMW that the IGU came to champion was originally provided by Albrecht Penck. As Penck himself implicitly acknowledged in his speculation about human futures and environmental carrying capacity in Central Asia, our best estimates are based on our current best scientific knowledge, and that is always open to revision (Penck 1930, 486). In the Anthropocene thesis we have a new vision of the interconnectedness and mutual interdependence not only of humanity but of all creation on our blue planet.

Despite the retrograde developments in recent years in terms of the fascination with building walls on international frontiers, and the Trump Administration's abandonment of international agreements on climate change in particular, the Anthropocene discussion recontextualizes the human condition as one of interconnection and mutual vulnerabilities that require cooperative efforts to resolve. The Anthropocene thesis perfectly highlights Martin Luther King, Jr's memorable claim that because we are 'caught in an inescapable network of mutuality' (Baldwin and Dekar 2013) we need a global ethic (Lee 2011). However persistent territorial states may be (and they remain the key to global politics), without agreements and common actions on climate change in particular, states alone clearly are not an adequate framework to deal with accelerating change. The Anthropocene framing provides compelling geographical reasons to engage in numerous modes of cooperation across state boundaries. A century on from the meeting that led to the founding of the IGU, it is such a vision that can provide the basis for a hopeful, progressive and irenic geopolitics.

Notes

1. One historical exception to the relative silence of anarchist geographers on the misdeeds of imperial rulers may be the Italian geographer Arcangelo Ghisleri who wrote against colonialism and against colonial campaigns in Tripolitania (aka Libya in 1912)

if Federico Ferretti (2016) is correct to call him an anarchist. Our thanks to Elena dell'Agnese for bringing this to our attention.

2. In his review of Dickson's map of Kenya and Kitui districts, Mackinder called for a 'more critical' use of various cartographic techniques (Mackinder 1903).

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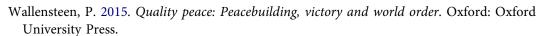
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