Making space for peace in contexts of “non-war” violence: Feminist and relational approaches to geographies of peace

Call for papers

American Association of Geographers
Feb. 25 – March 1, 2022
New York & Virtual Meeting

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Violence has been assigned to particular spaces. These mainstream ideas, political discourses, and collective imaginaries about location of violence can be challenged through a relational and feminist approach to violence and peace (Söderström et al. 2020, Springer 2011, Wibben and Donahoe 2020). Critical geography has made an important contribution to renewing our understanding of violence as something that goes beyond physical and direct violence (Derek and Pred 2007, Springer and Le Billon 2016). Its contribution lies in integrating the wider spaces involved in the production of violence in our understanding of the latter. According to Springer and Le Billon “even the most seemingly place-bound expressions of violence are mediated through and integrated within the wider assemblage of space” (2016, 2), hence the interest in “scalar transcendence” (Featherston et al. 2019). We are interested in these mediations and assemblages.

Feminist approaches have made important contributions to this relational approach to violence by giving importance to the body, and to the everyday (Fluri 2011). They insist on the need to connect and integrate the levels of the everyday and the private to geopolitical developments. The relationship between physical violence in war situations and everyday violence – understood as the daily practices and expressions of violence on a micro-interactional level – should be acknowledged (Schepers Hughes and Bourgois 2007). Latin American feminist geographers have further developed embodied understandings of war, peace, and insecurities in relation to the territories with the concept cuerpo-territorio (Zaragocin and Caretta 2020). In doing so, they have called into question the very notion of space and the impossibility to divide the territorial space – the land – from the embodied sites of struggle against violence, colonialism, and local/global patriarchies (Rodríguez Castro 2020). But also, spaces of resistance against violence uncommonly studied in Peace and Conflict Studies. These contributions call into question the opposition between violence and peace and describe peace in contexts of violence (Laliberté 2016) and violence in contexts of

In spaces where some only see conflict and violence, the geographies of peace approach (McConnell et al. 2014) is a helpful tool to become aware of the everyday practices of weaving relationships that contain violence and transform the suffering that it leads to. Peace and violence should not be thought of as binary or exclusionary categories, but as being present at the same time and as being close in space. As a result, typically, people create space for peace in a context of violence and the two exist side-by-side. The understanding of peace as a “fragile and contingent process that is constituted through everyday relations and embodiments that are inextricably linked to geopolitical processes” (Ibid, 11) is also relevant in non-war contexts as peace is multiple, positive, and always in the making; it is made of the (re)production of positive social relations. Peacebuilding is understood here as building constructive relationships and undoing destructive relationships of power ingrained in structural and epistemic violence. We are interested in contesting peace-war binaries through de-localizing, de-spatializing and de-colonizing and reassembling theoretical, ontological and epistemological proposals to rethink this peace-violence continuum. In the proposed sessions we envision two sub-themes: (1) a spatial approach to everyday peacebuilding in particular in cities dealing with violence beyond what is widely understood as war, and (2) a feminist approach to everyday peacebuilding.

Possible themes for this session include, but are not limited to:
- The critical geopolitics of the “everyday”
- Empirical and theoretical analyses of peacebuilding in “non-war” contexts
- Ways in which actors claim spaces in which peace becomes possible
- Body-mapping as methods in geography of peace
- Emotional geographies in contexts of violence and insecurities
- Feminist analyses of embodied-emotional geographies of peace
- Exploring the concept Cuerpo-territorio in challenging peace-war binaries
- Epistemological shifts in the spatializing of peace
- Multiscalar approaches in feminist geography and the scales of peace; the intimate, the everyday, the carnal, the translocal

If you are interested in participating in this hybrid session, please submit a 250 word abstract with your name and affiliation to the organizers before September 30, 2021.
References


