

# Introduction: intimacy-geopolitics and violence

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## Introduction

Mapping the relations between intimacy and geopolitics is gathering momentum within critical geopolitics. Both world events and geographical research have demonstrated the importance of politicised understandings of intimacy (Harker and Martin 2012; Oswin and Olund 2010; Smith 2011), and of dissolving the customary boundaries between global/local, familial/state and personal/political as objects of study (Cowen and Story 2013; Mountz and Hyndman 2006; Pain and Smith 2008; Pratt and Rosner 2012; Pratt 2012). This collection is prompted by the growth of interest in intimacy-geopolitics,<sup>1</sup> but also by a wish to push understanding forwards, both of the ambivalence of intimacy itself (Harker 2013) and of the common framing of intimacy-geopolitics as a binary (see Pratt and Rosner 2012). We interrogate the ways that intimacy-geopolitics is tightly interwoven, and how this relation functions in different settings. In this introduction, we make some suggestions for how this might be framed. Each of the seven short papers that follow takes a particular cut across this relation within a specific geographical context; together, the collection intends to provide a series of conceptual, empirical and methodological questions and provocations for further research.

## Violence

The focus is violence, a key theme for intimacy-geopolitics. Understood as a multi-faceted and multi-sited force – interpersonal and institutional, social, economic and political, physical, sexual, emotional and psychological – violence is endemic, and intimately interwoven with other sorts of relations. For example, Pratt's (2012) analysis of transnational care-giving shows that the different violences, to which care-givers are subject, cut across conventional bounds of places and scales, connected by political relations that traverse the intimate and geopolitical. Indeed, intimate violence may be tacitly or explicitly sanctioned by states and institutions. And crucially, it does

not rest on physical harm to bodies; while this threat is almost always at its core, all forms of violent oppression work through intimate emotional and psychological registers as a means of exerting control (Pain forthcoming). This dynamic is often closely linked to wider social norms, obligations and customs, and to economic relations (Hays-Mitchell 2005). In this way, violence plays a key role in the oppression and insecurities that disproportionately affect socially, economically and politically marginalised people and places. At the same time, resistance, organisation and peace-making also move and work across intimacy-geopolitics. They do not simply sit as oppositional to violence, but are in dynamic relation. They may be co-opted by violence and forced to change tactics; they may involve violence, or be used by people who exert other forms of violence in other spaces (Koopman 2005); they may overcome violence in some places at certain times; but peace is always precarious and never an endpoint (Koopman 2011).

Despite this growing recognition, in much geographical analysis violences have been separated out, positioned either as local/everyday or as international/political conflict (Closs Stephens and Vaughan-Williams 2009; Gregory and Pred 2007), a separation that has all sorts of undesirable effects. We build here on recent work that, instead, unpicks and draws connections across different forms of violence and insecurity (e.g. Harker 2011; Katz 2007; Pain 2014 forthcoming; Pain and Smith 2008; Pratt 2012; Staeheli and Nagel 2008; Staeheli and Hammett 2010).

## Intimacy

At this point, we should make clear what we mean by intimacy. It does not simply concern dimensions of life taking place at close quarters, spatially and socially restricted to the self and a few known others. Neither is it restricted to these same relations but with recognition that they stretch across time and space. And neither is it limited to acknowledgement that non-intimate others are frequently involved in intimate relations, for example

through the tropes of sex, violence or care. Its framing within this collection emphasises that intimacy constitutes more than these readings, and we unpick the spatial hierarchies that have frequently bounded it in this way. Indeed, previously widespread understandings of intimacy in the social sciences (for example, that sexual violence is purely or even primarily a matter of interpersonal relations), whether explicit or implicit, in themselves help to sustain oppression.

We suggest that intimacy consists of three intersecting sets of relations, which are fundamental to our framing here. They work simultaneously rather than separately, and must be considered as such when we come to consider particular empirical cases. First, intimacy is a set of spatial relations, stretching from proximate to distant; in this regard, much feminist research has emphasised the household or the body. Secondly, intimacy is a mode of interaction that may also stretch from personal to distant/global; for example, recent work on emotions highlights how subjects reflect, resist or shape wider power relations. And thirdly, intimacy may involve a set of practices, again applying to but also connecting the body and that which is distant; for instance, relations of care frequently traverse the interpersonal, institutional and national realms.

The project of acknowledging and destabilising the connections between intimacy-geopolitics is now well established, troubling apparently mundane phenomena and pointing to their multi-scalar nature. Yet we have a niggling sense of a question not quite answered, as conceptual and empirical emphases have largely been on the constitution of the intimate. Such work problematises 'the geopolitical', and asserts the stretching of intimate spaces, interactions and practices. Often, it pushes as far as people's responses and resistance to geopolitical influence on intimacy. But it has less often focused on understanding the constitution of the geopolitical itself as also and already intimate. The risk with analysis that primarily troubles intimacy, rather than geopolitics, is that geopolitics is verified as primary. This is not a critique of feminist work, rather a restatement of the persistence of a masculine hierarchy of knowledge production (Marston *et al.* 2005; Mountz and Hyndman 2006; Sharp 2009). We wonder whether this makes the marginalisation of feminist contributions more likely, positioning work on intimacy in a supporting role to more important matters (Staeheli *et al.* 2004). Instead, recent feminist writing is posing a further, deeper question: how is intimacy wrapped up in national, global and geopolitical processes and strategising, international events, policies and territorial claims, so as to already be a fundamental part of them? Geopolitics is exposed as already created by and consisting of relations and practices of intimacy: the already-thereness of the intimate as foundational to and within other realms (Bhattacharyya 2008; Hyndman 2010; Pratt and Rosner 2012; Puar 2007).

We can extend this analysis to violence. While many critical geopolitical analyses have emphasised state violence on bodies in different places, and in so doing worked across scale to a certain degree, often this has implied and reinscribed a certain kind of spatial hierarchy that does not acknowledge that the same violences are often already there within the intimate realm. The short papers here are intended to draw out this point, and demonstrate the three sets of intersecting relations in practice. As Pain's paper contends, intimate and international violences are closely related. Not only are state violence and armed conflict experienced as onslaught in the intimate realm in a range of ways (as the papers by Dowler *et al.*, Marshall, Harker and Sharp also show), but intimate violence is foundational to geopolitical dynamics and force. So the simultaneous, multiple workings of violences are essential to revealing how they work. The diffusion of 'geopolitical' violences is achieved through their presence in the intimate, and 'intimate' violences persist precisely because they are rooted in other sites. And at the same time, contestation of violence – through varied practices of resistance and peacemaking by individuals, communities, and social movements and institutions – continuously wind through intimate and global (see Askins' paper). It always does so in relation to violence, and vice versa: resistance to occupation may be met with further violence; feminist campaigns become more vigorous in the face of a backlash that attempts to reiterate the legitimacy of violence. So resistance may undo violence and create further forms at the same time, as Harker suggests. Moreover, as highlighted by the reflections by Sharp, and Pratt and Johnston, the potential epistemic violence of scholarship is wound into a similar set of spatial relations.

What we argue here is that our analysis of violence as geographers is enriched by taking these entwined spatial relations as a starting point: by rotating the usual lens of analysis. Intimacy is seen to stretch, and reaches around its others – those who are non-intimates, the public, the global, the geopolitical – and turns inside-out. This framing addresses urgent questions currently resonating through political and activist spheres, and it has implications for responses to violence at different sites: which violences receive attention and resourcing, and from whom? How does their everyday framing as intimate *or* geopolitical work to sustain them?

## Geopolitics

The short papers each address an issue for geopolitics within a particular context. Using qualitative, ethnographic and participatory methodologies, the authors' carefully situated research draws out the complexity of cross-cutting connections and relations of geopolitics to

intimacy and violence. Together, the papers reflect our framework of three intersecting sets of relations: intimacy-geopolitics as a spatial relation, a mode of interaction, and a set of practices.

#### *Intimacy-geopolitics as a spatial relation*

First, all seven papers illustrate the entanglement and indivisibility of proximate and distant spaces. Dowler *et al.* provide a framing piece, exploring the utility of three feminist visualisations for intimacy-geopolitics across three case studies of research in Liberia, Iran and the USA. These help to map complex spatial relations between citizens, activists, the military, states and the international community. The papers by Marshall and Harker attend to the position of personal relationships in relation to the intimate work of occupation by the state in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, paying particular attention to the intimate as a resource in resistance and alternative ways of living. In parallel, Pain connects intimate dynamics across domestic violence, international warfare, online and institutional violence. Sharp explores the dilemma of bringing to light hidden sexual and racist violence in narratives about independence struggles in Tanzania. Modelling the conceptual principle in her paper, Askins works from the intimate outwards, exploring the relation between dominant national discourses about migration to the UK and interpersonal relationships. Pratt and Johnston's paper focuses on the transnational movement of academic narratives between places that are differently positioned, both within global hierarchies and the stories that we tell as researchers and activists.

#### *Intimacy-geopolitics as modes of interaction*

The second theme is the potential for feelings and interpersonal relationships to effect political change at other scales. Here intimacy-geopolitics is used effectively to articulate the inseparability of politics from emotional geographies. Dowler *et al.* describe how emotional and embodied experiences of peace connect to action at a range of scales. Pain's emphasis is on the emotional dynamics that are present across a range of gendered violences at different scales. Askins examines the working of intimacy in forms of activism, arguing that a transformative geopolitics arises from the friendship between a locally born and a migrant woman in England; such 'emotional citizenry' has potential to challenge and reshape political discourses. Marshall asks how love functions in political struggle, both as a counter-veiling force for resistance and one that occupiers attempt to co-opt. Harker too makes clear the ambivalence of Butler's ethic of cohabitation as a conceptual resource for living with others.

#### *Intimacy-geopolitics as sets of practices*

Thirdly, the papers demonstrate how certain bodily and social intimate practices traverse sites and scales. The last two papers critically appraise our own practices as researchers exploring intimacy-geopolitics. As the papers by Sharp, and Pratt and Johnston, make clear, if the task is to move out conceptually and methodologically from intimacy itself, this involves disclosure and exposing the lives of others, raising significant questions of ethics and power. Their projects employ specific epistemologies and methods in an effort to dismantle the customary divides of intimacy-geopolitics, both between fields, scales and sites, and between researchers, activists and communities. Sharp considers the ethics of pursuing intimate stories as researchers, particularly in cross-cultural contexts, and from their experience of staging a testimonial play, Pratt and Johnston ask whether scholarly narratives can have transnational resonance rather than universalise.

The goal of all these analyses is to rotate the usual framing of intimacy-geopolitics, to exceed any spatial hierarchy in its relation, and to rethink it as variously configured spatial relations, interactions and practices in particular places. Intimacy is not simply the terrain on which broader sets of power relations are written. It is already out there, quietly working to produce domination as well as resistance across all practices and sites.

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#### Note

- 1 The term intimacy-geopolitics redresses the usual emphasis on the geopolitical as primary in these relations. The hyphen signals the supposed divide and the actual inseparability.

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# A feminist visualisation of the intimate spaces of security

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*Geographers have demonstrated how discourses and practices of security are unevenly experienced and mapped onto space, often paradoxically creating insecurities in people's lives. Yet, all too often, the fluid nature of power is difficult to articulate; the intimate is either eclipsed or treated as a passive victim of national and global processes. To draw attention to these erasures, feminist geographers have adopted geometric visualisations that prompt new questions about the importance of intimate spaces for understanding security. This paper highlights three visual motifs, by Katz, Pain and Smith, and Shalhoub-Kevorkian, which we apply in our different fields of intimacy-geopolitics.*

**Key words:** *feminist geopolitics, visualisations, security*

Understanding the fluid nature of how power flows between the global and the intimate can be difficult to articulate, and all too often intimate spaces and bodies are either rendered invisible or are characterised as the disconnected, passive victims of national and global pro-

cesses. As feminist geographers, we are interested in disrupting conventional approaches to space and scale that reinforce these invisibilities. In doing so, feminists increasingly adopt particular visualisations, which operate as conceptual tools impelling us to see and make

visible that which is often erased. These visualisations are concerned with the securities and vulnerabilities of certain people, as they variously experience, ignore, navigate, rework and resist the violences shaping their lives. The goal of these visualisations is, therefore, not simply to reinforce common understandings of how global and national politics impact the intimate. Rather, these visualisations demand we attend to how everyday practices and identities such as citizenship, class, race, gender, religion and sexuality are integral, co-constitutive parts of processes conventionally located at other scales. For the purpose of this paper, we highlight three types of visual motifs we find useful in making visible the relationships between multi-scaled and located processes: Katz's (2001) topographies of political engagement, Pain and Smith's (2008) double helix and Shalhoub-Kevorkian's (2010) transgressionary spiral. Each of us has incorporated some aspect of these motifs into our research on peace in Liberia, human rights in Iran and the multiple frontlines women face in the US military. These models allow us to situate places in their broader context, dismantle the global-intimate binary and examine the spatial temporality of violent transgressions.

This paper highlights the utility of visualisation as a feminist tool that demonstrates what Pain and Staeheli describe as the shifting nature of the intimate as more than a geographic locality. They argue the intimate is a complex set of relations that work simultaneously, 'as a set of spatial relations, stretching from the proximate to the distant . . . a mode of integration' and a 'set of practices . . . connecting the body and that which is distant' (Pain and Staeheli this issue). In this spirit, we contend that these visualisations prompt us to focus on relationships that might be ignored, to ask questions that might otherwise be overlooked, and later to communicate patterns that disrupt the norm. Our aim is not to give precedence to one style of representation over another, because all three visualisations may be useful to each of the cases we present. Rather, each motif serves as methodological apparatus that allow us to view the entanglements between binaries like intimate and global that too often structure space and knowledge. More specifically, these models help illuminate the violence and contradictions that emerge amid multiple-scaled notions of peace, the tensions between local and international human rights claims, and the destabilisation of views of noncombatants as secure.

Katz's visual metaphor of topography can illuminate the messy politics of peace in postwar Liberia. Peace has multiple, often-contradicting meanings, and by envisioning a topographic surface in which contours represent different meanings and practices of peace, we can both connect peaces across space and imagine how they interact within place. For example, emotional experi-

ences of peace, embodied through trauma, fear, solidarity or friendship, exist in relationship to lived realities of peace, where daily circumstances of life, such access to food, may or may not be violent. Further, everyday and embodied experiences of peace shape and are shaped by the use of peace by both women peace activists and postwar development workers, and in international discourse, where peace is often a state-scale geopolitical identifier indicating the country's 'stability' and conformity to norms of liberal democracy and market capitalism. With starkly different visions of peace, topographies thus allow us to imagine how one slides across and interacts with multiple contours of peace within their lives.

Equally, the double helix is useful for visualising the complex geopolitical dynamics at play among Iranian citizens, the Iranian government and the international community as it relates to human rights. One strand represents the everyday experiences of Iranians and another depicts the international community, with the two intertwined helices connected through various encounters. Openings in the double helix correspond with free flows of information and embodied mobility, while the crossing of the helices renders connections invisible. To this end, the 2009 Green Movement uprising signified an opening in the helix, when nationwide civil rights protests garnered global attention and transnational support. The ability of Iranian citizens to make rights claims against their government, however, is complicated by a history of international interventions. Presently, their daily lives are severely impacted by international sanctions justified, in part, by the Iranian government's human rights record. The crossing of the helices renders everyday insecurities from sanctions invisible to a global audience and represents the closing of borders and restricted information flows. The double helix helps us think critically about the (in)visibility of certain injustices, and how this impacts the ability of Iranians to make rights claims locally and internationally.

Lastly, in examining the United States Armed Services' combat exclusion policies that barred women from certain assignments based on proximity to direct combat, a spiral is useful in understanding how the (in)visibility of women's bodies reinforces sovereignty during times of national vulnerability. For instance, if we envision the centre point of a spiral as the body of a female soldier (the intimate) and the curves around that centre point as 'tensing or tapering' as a result of popular 'fears or trust' for national vulnerability, we can observe how the (in)visibility of this soldier is diametrically connected to the state's claims for heightened national security. This erasure of the intimate is apparent when United States Republican Congressman Tom Graves, intending to support women entering combat positions tweeted,

'Women in police/fire departments rushed into WTC on 9/11 with courage and absent fear; they can deliver justice to the enemy just the same' (Graves 2013). Although the courage demonstrated by female rescue workers on 9/11 and the days that followed was noteworthy, at that time their bodies were rendered invisible when outdated designations, such as fireman and policeman, instantaneously replaced the more gender-neutral identifiers of firefighter and police officer. A discourse of masculinist protection, fuelled by the invisibility of women rescue workers, helped promote sweeping measures for national security during the early days of the war. However, rewriting women back into the history of this event, as in the case of Graves' tweet, drives the appearance of the United States as a unified nation fighting an enemy so sinister that even our women have to enter the fight. At first glance, Graves' tweet seems to applaud the capabilities of female soldiers. Still, he points to the role of women rescue workers over a decade earlier rather than drawing attention to the number of female soldiers who, despite being designated as noncombatants, have been assigned to combat locations. In this way, the intimate continues to be rendered invisible. Ironically, the notion of the state protecting female soldiers as noncombatants not only erases their experiences of vulnerability from an enemy-other, but also their vulnerability from the enemy-within as demonstrated by the increasing numbers of rapes directed towards US soldiers by US soldiers.

Each of these feminist visualisations pushes its users to excavate and make visible processes, experiences and knowledges that are often erased and disconnected from processes occurring in other spaces or at other scales. All

of these examples help us to examine (in)security in relation to the co-constitutive relationship between the embodied, intimate everyday, and national and global processes. In our own usage, we treat these models as flexible tools that can be expanded and adapted to distinct contexts. By focusing our attention through these visual motifs, they facilitate long-held feminist imperatives both to rupture gendered binaries of space and knowledge, and to give weight to those voices and experiences that are too often marginalised or deemed irrelevant to national and global concerns. The inextricable entanglement of intimate and global security is a particularly pressing insight given that marginalised populations disproportionately experience the burdens and fears of securitisation. While geographers today are paying increasing attention to fluid subjectivities and the everyday in studies of the global security, we conclude by arguing that these motifs prove invaluable tools in expanding efforts to draw awareness to complex, nuanced connections of places and scales.

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# Love stories of the occupation: storytelling and the counter-geopolitics of intimacy

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*Though research on Israel/Palestine often privileges the macro-geopolitical perspective, a growing body of work has begun to catalogue the ways in which the violence of occupation is carried out through intimate spaces and practices. However, often missing from such accounts is an understanding of intimacy as a counter-veiling political force. Looking at the 'Love Under Apartheid' project in Palestine, and queer anti-occupation organising in Israel, this paper considers how storytelling can serve as both a research methodology and political intervention, changing the way geopolitical stories are told and unfold.*

**Key words:** love, storytelling, Israel/Palestine

The popular geopolitical notion that mutual ignorance perpetuates the Israeli–Palestinian ‘conflict’ is belied by the intimate cultural knowledge that the occupier has used to divorce a people from the land, and that the occupied have acquired in order to survive. The very foundation of a Jewish homeland was itself predicated on the destruction of the Palestinian household; the threat of rape was strategically used during the *nakba* of 1948 with the idea that Arab fathers would sooner surrender their land than imperil the honour and integrity of their wives and daughters (Warnock 1990; Peteet 1991; Holt 2003). As the site of biological and cultural reproduction, the intimate spaces of the family/home continue to be prime targets of colonial violence in Palestine (Abdo 2008; Harker 2011). Sexual violence against young men and women continues to be used as an interrogation tactic (B’Tselem 2013), while family separations caused by imprisonment and restrictive residency laws serve to disrupt Palestinian family life.

Israeli feminist research has similarly sought to link the violence of occupation and domestic violence within Israeli homes. Beyond arguments that soldiers ‘bring home’ the war through domestic violence, feminist and queer scholars have argued that militarism begins at home with the foundational hierarchy of heteronormative patriarchy (see Pain this issue). However, while there is increasing awareness about the intimate connections between domestic and colonial violence, less often considered is the role of intimacy, familial or otherwise, in potentially confronting such forms of violence and oppression. Beyond sentimentalist notions of love conquering all, how might interpersonal love challenge the occupation by mobilising affinities and sustaining resilience? Further, how might individual love stories that complicate the neat colonial demarcations of land and people pose a narrative challenge to the geographies of occupation?

The political potential (and pitfalls) of love has lately enjoyed serious debate among radical thinkers, from Badiou to Žižek. Geographers too have given love consideration, researching the changing nature of intimacy in the context of global mobility and mediated proximity (Valentine 2006; Walsh 2009), and more recently as the subject of geopolitical inquiry (Smith 2011). Drawing from political theorists of affect like Ahmed and Sedgwick, Morrison *et al.* (2013) urge geographers not to reflexively dismiss love as apolitical at best, or at worst an anti-politics concealing heteronormative patriarchy. Instead, they argue for love as a fundamentally political spatial relation involved in the production of boundaries, spaces, places and affinities. Paradoxically, love is something that is, at once, deeply personal, universally recognised and yet culturally and historically specific. This paradox is true too for the stories we tell about

love. As Cameron (2012) points out, stories are both singular expressions of particular, individual experiences, but also indicative of their social context and cultural conventions.

This productive tension is at the heart of a project called Love Under Apartheid. Launched by US-based Palestinian rights activist Tanya Keilani on Valentine’s Day 2012, the project features the stories of couples and families fractured by the occupation. As Keilani explains in the project description, ‘thinking about occupation historically and in the abstract, we may not comprehend the extent to which it affects the most private and intimate parts of Palestinian lives’ (Keilani 2012, np). These love stories help to communicate ‘the extent to which the Israeli apartheid system affects individuals by restricting a deeply personal right: their right to love’ (2012, np). The right to love is a right to self-determination, and crucially the right to a future. Futurity features prominently in the narratives. As Keilani again explains:

when we find a partner, we think about our futures: where will we live; what kind of home we will create; would we like children; if so, how many – but planning a future together isn’t the same for Palestinians. (2012, np)

The language of love allows for an intimate proximity with the Palestinian narrators, too often cast as the objects of history, here narrating their personal struggles with occupation, but also their personal stories of love. By loving beyond boundaries, Palestinians dispute not only the ongoing partitioning of Palestinian land, but also the aesthetic and affective partitions that prevent us from seeing the Other as capable of loving and being loved. In this sense, love here is not the basis of political subjectivity, as Hardt and Negri (2011) might have it, but is used to highlight and confront the colonial apparatuses that negate love (see Rancière and Corcoran 2010), potentially providing a common ground where different voices can come together in a common refusal of the same subjugation, differently experienced.

As such, the Love Under Apartheid project deploys love as a counter-geopolitical force in three ways. First, individual love stories directly confront and seek to overcome the division of Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem and historic Palestine. Second, the stories themselves seek to create affinity and a kind of intimate knowledge of Palestinians among publics used to seeing them as ‘Other’. Third, the stories seek to make intimate the abstract language of universal rights through an appeal to the universal experience of love.

However, this emphasis on personal romance takes as universal the notion of love as individual desire (perhaps signalling the changing nature of intimacy in Palestine and the role of digital communication in facilitating and narrating romantic love). This universalising of

particular experiences of love likewise risks reifying heteronormative constructions of love and family life. What of queer love under apartheid? Love stories that are critical of Israeli militarism are becoming increasingly mainstream within Israeli gay culture. Two recent films, *The bubble* (2006) and *Out in the dark* (2013), explore the complexities of gay relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. Both films cast a critical light on the Israeli occupation and the vulnerability of Palestinian gay men to abuse by Israeli authorities. However, the stories also trade in the clichés of innocent love caught between two warring factions – Israeli militarism and Palestinian extremism – reinforcing the notion of the occupation as a symmetrical conflict, with ‘bad guys on both sides’ ultimately portraying liberal Tel Aviv as the sensible middle-ground. Depicted as such, stories of Israeli–Palestinian queer love are insufficiently critical of the power relations that undergird the occupation and enable the occupier alone to narrate such stories. Nevertheless, both these examples illustrate how stories in general, and perhaps love stories especially, are potent counter-geopolitical narratives. Such stories help us achieve new understandings of the everyday realities of occupation. They serve as affective disruptions to dominant narrative representations of Palestine, with the potential of collapsing social distance and creating new, intimate political affinities.

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# Gendered violence: rotating intimacy

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*This paper explores what the framing of intimacy-geopolitics as interwoven strands of a single structure means for gendered violence. It considers some longstanding and newer forms of violence that work through intimacy, and draws attention to the messy relation with resistance.*

**Key words:** domestic violence, warfare, online violence, institutional violence



If feminist geography has a united project, it is turning the inside-out and the outside-in: making visible and central to social and spatial relations phenomena that are often framed as simply-intimate. In our introduction (Pain and Staeheli this issue), we suggested that intimate relations and emotions are not only part of the connective tissue of relations that stretch across and between communities, cities and states, but foundational to them. Here, I extend this framing to different forms of gendered violence.

Feminist scholarship has made it clear that gendered violences are linked across scales and sites (Moser 2001; Tickner 1992). In *Frames of war*, Butler (2010) charts the racialised hierarchies that determine which lives and whose suffering is recognised and deemed grievable by the West: these enable the cold rationality underpinning recent military interventions, skew media representations of victimhood and feed the demonisation of Muslims within the West (Razack 2008). Yet, as I have argued elsewhere, this distancing is also performed in relation to the violences that are closer to home, especially manifest in the social recognition of domestic violence (Pain 2014a). Forefronting the intimate in analysis of gendered violence – and simultaneously redefining intimacy as already present and woven through broader processes and sites – presents one way of recognising that all forms of gendered violence are, as feminists have maintained, part of the same complex of harm and control.

For example, terrorism may comprise spectacular moments rather than long-term entrapment, but like domestic abuse it achieves its work through control of emotions, particularly fear (Pain 2014a). Longstanding work by black feminists and feminist international relations scholars has connected international warfare and intimate violence, charting the use of rape in war, the rise in domestic abuse among military and civilian families during and after combat (INCITE! 2006) and the imperatives of hypermasculinity and masculinist protection in state conflicts as in intimate violence (Sjoberg 2013; Young 2003). Even in what is called peacetime, intimate violence has congruence with international conflict: its emotional dynamics and tactics strongly resonate with the conduct and psychology of warfare (Pain forthcoming). Aggressors pursue the enforcement of their worldviews, laying blame and justifying violence through carefully constructed ethical framings. The psychological occupation of domestic abuse, the mindgames played by perpetrators and Orwellian doublethink required for resilience resemble occupying forces' deployment of their intimate cultural knowledge of the people they oppress (see Marshall this issue).

An important strand in the connective tissue of gendered violence is resistance. As we have suggested (see Pain and Staeheli, and other papers in this issue),

resistance is never in straightforward opposition to violence, but exists in messy and dynamic relation, and may also be an intimate practice. In situations of domestic violence, resistance is necessarily private and small-scale, not always planned and strategic, but may be faltering and unanticipated. It does not always clearly work against the paralysing effects of violence and fear: some of the time, it works with them (Pain 2014b). When resistance is more publicly articulated, the response may be further aggression, as the emerging issue of online violence against women, particularly threats of sexual violence on Twitter and Facebook, illustrates. Threats made against women who oppose gendered violence often shatter the myth of any distinction between offline and online violence (Citron 2009); threats are intimate, and they have real-life effects. Online violence is a reassertion of power, but perpetrators often deny this, minimising and de-scaling it, and drawing on a claim commonly made of older forms of gendered violence: that its spatial context means it is not-violence. These claims reflect how gendered violence is positioned within our culture at large (Women in Toronto Politics 2013; cf. Dowler *et al.* 2014). When we raise our heads to speak about violence – as individual victim-survivors, as activists, as scholars – we often face the same exhortations that work in the interests of power.

Geographers have had a tendency to analyse violence at and from a distance, at the same time as we are part of the relations that sustain or challenge it (Pain forthcoming). Many of our institutions have historical connections to violent imperialism, are complicit in contemporary oppressive social and economic relations, and are also everyday sites of intimate violence. As Dowler *et al.* (2014) argue in their analysis of recent institutional cover-up of sexual assault at Penn State University, the neoliberal cultural economies of universities and colleges have led them to prioritise institutional reputation over the welfare of individuals.

Whether targeted at men, women or children, gendered violence works through intimate control and fear at multiple scales. At all scales, too, the intersecting structures of gender, racism, ethnocentrism and class privilege frame who loses most (INCITE! 2006). Social attitudes and policy responses still reflect unawareness of the tense interface at which intimate violence might become public, and vice versa; always threatening, always precarious, its leakiness is full of risk. Yet the common separation of violences as significant (read: a social, political, global issue) or not, prevents the recognition of certain victims and the grievability of their suffering. Often, one form of violence compounds the effects of the other. Violence is a bouncing bomb, moving across intimacy-geopolitics and gathering destructive power. If intimacy-geopolitics is a single complex, the challenge is to

approach gendered violences together, and to rotate intimacy so that it becomes primary to understanding.

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# A quiet politics of being together: Miriam and Rose

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*This paper draws on fieldwork with a befriending scheme that pairs refugees, asylum seekers and local residents in the north east of England. It explores the ways in which a 'quiet politics' of encounter, embedded in intimate relationships, is caught up in and productive of complex inter-scale geographies, highlighting the ebbs and flows across security and insecurity. Critically, it foregrounds the relationality of emotions in enabling and maintaining intimate-geopolitics.*

**Key words:** emotions, intercultural encounter, geopolitics

This paper foregrounds a quiet politics that is enacted in initiating interpersonal relationships, while simultaneously caught up with/in wider geopolitics, and interwoven through scale: a quiet politics about belonging, about local community; interconnected through international mobilities and working to connect across difference. Emphasising the role of emotions in forms of caring, as central to developing relationships and also brought to them from other places and times, I argue that emotionality both mobilises the quiet politics that bring people together, and is inherent in their being together: 'the intimate as foundational to and within other realms' (Pain and Staeheli this issue). I draw on a specific relationship to exemplify the broader framing of intimacy-geopolitics set out in the introduction.

Miriam and Rose are two women who have become friends over the past three years, through a scheme that pairs longer term residents with refugees and asylum seekers in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, north east England<sup>1</sup>. Miriam is a refugee from Iraq, who came to the UK four years ago. She stayed in her home country longer than she would have wished, to care for her elderly mother, fleeing with her children only after her mother died. Miriam comes to the scheme articulating a desire to belong in Newcastle, to be part of the local community, to build connections with people in Newcastle. Rose is a retired nurse, who worked overseas, mostly in Asia, and has difficult and fond memories of these experiences. Rose comes to the scheme wanting to reciprocate the welcome she received elsewhere in the world, speaking of

belonging to a wider/global community. While we must be aware of the privilege of certain mobilities over others, and the power relations enabling such movements, critical here is that Rose desires a more open and inclusive local community in Newcastle.

Both women, then, evidence intimacy-geopolitics as a set of spatial relations, coming together through embodied emotions from elsewhere. Their relationship is produced through a quiet politics – an unassuming praxis of engaging with others, in which new social relations are built in/through everyday places, relationally connected across a range of geographies (Askins forthcoming). Both women sought out the scheme to (re)produce a specific locality-future, performing a citizenry embedded in emotional belongings, previous experiences and their own sense of agency. In particular, Miriam moves beyond ‘performing the script of “refugee”’ (Hyndman 2010, 456), enacting a will to engagement with local people, disrupting how those constructed as needing ‘welcome’ and/or ‘care’ may be reiterated as power-less (Korf 2007).

About a year ago, Rose’s husband died. Her family returned home for the funeral, but live elsewhere in the UK. Miriam has been with Rose through the longer bereavement process, visiting and bringing food, going out shopping with her, sitting and talking with her – as Rose had done with Miriam in the preceding couple of years, when Miriam first arrived in the UK grieving her mother. This resonates with Wiles’ (2011) conceptualisation of vulnerability as enabling an openness through which alternative relations may be performed in positive ways, not always already fragile and weak. Miriam’s vulnerability and need for security is not reducible to only being in need. Neither is Rose’s.

Rather, over the past three years, they have formed close bonds. Miriam describes Rose as ‘being like a mother to me, and a grandmother to my children’. Rose describes Miriam as being a great support at a difficult time, ‘like a daughter to me’. These women connect through an emotional and embodied mode of interaction: gentle hands on shoulders, smiles, laughter, tears and frustrations. Emotions are not always positive and easy, and not always shared: key is that *emotionality* itself (being emotional/having emotions) is central to their relationship. What is important here is that emotions are embedded through Miriam and Rose’s friendship from before they met, and enter their intimacy from other places. Past/distant violences are part of refugees’ and asylum seekers’ everyday lives, and Rose, too, brings embodied emotions to the relationship from other places at other times. When we consider intimacy, then, we should ‘highlight its shifting and multiple scope across transnational lives, ordinary spaces and daily interactions’ (Dennis and Warin 2010, 50).

This unfolding friendship – and there are many others across the scheme – foregrounds how intimate relationships, as a set of mutually caring practices, persist precisely because they are simultaneously rooted at other scales. It works to challenge local exclusionary discourses embedded in current dominant UK government anti-immigration rhetoric (Conlon and Gill 2013), resisting hegemonic geopolitics and enacting an emotional citizenry as (potentially) part of wider transformative change, diffusing back out from the local. Rose and Miriam demonstrate the importance of researching intimate relationships, their quiet politics and embodied (re)productions of place, as part of a critical geopolitics scholarship that challenges violence and insecurity. This recognises geopolitics as inherently intimate, in the fuller sense of intersecting intimacy that Pain and Staeheli describe (this issue). Rose and Miriam are actively co-constructing securities through reciprocal care, in a profoundly feminist sense (Beasley and Bacchi 2007). This remains fragile, emergent, powerful and hopeful, exemplifying intimacy-geopolitics as quietly calling forward interconnections across the local, national and global, and public and private space.

### Acknowledgements

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### Note

- 1 This ‘befriending’ scheme centres around partnered individuals spending time together in ways that best suit them, run through a local voluntary organisation, and the focus of ongoing participatory research since 2010.

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# The ambiguities of cohabitation

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*In this paper I examine Judith Butler's ethic of cohabitation as a means of thinking intimacy-geopolitics. Butler's ethic of cohabitation begins with an inability to choose in advance who we inhabit the earth with. Conceptually this idea is linked with the precariousness of life: a subject's life is always in the hands of others, both known and unknown. As such, cohabitation is always an intimate affair that is at the same time global. However, I argue cohabitation as ethical relation fails to map neatly onto cohabitation as spatial practice, and thus it is an ambivalent resource.*

**Key words:** *cohabitation, Judith Butler, Palestine*

In this paper I want to examine Judith Butler's ethic of cohabitation as a conceptual resource for thinking intimacy-geopolitics. Butler uses the term cohabitation to describe coexistence grounded in the passivity of social being, or an inability to choose in advance with whom we inhabit the earth. As she has previously argued (Butler 2004 2009), this vulnerability of the subject is a necessary condition of existence: simply put there is no life without relations to others/Other. There can be no life without sustenance, care and shelter that is always provided by known and unknown others. As such, cohabitation is always an intimate affair that is at the same time 'global' (Pratt and Rosner 2012). However, as I will argue, it is also an ambivalent resource, as cohabitation-as-ethical-relation fails to map neatly onto cohabitation-as-spatial-practice.

Butler's ethic of cohabitation emerges from, and is put to work in the context of Palestine/Israel, where it becomes an argument for a form of binationalism in which Israel ceases to exist as a Zionist state. This would mean, *inter alia*, full recognition of the Palestinian right of return (Butler 2012, 206). However, Butler's affirmation of unchosen cohabitation is partially enabled through recourse to forms of dwelling that are chosen. For instance, in the Palestinian case, Butler positions the *nakba* in 1948 as a literal unhousing (2012, 110), and it is precisely this past form of being housed that gives Palestinians the right of return. Furthermore, when talking about binationalism, Butler states explicitly that this does not mean the unhousing of Israel's Jewish population (2012, 214), since this would create another stateless population. In both cases, such dwelling spaces were in some way chosen in the past, and must be affirmed or protected in the future.

There is thus a tension between chosen and unchosen cohabitation. This is clearest in a small aside – 'though one could, to some extent, choose with whom to share a bed or a neighbourhood' (2012, 100) that precedes discussion of unchosen cohabitation. Butler subsequently clarifies:

to cohabit the earth is prior to any possible community or nation or neighbourhood. We might sometimes choose where to live, and who to live by or with, but we cannot choose with whom to cohabit the earth. (2012, 125)

Butler uses a temporal fix (global cohabitation precedes other forms of cohabitation) to distinguish between the earth (global) and other spaces (local) – a spatial problem.

Translating this conceptual problem empirically helps throw light on the ambiguity of the spatial extent of cohabitation. There are many documented cases of unchosen cohabitation – living with those we don't and cannot choose – functioning at the extent of the neighbourhood (Conflict in Cities 2012). We can also find examples of unchosen cohabitation of houses/apartments, such as in parts of the Old City in Hebron (Sacco 2012), which Butler (2012, 210) terms 'wretched' cohabitation. As both of these examples show, an ethic of cohabitation may be applicable at any spatial extent, but the forms of intimacy it creates may well be incredibly violent. It may of course be possible to foster less violent forms of unchosen cohabitation, which in practical terms would require various 'solutions' that embrace and rework the tension between honouring an ethic of cohabitation that goes all the way down to housing, and honouring some form of chosen space that in many ways is crucial to the production of subjectivity (by literally separating an 'I' from a social 'we'). However, such 'practicalities' raise

other conceptual questions in turn, such as how an ethic of cohabitation functions in a non-democratic context, where forms of agnostic and antagonistic dissent are not permitted.

For instance, how does one seek to foster a politics of cohabitation in contemporary Israel, when opposition to the Zionist state (and its policies of anti-cohabitation with Palestinians/non-Jews) is explicitly or implicitly expelled? As Butler notes, an ethic of cohabitation proposes the end of the Israeli state as we know it. Butler is very clearly *not* arguing for 'the dismantling of Israel as a state' (Benhabib 2013, 158), but rather seeking the end of Israel as a politically Zionist state form that is fundamentally built on the repression, expulsion and neglect of the non-Jew. Her arguments for Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions can be understood as a means of enacting this end, as concerned global constituencies actively choose not to share the earth with the state of Israel in its current form, since this state actively denies the inherent plurality of social existence.

However, the conceptual problem of spacing cohabitation re-emerges here, because as critics of Butler argue (see Benhabib 2013), Zionism doesn't seek to inhabit the earth, but merely create a safe space for Jews within it. What such an argument plays on is precisely the spatial extent at which cohabitation works (i.e. 'we don't claim to inhabit the earth, just a part of it, which actually enables cohabitation at the planetary scale'), and the failure of other states to play by the rules of agonistic and antagonistic engagement necessary for cohabitation (i.e. 'we've tried cohabitation, and look what happened: the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews'). Such critiques play on the tension between chosen and unchosen cohabitation. They hone in on the ambiguity in Butler's argument that if one can choose with whom to live in a house, then perhaps one can choose with whom to share a nation, a scaling up that turns cohabitation into a means of ethno-national violence. In this instance, geopolitical

violence finds both its justification and means in intimate practice.

If one accepts that it is very hard to conceptually separate the global from the local (see for example Pratt and Rosner 2012), then cohabitation as a particular form of intimacy-geopolitics is a 'janus-faced resource' (Lee and Pratt 2012, 902). It is an ambivalent act, potentially undoing *and* creating forms of violence. Putting it to 'good' use requires that we pay careful attention to when *and where* it is enacted.

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# The violences of remembering

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*I reflect on the methodological challenges of undertaking oral history research that attempts to address issues of security and violence that occurred in the past. When such issues become entangled with individual (and group) senses of identity and autobiography, there are challenges to do with nostalgia, forgetting and non-disclosure. I draw on current research into post-colonial identities in Tanzania.*

**Key words:** epistemic violence, identity, memory

Looking back on my own times, what strikes me is that we have developed endlessly subtle styles and techniques to reveal the secret meaning behind the apparent meaning, to open up the desires and assumptions behind what people say and explain about what they feel and believe. And all that can really be read into what we write is our own desire to translate everything, everyone, all reasoning, all irrational hope and fear, into our own Procrustean grid of priorities. (Byatt 2001, 167)

In her novel, *The biographer's tale*, A.S. Byatt beautifully illustrates both the impossibility of the narrator speaking only of the subject of biography and also of the subject of biography giving her or himself up as a coherent, graspable entity. Instead, Byatt's biographer finds himself appearing more and more frequently as his narrative develops. There has been much discussion of human geographers' angst regarding the former challenge, but the latter has perhaps received less attention, especially in political geography where qualitative approaches generally are a more recent development.

The influence of feminist and postcolonial theories in geography has led to a general acceptance of the need to challenge the 'epistemic violence' (Spivak 1988) of accounts that ignore the experience of women and subaltern peoples. Feminist scholars, recognising the reproduction of white, masculinist, bourgeois histories through the writing of similarly embodied scholars, have turned to oral histories to open up other spaces to political analysis. This has facilitated a narration of other spaces, outside of the gaze of dominant, formal accounts. There is, of course, an assumption running through such approaches that the women in question do choose to open up their lives to the biographer-researcher.

This may lead to a profound methodological challenge to feminist geographers. Are we any different to Byatt's biographer when we seek the intimate aspects of

critical geopolitics? Why should women share the intimate with someone, especially a researcher, a stranger (and why is this an act of disclosure that is especially requested of women)? It is based, I think, in the assumption that including voices is always and everywhere good because it challenges the epistemic violence of silencing. But can we be sure that our narrations are free of violence? Might it be that other violences lie in the re-telling of stories, especially when women's biographies involve embodiments of the nation or of civil conflict that are cross-cut with family and intimate relationships?

Pratt and Rosner have suggested that intimacy 'does not reside solely in the private sphere; it is infused with worldliness' (2012, 3). This is true; nevertheless intimacy does also reside in the private sphere. Just because intimacy is linked into other spheres and scales does not mean that it is always done in a way that is (meant to be) legible to others. Perhaps there are hidden intimacies, ones that are shared selectively, but ones that nevertheless remain silent to wider audiences. Many talk about minor bodily acts and transgressions becoming expressions of resistance, but of equal importance are questions around *when* people choose to take the intimate into the public, and under what circumstances.

As part of a project researching postcolonial identities in Tanzania, I have interviewed members of the international community of scholars who worked at the University of Dar es Salaam in the 1970s and 1980s. The oral histories I have been involved in collecting have included wonderful narrations of the period as being foundational to people's politics and academic careers, of putting Africa in a central location for imaginings of the future, and appearing to promise something new and better. It was clearly a time of great possibility. One Tanzanian scholar wrote that he was able to act 'not simply as a

contemplative philosopher but as an historical actor' (Shivji 1993, 211). In these recollections, I realise that the narratives are pulled through nostalgia and, for many, a sense of youthful adventure that fuelled a sense of political empowerment. However it became clear that this transcendent subjectivity was not available to all during the time.

I happened to be visiting Zanzibar in December 2011 when the mainland of Tanzania was preparing for the 50th anniversary of *uhuru* (freedom) of Tanganyika from British colonialism. I talked to Zanzibari friends about their feelings about the islands' relationship to the mainland and was surprised to hear familiar public tales of politics and revolution entwined with personal ones of forced marriage and racial intimidation. It seemed that no family was untouched by this intimate violence and yet this is something that has been rendered marginal in retellings of Tanzania's history. From the perspective of a feminist agenda of exposing dependent and violent connections between the intimate and geopolitical, this was an incredibly powerful story of the geopolitics of union, and was one that I immediately wanted to explore further. Moreover, I feared that by not telling this story I was simply replicating the violence of the dominant narrative that has

chosen to leave these intimate politics in the bedroom, in the kitchen, in the private.

But I have not pursued the story in my research. On the one hand, this is for reasons of safety. The last time there was an investigation, around 10 years ago, I was told, the journalist responsible for the story was shot at and the newspaper that published his story closed down. However, going beyond this, I do not feel comfortable that this is a story that should be forced into my 'Procrustean grid of priorities', however compelling it might be as an exemplar of feminist geopolitics. Perhaps it is for Zanzibaris themselves to decide when and if this is a tale to be told, and in what way it should emerge.

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# Filipina domestic workers, violent insecurity, testimonial theatre and transnational ambivalence

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*From conventional social scientific interview material, we have developed a testimonial play that focuses on the intimate violence of a state-regulated temporary worker programme in Canada. Taking the play to the Philippines has raised questions about the contextuality of interpretation. How easily do our scholarly narratives travel between global north and south? How might we use our research to stage nuanced transnational conversations about issues that are experienced differently in different places?*

**Key words:** *Philippines, migrant domestic workers, Canada, testimonial theatre*

16 November 2013. We are sitting in a rehearsal studio at the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) Theatre in Manila working on the final scene of our testimonial play, in which a representative of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Philippine Foreign Affairs each has an opportunity to present and legitimate their government's perspective on Canada's Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). The words of the CIC representative have been written for the play but those of the Philippine governmental representative are taken verbatim from a research transcript, as is the case for all other monologues and dialogues in the play.<sup>1</sup> At this moment, the director and actors are working on the following short segment:

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada Rep (CIC):** [ . . . ] The federal government recognizes there are difficulties associated with the LCP. But it's also important to recognize the benefits [ . . . ] to Filipinos. [ . . . ] The World Bank and many academics now believe that the money sent home as remittances is a more effective means of stimulating the Philippines economy than more traditional forms of development aid.

**Philippine Foreign Affairs Rep:** If I may, I would like to clarify something. It has never been the policy of the Philippine government to send domestic workers abroad. [ . . . ] Now if they choose to go out of the country to work we need to cope with this. [ . . . ] Of course the Philippines doesn't have all the resources to cover everything and attend to all the needs of these people. But if we compare the Philippines' performance with its neighbours, we are doing a lot more. In migration circles, our government is a model for other labour-sending countries. But it is not the policy to send domestic workers abroad. It is a personal choice to leave the country.

**CIC:** Exactly! [ . . . ] Shouldn't individual Filipinos have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether this is a good or bad program?

Helping the actors to more fully realise their characters, the Director asked whether the governmental representatives are saying the same or different things. Sitting on the sidelines it's tempting to think: 'It's the same rhetoric of personal choice. It's neoliberalism twice over.' What the actors had to say is far more interesting. Lex Marcos, a Manila-based Filipino actor, thought that his character was divided and concerned; Patrick Keating, from Vancouver, felt that the CIC representative was singularly boosterish about his government programme. Abstracting the two perspectives to a cliché of neoliberalism strips them of their emotional nuance and interpretative complexity. This moment of insight – and many others like it – has been afforded by the opportunity to stage our testimonial play, *Nanay*, in the Philippines.<sup>2</sup>

The play was created in Canada from research into the structural violence associated with the LCP, one of Cana-

da's temporary foreign worker programmes (Pratt 2004 2012), a violence lived intimately within so many Filipino transnational families. Alongside the scene just described, actors performing as Filipino domestic workers narrate intimate stories of their suffering as domestic workers, while others present Canadian employers' very real stresses in the absence of a national child or elder care policy. The play was created in Vancouver and performed without major modification in Berlin; the occasion of bringing it to the Philippines has prompted us to think carefully about whether and how narratives of intimate insecurity travel and the politics and geopolitics of academic narratives of intimacy and violence (Johnston and Pratt 2014).

Lex's intuited ambivalence about the LCP, placed against a singularity of the Canadian's interpretation, crystallises a simmering debate among scholars and policymakers: in contrast to the CIC representative's enthusiasm for the LCP, Canadian researchers tend to be uniformly negative about the programme, emphasising the exploitation and vulnerability of live-in caregivers as precarious workers in Canada. Scholars writing from outside of Canada have argued that this kind of critique betrays a narrow and Eurocentric perspective. Daniel Bell and Nicola Piper (2005) believe that liberal democratic theorists in the global north often ignore the actual needs and interests of migrants because they frame questions of justice from within their own context. Similarly, Deirdre McKay (2007) argues that critiques of family separation imposed by programmes such as the LCP betray Eurocentric middle-class norms of family and intimacy. In the area of the Philippines that she has researched, she argues that there is nothing particularly new, violent or damaging about parents leaving their children in the care of extended kin.

Bringing our play (and research) to the Philippines responds to Nancy Fraser's (2009) call for a more intimate (and just) geopolitics by reconfiguring the scales and spaces of politics so that public dialogue includes all of those subjected to a particular governance regime. In her view, too often deliberations about justice are mis-framed geographically and those who should be heard are excluded. Our intuition from travelling with *Nanay* is that such dialogues will be halting because issues worthy of scholarly attention can look very different depending on context, across the global north and south. Our methodological challenge as scholars, it seems to us, is to create the kinds of research outputs that can foster and sustain nuanced possibly ambivalent transnational conversations, ones that can hold a critique of the structural violence associated with the LCP together with the possibility that the LCP is one of the best programmes of its kind and the Philippine state is a model migrant-sending country. This is not a position of cultural relativism; it is a call to use our research to stage complex intimate conversations that



might open new ways of thinking about the complexities and contradictions that lie before us.

### Notes

- 1 For more details see Johnston and Pratt (2010) and Pratt and Johnston (2013).
- 2 We deeply appreciate receiving a SSHRC Public Outreach Grant and ESRC Knowledge Exchange Grant, which have allowed us to do this.

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