



## Intimate war

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### ABSTRACT

Contending that domestic violence and modern international warfare are part of a single complex of violence, this paper identifies their shared intimate dynamics. Both violences operate through emotional and psychological registers that are as central to their effectiveness as incidents of direct physical harm. While these dynamics are intimate, they are present across scale, and read here through a feminist lens on intimacy-geopolitics where neither framing has primacy. Research on the connections between domestic violence and international warfare is longstanding, most recently highlighting how intimate violence is produced within warzones. The analysis here begins instead from intimate dynamics, to draw out the warlike nature of domestic violence in peacetime. Tactics of modern warfare are juxtaposed with the dynamics of domestic violence in suburban Scottish homes: shock and awe, hearts and minds, cultural and psychological occupation, just war and collateral damage. Resisting the temptation to regard domestic violence as everyday militarism, the relation is rotated: both violences continuously wind through the intimate-geopolitical. This spatial reconfiguration is structured by gender, race, class, nation and citizenship, resulting in uneven impacts from all kinds of intimate war. The interweaving of military and intimate themes is intended as a casting-off point for progressing political geographies that are attentive to intimacy as foundational in the workings of power across scale.

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### Introduction

This paper contends that domestic violence and international warfare are part of a single complex of violence. 'Intimate war' is not a term for one or the other, but a description of both. For decades, feminist activists and researchers have pointed out the connection and its broader implications (INCITE!, 2006; Loyd, 2009; Tickner, 1992). However, with a few exceptions, political geographers have had little to say about domestic or sexual violence. This is unexpected in a discipline with a core interest in how spaces, places and scales produce and reproduce a whole range of social and political phenomena. Instead, over the last decade in particular, geographers have been engrossed in analysing war, terrorism and international conflict. While this attention is warranted, when placed alongside scant scholarship on other forms of violence it looks disproportionate and, ironically, is sometimes led by the mediated spectacle of global events which at the same time is under critique (Pain, 2009). Yet these forms of violence share bases of power with more pervasive intimate forms of violence: they are similarly located, they work through emotions, and there is always some enactment of resistance (Pain, 2014a, 2014b), all of which points to a shared analysis. Far more than

terrorism, which I have discussed elsewhere (Pain, 2014a), war is inseparable from the politics and experience of everyday life (Cuomo, 1996; Woodward, 2005), yet the spatial metaphors used to analyse war tend to situate it as different and distant (Sjoberg, 2013).

The starting point for the analysis here involves a specific articulation of the relation between the intimate and wider political structures. This articulation does not position the intimate as affected, or dripped down upon, by larger (geopolitical) processes. It does not restrict itself to drawing parallels between international/global on the one hand, and everyday/intimate on the other. Instead, it takes the intimate as a starting point or building block from which analysis moves out, both methodologically and conceptually, and asks what insights does this inverted orientation offer? This means examining the intimate dynamics of violence: the ways that military tactics and domestic violence operate through emotional and psychological registers that are as central to their effectiveness as incidents of direct physical harm. Military strategy is also-intimate: domestic violence is also-political. In both cases, these dynamics are made and lived. Wound into everyday lives, they are perpetrated, negotiated and resisted by individuals and groups of people in specific ways. They intersect with and frequently feed off obligations and customs of care, emotion, and social relations with others. And they are framed through gender,

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race and class, and refracted through the histories of places, nations and citizenship.

The project thus relates to – although it cannot fully answer – recent calls for International Relations as a discipline to understand war from the perspectives of those who experience it (Sjoberg, 2013; Sylvester, 2012), particularly to include a focus on its emotional dimensions (Sylvester, 2013). Sylvester (2013, 4) suggests that scholars should ‘stop averting our eyes and decide to descend into the ordinary of violence’. For over a decade, feminist political geographers have been doing just that, writing about war and its effects in ways that ably blend conceptual, empirical and activist concerns. Most, I suspect, would reject any binary division between scholars whose private and professional lives are supposedly insulated from violence (up here), and the lives of those we study (down there). Nonetheless, geographical research on domestic violence has been almost completely separate from these efforts. Such analysis may also form part of an emotional geopolitics (Pain, 2009) that explicates how emotions produce violence, fear, oppression and resistance across multiple spatial scales and sites (see also Cuomo, 2013; Pain, 2014a; Williams & Boyce, 2013). In this reading of emotions, they become highly significant to politics: rather than individualised or pathologised states, they are collective social forces that explode the boundaries and bifurcations that we too frequently draw.

The paper deliberately focuses on domestic violence close to home rather than at a distance; situated in the west, and experienced by women, children and men in some ways privileged as well as those marginalised by economic processes, social exclusion, racism and contexts of colonization. This helps to expose the political geographies of domestic violence in peacetime as well as in wartime. The two empirical cases here are women with different backgrounds that shaped the outcome of the violence they experienced, especially concerning their ethnicity and claims to citizenship. This too is a purposeful choice, intended to illuminate the everywhere-ness of intimate violence and the powerful underpinning of class, race and geopolitics in the political work that it does.

Because of this focus, inevitably a number of salient issues cannot be discussed here. The paper does not analyse domestic violence within international conflict, although these important connections are referred to in a number of places. It refers to some forms and contexts of war more than others, reflecting geographers’ recent work which has paid much attention to US involvement in conflicts overseas. In discussing war and domestic violence as parts of a single complex of violence, the aim is not to homogenise either. They tend to have some core characteristics, but are shaped by temporal, spatial, cultural and political contexts, and the efforts made by a whole range of actors to resist and combat them. The paper does not unpack the issue of civilian men affected by domestic violence or war. Women and children are more likely to be affected by these violences and their aftermaths, but that is not to erase the important and distinctive gendered experiences of men.

The paper begins with the assertion that domestic violence is political and should be analysed as such. It then summarises existing work exploring the connections between intimate violence and international warfare. The conceptual framing of intimacy-geopolitics is introduced. The paper then draws on empirical material to explore some of the intimate emotional and psychological dynamics of violence. Continuing to move between wider literature on war and domestic violence, it asks how we can make sense of the warlike nature of domestic violence in peacetime. The ways in which unequal victims are produced in the aftermath of war are discussed, and the paper concludes with some implications for political geography. The interweaving of military and everyday themes and terminology throughout is intended as a provocation,

providing some openings or casting-off points for further conversations within political geography about intimate violence in particular, and intimacy more generally as foundational in the workings of power across scale.

### Domestic violence is political

Domestic violence is political, although it is not always considered in that way. If, as this paper goes on to argue, domestic violence is closely connected with warfare, sometimes part of warfare, and located within a network of violences which appear to be operating at different scales but in fact closely resemble each other, then it seems odd that this form of systemic violence is not routinely analysed as political. Its intimate dynamics are motivated by a wish to exert control, as we shall see later, and map onto broader power structures in society, especially those of patriarchy, class, racism and heterosexism (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Holmes, 2009; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Just as war is commonly viewed as a continuation of politics by other means, so domestic violence furthers the politics of oppression (Hanmer, 1978). Domestic violence is also enmeshed in state politics, which profoundly affect prevalence and outcomes. While during the twentieth century western states took up greater responsibility for prevention and policing, though often with limited success, there has always been an imbalance in resourcing compared to other forms of violence. Austerity in the west has led to cuts in domestic violence services and the provision of justice; these average 31% in the UK in recent years, but up to 70% for some organisations (Baird, 2012; McRobie, 2012). Neoliberal state policies, continued racism and sexism in the legal system, and involvement in global conflicts have had direct negative consequences for the security of those experiencing domestic violence (Phillips, 2008; Walklate, 2008).

A recent World Health Organisation report (WHO, 2013) makes clear the scale of the problem. 38% of murders of women worldwide are committed by an intimate partner, and 30% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. UK statistics also show that 30% of the adult female population have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 (Office for National Statistics, 2014). 88% of these offences are perpetrated by men against women. This violence is not diminishing over time (WHO, 2013).

However, there is a common characterization of domestic violence as involving only isolated individuals and private spaces, and this spatial imaginary both reflects and produces its usual framing as non-political. Dominant social and medical discourses still often characterise it as individualised, pathologised behaviour (Enadner & Holmberg, 2008; Herman, 1997). But like warfare, domestic violence is multiply sited. It seeps out and diffuses into the public sphere, affecting families, friends, and wider communities (Jones, 2010). In recent years, too, the home is increasingly becoming part of warzones of international conflict (Sjoberg, 2013) as civilians, especially mothers and children, become its main casualties (Jones, 2010; Loyd, 2009). The home is therefore a complex space of both security and violence (Fluri, 2010), as well as a key site of resistance to violence of all sorts. Both forms of violence are marked by a huge displacement of people from their homes. The trauma of forced migration due to war has long term health, economic and social consequences, and is a gendered phenomenon that largely affects women and children (Hans, 2004; Hyndman, 2000). According to the UNHCR, the UK, having had no recent wars on its turf, has no Internally Displaced Persons. But there are tens of thousands of forced migrations per year in the UK due to domestic violence. In England alone, in 2009–10 18,812 women accompanied by 18,819 children left their homes and previous lives behind, relocating to other parts of the country to escape domestic

violence (Bowstead, 2014). The experience and aftermath of some wars are more visible than others.

### Domestic violence and warfare

Gender relations are like a linking thread, a kind of fuse, along which violence runs. They run through every field (home, city, nation-state, and international relations) and every moment (protest, law enforcement, militarization), adding to the explosive charge of violence in them.

Cockburn, 2004, 44.

War has predominantly been theorised by mainstream scholars of political science, war studies, international relations and human geography as a phenomenon that is spatially, socially and politically separate from intimate violence. Feminists have argued that gender is not only relevant to war, but at its core (Enloe, 2000; Giles & Hyndman, 2004; Sjoberg, 2013), and this framing has provided the basis for connecting international and intimate violence. In reframing security as a human as well as state condition, a long line of feminist scholars has shown that gendered (in)securities at different scales are mutually influencing (Peterson, 1992; Staeheli & Nagel, 2008; Tickner, 1992; Williams & Massaro, 2013). War is located on a broader continuum of gendered violence against women, men and children that transcends spatial divides (Cockburn, 2004; Moser, 2001). For Cockburn (2004), there are three such continua. First, gender links violence at different points on a scale, from personal to international (for example, from sexual violence to stealth bombing). Second, gender makes any distinction between war and peace or prewar and postwar meaningless, as gendered violence and other inequalities persist from one to the next. Third, gendered violence runs through social, economic and political spheres, as gender relations permeate each domain. Feminist political geography suggests a fourth spatial continuum: as modern day warfare involves many scales, levels and actors alongside states (Enloe, 2000), distinctions between domestic sovereign space and global space are dissolved, and 'feminized' civilian and 'masculinized' military spaces can no longer be imagined as separate (Giles & Hyndman, 2004).

These continua of violence shed a different light on the causes of war. Intersected by colonial and capitalist hegemonies, patriarchal power relations drive war, as political and economic power is primarily held by men and international conflicts play out on women's bodies (Enloe, 2000; Hooks, 2000). In particular, hypermasculinity, as a key part of state identities, underpins militarism and state security, leading to specific gendered patterns of both international warfare and domestic violence (Hammer, 2003; Hooks, 2000; INCITE!, 2006). Hypermasculinity is valued across the decisions, practices and tactics of war: the 'standards of being a 'good man' (regardless of sex) and thereby a good war decision maker map onto the standards of militarized masculinity, including the austerity and heroism of soldiering, the toughness of military action, and the responsibility for protection that comes from the just-warrior role' (Sjoberg, 2013, 144). As we shall see, these features of war are also present in the dynamics of domestic abuse.

More directly, there are increases in domestic and sexual violence in times and zones of war. In Jones's (2013) account of American soldiers' return from Afghanistan and Iraq, she documents rising rates of homicide committed by service members and new veterans, and rape, sexual assault and domestic violence resulting from the effect of military culture, all of which are consistent with earlier wars across history (see also Leatherman, 2011). Through these continuities, Jones (2010) argues, war keeps going. Militarization, conflict, post-conflict and displacement

exacerbate domestic violence, and it becomes more lethal where weapons are easily available (Adelman, 2003; Cockburn, 2004). War also presents new forms of violence against women (WHO, 2013); Sela-Shayovitz (2010) draws direct links between terrorism and increasing femicide in Israel, while Mojab (2004) documents a rise in the 'nationalist tradition' of honour killings in Iraqi Kurdistan after the 1991 Gulf War. There are especially high rates of violence in the transition from war to peace, as gender-based violence shifts from the public back to the private sphere (Hans, 2004).

Warfare and domestic violence are widespread, and their coincidence in particular times, spaces and social contexts suggests deep and direct relations between them. I go on to argue that it is in and through the neglected spaces of the intimate – the body, the emotions, the psyche – that this connectedness is produced. Existing work on the two violences relates them at the level of structural power relations, emphasizing the ways that war incites intimate violence. In the remainder of this paper, the intimate dynamics of violence are taken, instead, as the starting point for analysis.

### intimacy-geopolitics

The spatial concept underpinning this analysis is intimacy-geopolitics (Pain & Staeheli, *in press*), the hyphen between each sphere signalling the supposed divide and the actual leakage between them. This framing provides a framework for connecting violences across scale, following a recent body of work that has unpicked and drawn together different forms of violence and insecurity (e.g. Pain, 2014a; Pain & Smith, 2008; Pratt, 2012; Staeheli & Nagel, 2008). In much work in critical geopolitics, emphasis is placed on state violence against bodies in different places, without acknowledgement that this violence is already present within the intimate realm. The tendency is to position geopolitical forces as the active agents, and where intimacy is considered the question is restricted to how intimate spaces, relations and practices soak up and are shaped by these wider forces. But in reality there is no spatial hierarchy between the global or geopolitical on the one hand, and the everyday or intimate on the other (Pratt & Rosner, 2012); they are equivalent strands winding into a single structure (Pain & Smith, 2008). Already similar and already connected, domestic violence and international warfare are both multiply scaled and sited, and this underpins how they work. The diffusion of 'geopolitical' violences is achieved through their presence in the everyday, and 'intimate' violences persist precisely because they are rooted at other scales (Pain & Staeheli, *in press*). What this means for how we think about intimacy is that it stretches and reaches around its others – those who are non-intimates, the public, the global, the geopolitical – and turns inside-out. If intimacy has already encompassed and formed that which is wider and distant from it, any clear distinction between intimacy and geopolitics no longer makes sense.

### Domestic violence as warfare

The analysis here highlights the intimate in the violence of warfare, through the use of military themes to analyse private experiences of violence in the home. Some provisos are needed, as distinctions between war and peace are clearly hazy, military violence often permeates 'peacetime' (Cuomo, 1996), and militarism certainly shapes the spaces of 'peaceful' countries (Woodward, 2005). Nonetheless, there is a reason for this starting point for analysis, which I examine more critically at the end of this section. In the following sections, military and everyday violence are juxtaposed. The aim is not to draw direct parallels, but to illustrate

continuities across violences in different arenas, and to point to their integrated whole.

### *Methodology*

The data are from a study of the role of fear in domestic violence, carried out in collaboration with Scottish Women's Aid (Pain and Scottish Women's Aid, 2012). In 18 in-depth qualitative interviews, survivors documented their experiences of domestic violence. They included women and men in heterosexual and same-sex relationships, of varied age, social class and ethnic backgrounds. Names have been changed to preserve anonymity. A more detailed account of the methodology, including its basis in feminist and psychotherapeutic principles and practices, can be found in Pain (2014b). Below, I draw on the accounts of just two of the women interviewed. The dynamics they encountered were present throughout the wider sample, and are reflected in wider literature on domestic violence which are drawn into the analysis (although these literature do not adopt the same military terminology). Jennifer and Kim were selected for this discussion as they have similar experiences of the dynamics of abuse but occupy very different structural positions which, as I suggest towards the end of the paper, are a crucial part of the story of (intimate) war.

### *The emotional histories of violent relations*

Intimate war gains its devastating potential precisely because it does not concern strangers, but people in relationships that are often long term. Every instance of war and conflict involves complex and dynamic relations between states, militias, insurgents, civilians, and so on, and its historical roots underlie what happens in the present. In recent years the emotional foundations of international relations have begun to be exposed (Crawford, 2000; Pain, 2009; Sylvester, 2013). For feminist scholars, feelings and behaviours on the world stage are gendered in their production, enactment and effect: they mimic intimate relations, and arise from similar precedents of hegemonic masculine power (Eisenstein, 2007; Young, 2003).

In domestic violence, there is also a complex and powerful mix of emotions present, usually within a relationship that lasts months or years. People targeted may feel love for the perpetrator, or at least love's material traces which hold people in place; fear and hate; responsibility, duty and care towards other family members, especially children; and shame and pride in relation to the wider community. All of these may be present in turn, or simultaneously, or ebb and flow according to the shifting dynamics of abuse (Pain, 2014b). This first continuity in intimate war, then, is the historical development and radical shifts in affinities within relationships that frequently involve a more powerful partner who, over the course of the relationship, exercises control. Kim, a recent migrant to Scotland from Algeria, and Jennifer, a white British-born woman, started their relationships in very different circumstances. Each noticed their partner's anger early on, and found it inexplicable:

Kim: (I) decided to get married with him without really knowing him ... I had the family pressure to marry him and not having this relationship where I could know more about him .... To start with it wasn't physical ... it was just feelings, he was saying he was angry ... he made me feel guilty like I wasn't good enough ... he was very controlling.

Jennifer: It seemed really nice in the very early days ... It was OK until one quite early on ... Philip he kind of freaked out ... got very tense physically and then he kind of stomped right through the flat, and he was sort of he was breathing quite heavily ... I

thought the reaction was a bit weird, but my reaction was to feel sorry for him.

The dynamics of intimate war play out against this complex emotional backdrop. From this point on, intimate war involves a set of tactics that hold power because they work through emotional and psychological registers as well as physical domination. The conceptual labels I use to frame these dynamics below are more usually associated with the tactics of modern warfare. Each can only be discussed briefly here: but these are not individualised or unintended consequences of abuse, rather highly patterned and very common. As Sjöberg (2013) argues, the tactics of war are gendered, tending to be abstracted and clinical, often described using the masculine sexual imagery of penetration and control, and ignoring the messiness of outcomes and impacts on bodies: a scientific ideology that reflects the gendered Western dichotomies that facilitate control. While domestic violence perpetrators are often represented, and self-represent, as being out of control, their violence is often carefully restricted to certain people and places, and research suggests that the tactics deployed are equally deliberate (Hennessy, 2012; Stark, 2007; Williamson, 2010).

### *Shock and awe*

Kim: I just couldn't believe it and I didn't, I just couldn't believe it ... I felt hopeless, shocked, again like powerless ... I was this woman in control of her own life, I thought so, and here he was treating me as someone with no importance ... I wasn't prepared because I was scared, yes, far away from everybody.

Jennifer: I mean it's like you know you are walking down the street and you see someone hit by a bus or you know something terrible happens. It's like you stand there and you can't believe, you cannot believe that this is happening.

Despite the warning signs, when physical violence begins it come as a great shock. While such incidents come to be routine they are often still experienced as coming 'out of the blue' and feeling unpredictable. Interviewees describe feeling paralysed by shock and fear in these moments of violence. Displays of force are not only directed at the target of abuse, but frequently at doors, windows, furniture and possessions, pets and children, and sometimes through the perpetrator using their own body as a weapon, threatening or carrying out self-harm in order to intimidate or control the target.

Jennifer: He'd just flip out and he would start sort of smashing things ... sometimes he'd actually kind of either sort of hit himself or you know he would hit his head off the wall, he'd try to hurt himself, and like you know early on I think he did more of that and then as time went on he did less of that and it became more about hurting me. But you know when I was pregnant I remember we were sitting on the bed and talking and he just started freaking out and you know he'd be like flailing around and hitting, he'd pull the duvet off me and throw it across the room and then he hit me in the stomach, and you know he'd pretend that it was an accident and of course he hadn't intended to, but you know you don't hit somebody in the stomach when they're pregnant and it was just all very shocking.

I almost kind of didn't care what he did to me ... it was like the insult was what he was doing to all these really important things in my life, you know, my kids, my animals and my home you know.



Such displays function very effectively to instil fear, and to regulate the target's immediate and future behaviour, so that violence is not always necessary to retain tight control of the relationship (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Stark, 2007). These emotional displays, frequently repeated but targeted only in specific places such as the home or the car, can be read as controlled as well as controlling. This points to a second area of continuity in intimate war. Based on the use of overwhelming power and spectacular displays of force to intimidate and dominate the enemy and destroy the will to fight back, 'shock and awe' came into being as a military doctrine after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. In these displays of force, hypermasculinity is core; shock and awe is 'an act of national self-aggrandizement' and "awe' implies inferiority [of the victim]" (Flint & Falah, 2004: 1379–80).

### *Hearts and minds*

Intimate war involves far more than incidents of physical violence. For Kim and Jennifer and all but one of the other interviewees, violence continued for several years. Perpetrators in long term conflicts adopt strategies alongside physical violence to retain control of the people and places they are targeting. Counter-insurgency strategies frequently attempt to play through the emotions and psyches of civilians – in British and US military strategy, winning 'hearts and minds' (Egnell, 2010). This tactic works in two broad ways; first, by using occasional force to create a climate of chronic fear in which targets will do, or will appear to be doing, as the perpetrator demands (Pain, 2014b). But secondly, by making appeals to targets, using emotions as a weapon, and persuading them of the rightful nature of the actions being taken by the perpetrator, and contradictory displays of care. These two tactics – shock and awe, and hearts and minds – are obviously incompatible, and indeed in Iraq the second was swiftly adopted only after the first failed (Sepp, 2007).

Kim's husband refused to talk about his violence, or to consider any form of action or alternatives. She describes how he would suddenly switch from aggression to appeasing and comforting her at the moment she began to defend herself:

Kim: You couldn't talk to him, I couldn't talk to him, I couldn't make him realise the way he was doing, the way he was, what he was doing, I couldn't even say to him the baby's sleeping, it didn't matter ... I said "I know you are not happy, I am not happy neither" ... like then I was "another solution is live together but having separate lives" but no it couldn't happen this way neither, he didn't let me live this way ... he would do or say anything to make me feel bad about the way he was feeling.

Sometimes he had scratches on his face ... because he was doing trying to strangle me sometimes, and I was trying to hurt him, but everything was bad because I left mark on him ... and so after that he was always happy ... when I was defending myself. He'll come to me and hug me ... I didn't understand at that time because then he will fight and then he will come to calm me down and hug me.

Rachel: So did he calm down at the moment when you defended yourself?

Kim: Yes, yes.

Rachel: That's when he calmed himself down.

Kim: When I was just, oh yes.

Rachel: And he turned the situation around it sounds?

Kim: Yes and he had even the smile, like he was having this smile ... because he was winning.

### *Cultural and psychological occupation*

She becomes responsible for the emotional temperature of the relationship.

He monitors her growing tendency to blame herself.

The voice of her instinct is quietened.

She begins to speak in the language of the abuser.

Our response has been informed by his voice speaking through her.

We label the victim because she invites us to see her as responsible.

He will undermine her positive attributes.

He will expand her negative attributes.

He redefines truth and challenges her memory.

Intimacy compounds the effects of brainwashing.

Hennessy, 2012, 40–41.

In a powerful work based on many years' experience of counselling domestic violence perpetrators and their targets, Hennessy (2012) details the common strategies by which perpetrators use their intimate knowledge of their targets and manipulate their psychological and emotional responses so as to retain control. Such tactics are disarming. People targeted by domestic violence continuously take action to resist shock and awe tactics that characterise violent incidents (Enadner & Holmberg, 2008; Pain, 2014b), but longer term cultural and psychological occupation by perpetrators is more effective. The psychological effects of long term victimization work to hold targets in place, through intimidation, loss of confidence and self-doubt (Hennessy (2012); Herman, 1997; Stark, 2007; Williamson, 2010). It is no surprise that domestic violence has mental health impacts directly comparable to those of terrorism and war: female survivors show similar levels of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as combat soldiers (Herman, 1997), and high levels of depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. Perpetrators seek to alter their targets' perceptions of the situation, in particular by placing blame for the violence at the feet of the person suffering it (Jones, 2004; Stark, 2007). Many interviewees reported confusion and 'doublethink' in the face of the perpetrator's contradictory behaviours and self-justification (Herman, 1997; Pain, 2014b):

Jennifer: Well for years I thought it was my fault. Like a little bit of me, twenty percent of me was always saying you know "this is his fault you know, he's a fucking nutter really". But a big part of me thought it was my fault and that's because he told me it was my fault ... he had a lot of authority and for some reason I believed him.

I talked to my best friend through all of this, Patsy and you know she was very clear this is what's happening, "you are in a violent relationship aren't you Jennifer?" And but the thing is you know, what I had countering that, that thought process and that rational knowledge ... was him telling me that it wasn't [a violent relationship].

I was living with this constant watchfulness, anxiety, you know, self-regulation, and I would do anything to make sure that couldn't happen. But at the same time there was nothing I could

do to make sure it couldn't happen because it was so random ... at the time it was all about me improving my skills to stop that happening ... I was scared, but I was kind of pushing those feelings of fear down, because I think I feel like if I admitted to myself what was really happening and how bad it was, you know, and thinking "well what if he you know what if he kills me by mistake?" ... I was saying [to myself] ... "I'm going to call the police next time and I'm going to get the kids, put them in the car and go to my mum's house", but it just it just seemed impossible, to do those things just seemed impossible.

Occupation rarely only involves physical actions to dominate space and people. In the context of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, (Marshall, *in press*) describes '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', a tyrannical abuse of spatial and historical closeness. In this case, much of the violence of occupation is carried out through intimate spaces and practices, and again, these are also marshalled in resistance to occupation (Harker, 2011; Marshall, *in press*). As Williamson (2010: 1412) puts it, 'it is those abuses that cannot be seen that are most difficult to deal with'. Such psychological dynamics are supported by the wider sets of political and economic power relations within which many instances of war take place. The structural dependence of targets is often reinforced by controlling finances, monitoring time and behaviour, isolation from potential sources of support, and using the threat of violence to neutralize the possibility of resistance (Stark, 2007).

Hearts and minds, as a military strategy, is as contested as shock and awe in its ability to work long term to achieve the perpetrator's interests (Egnell, 2010; Sepp, 2007). Founded in contexts of colonial policing, it reflects a normative Western approach to legitimacy (Egnell, 2010) and, in common with just war claims (below), it involves coercive behaviour masked by a stance of ethical care (Dixon, 2009). It can easily become counterproductive (Egnell, 2010). Occupation, too, is always countered by resistance and activism among its targets (Harker, 2011; Marshall, *in press*; Pain, 2014b), while they work to protect the intimate – children, homes, bodies, minds – from the latest attacks.

### *Just war*

Just war theory presents a set of conditions and reasons in which war is considered justifiable, on the grounds of having a just cause, being committed by a just authority and with just intent. While just war has tended to be implemented as an absolute moral and ethical code, it is reflective of the religious, political and geographical contexts in which it is deployed (Flint & Falah, 2004; Megoran, 2008). Flint and Falah (2004) describe the US war on terror as justified by a 'prime morality', fighting for 'right' and 'good', that claimed the US was working for the benefit of individuals and humankind rather than committing a political act that sought to protect its own power. Sjoberg (2006, 150) adds to such critiques by identifying gender biases in the just war tradition, as leaders often co-opt gender in their 'justificatory stories' for wars and humanitarian interventions: 'states-as-men protect their homeland-as-women and masculinized soldiers protect feminized innocents'. For example, US President George Bush's speeches at the time of the US invasion of Afghanistan centred on protecting Afghan women and children from oppression, but such acts of war tend to compound women's suffering and bypass women's advocacy organisations. Such articulation of the masculinist protection that frames international security is a symbolic politics only, designed to garner support for aggression; domination is masked by an ethical

stance of good and care. Young (2003) reads this intimate protectionist logic in the post-2001 US security regime: 'you subordinate your actions to our judgment of what is necessary, and we promise to keep you safe', and 'you must trade some liberty and autonomy for the sake of the protection we offer' (Young, 2003, 226–8).

In domestic violence, perpetrators commonly position themselves as the protector of those they abuse (Hearn, 1996), and as the more ethical partner working for the good of the family; exhibiting 'ways of understanding, explaining and justifying their use of violence' that 'construct[s] a sense of themselves which incorporates their violences' Jones (2004, 268). They position themselves as the ethical partner even as they are using violence against family members. Perpetrators commonly justify their violence on a range of grounds – perceived lacks, failings or misdemeanours on the part of the person targeted, very often relating to gendered roles with regard to housework or childcare: the claim that the target has broken rules that have been set by the perpetrator, a perceived lack of loyalty, or their manner towards the perpetrator (Hennessy, 2012; Stark, 2007). For Kim, for instance, her husband's initial explanation of his violence was that she had another boyfriend before marrying him. Once their daughter was born, Kim's husband became very jealous of the attention she was giving her and he presented this as just cause for his violence. Kim's relatives, while not aware of the full extent of his violence, also supported his justification:

Kim: He knew that I was happy with my daughter, with my life ... but I was not ignoring him being a bad wife, I was just so happy having her ... and I was busy. But then you know my sister ... they were making me feel bad saying "well a man when he feels that you are too much with the daughter, loving her, and not giving him" then and I hated this, I hate this because he never gave me anything before.

While Kim knew that these were groundless excuses, she still felt guilty at some level and a sense of obligation to make the marriage work. However, the overriding factor that kept her in place for so long despite the violence was her husband's use of his migrant status to justify his violence. He told her that if they broke up he would have to leave the country; whether he realised or not, she later found this to be untrue. This allowed him to position himself as the victim, playing heavily on her sense of responsibility:

Kim: He married me with his real name but his passport shows that he is not legal here ... of course I didn't say anything about it because I was scared. And he was telling me if I say anything about it he would kill me ... When I left I made that decision to leave after maybe eight months ... His mother was crying saying that you know "he has been living in Scotland for so many years, he couldn't bear to go back to Algeria", and then I was the bad one because I made all this happen to him blah–blah ... I couldn't bear the situation because of me he was going to be deported.

Jennifer's husband not only blamed his violence on a whole range of causes, which she felt were inexplicable and unpredictable, but a strong part of his narrative was that his violence was measured and proportionate to her own crimes, not only having just cause but conducted within just parameters:

Jennifer: He constantly told me that if he wasn't controlling himself things would be a lot, lot worse, and you know I should give him a lot of credit for being so controlled ... He'd always turn it on to me you know, that I'd done something wrong. So say for example you know in the evening I would just have said

one little thing that was wrong, but then you know he'd justify his [violent] behaviour by saying that I'd been doing that all day. Or you know I'd been doing this for weeks and you know there's only so much he could put up with and so that's how he would justify his violence ... He had these expectations of my behaviour and I was always, just always failing.

Such arguments and reasons for violence are nonsensical if we believe in a common humanity. An ethic of care for others would ensure that those others are placed at the centre of the construction of the self (Jones, 2004), just as an alternative just war theory would place dialogue and empathy at its core (Sjoberg, 2006). While it is easy to dismiss the 'tyranny of justice' (Flint & Falah, 2004: 1395) in intimate war as simply the warped perception of perpetrators, it is highly significant because it is so commonly repeated across cultures and within otherwise isolated domestic settings. Just war narratives may appear nonsensical on the one hand, but on the other they have potency because they echo societal perceptions about violence. The tactics of intimate war capitalise upon the logic that its targets are in some way to blame.

#### *Collateral damage*

Despite one of the precepts of a just war being that innocents and non-combatants should not be harmed, civilians form the bulk of victims in all wars. Collateral damage is the military term given to unintended civilian casualties or damage to civilian property that arise from an attack on a 'legitimate' target. For anti-war scholars and activists, this is an intentional emotional tactic that is part of the broader effort of intimidation. In domestic violence, children hold a pivotal position. Domestic violence frequently begins or escalates during pregnancy and having a newborn baby. At this time, mothers may feel a new physical and emotional vulnerability, often compounded by financial insecurity and dependence, and couples spend more time at home (Radford & Hester, 2006). Both Kim and Jennifer described their partner's violence around their babies, and their sense of helplessness as they tried to protect their children:

Kim: When I had my child it was worse, I mean physically because I was so fond of her, having her in my arms all the time so it was easy for him to, how would you say, to kick me on my head because he was doing this, spitting on me that was his stuff, spitting on me.

Jennifer: I remember him screaming at me, ripping off the duvet, shaking me when I was breastfeeding or holding either small baby ... him screaming, smashing things and being violent towards me in the nursery when she was lying in her cot. I remember sitting on the bed holding my daughter tight in my arms when she was very little while he raged around the room, him seeing this and becoming infuriated by it, and him trying to take the baby from me. I remember the feeling of utter terror and panic.

Children are often invisible victims of war, whether within the household (Hester, Pearson, Harwin, & Abrahams, 2006; McGee, 1997) or between states (Hyndman, 2010; Loyd, 2009). As well as becoming the central focus of their mother's terror, children are seriously affected by witnessing and sometimes directly experiencing violence. Even where children are not physically harmed, many experts now view abuse of a parent as abuse of the child, because of the emotional damage it causes them (Hennessy, 2012; Radford & Hester, 2006). It is only relatively recently that these impacts have been fully recognised. Previously, they tended to be

viewed as incidental; even the term 'witnesses' places children as chance spectators or accidental victims, and perpetrators' narratives may concur with this. But this is no more the case than civilians being accidental collateral damage in acts of war. A growing body of evidence shows that children are sometimes used intentionally as a weapon in emotional warfare against the other parent (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Hennessy, 2012; McGee, 1997; Radford & Hester, 2006).

Kim: He described the way he was going to kill me in front of my daughter who was I believe three and a half or four ... for him to scare my daughter this way because then she was crying, begging him to not kill me.

Jennifer: She watched him physically attack me, she had nightmares for a week, she couldn't sleep, she wanted to sleep with me, she thought he was trying to kill me, she thought she'd seen her father trying to kill her mother.

Kim: I understood when he was saying that to me when the visa, when he'll get his visa, he maybe he will take my daughters away ... I was scared of this.

Jennifer: When he was angry, he never, ever responded to my appeals to stop, or be quieter, or talk later, because of the children ... But if someone came to the door, or the phone went, he sometimes calmed right down and spoke to them.

This was a common dynamic amongst the sample. Children's presence during incidents of violence seemed to interviewees to be not only acknowledged by perpetrators, but used purposefully (Pain and Scottish Women's Aid, 2012). Equally it is children's presence that stops the targeted parent running out of the house, making a scene, or calling for help, as she or he has to stay close to the children, to protect them and then care for them in the aftermath. Children are a key part of the emotional work of intimate war. The effects of war on children make the justificatory stories that perpetrators tell more nonsensical still. As in warzones, children in homes with domestic violence have higher rates of mortality, morbidity, and emotional and behavioural disturbances (WHO, 2013). Yet responsibility for children's security has for decades been placed with the targeted parent for remaining in a violent home, rather than outsiders holding the perpetrator fully accountable for children's welfare (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002).

#### *Rotating militarism*

He'd wanted to be an officer in the army, in the RAF [Royal Air Force] but he didn't pass the tests or something, or he just changed his mind. But he'd been in the cadets at school and marched up and down doing parades, and he got to be the guy who shouted at all the rest what to do. And when we first met I thought it was funny and I would say to him "show me that voice, let me hear that voice that you used when you were on parade drill and you were screaming at them". But he never would. But then he did, later he did use that voice on me. [pauses] And to have, to have this person that you are supposed to love screaming, pinning you against the wall and screaming at you from an inch away and purple with rage and screaming.

Jennifer.

The tactics of modern warfare can be read in the unlikely setting of suburban Scottish homes. How might we explain this? It is tempting to analyse these intimate uses of violence in light of geographical work on militarism. Militarism, the extension of

military influence into everyday civilian life, inflects civilian spaces and social relations (Woodward, 2005) and provides a way of making sense of 'the ways in which war is already in our peace' (Cowen, 2012). The shared intimate dynamics of domestic violence and international warfare might thus be understood on the basis that we all live in societies where militarism inflects not only intimate spaces (Cowen and Storey, 2013) but patterns of masculine aggression. Although I claimed to be examining domestic violence in the context of peacetime, Scotland, as part of the UK, has been continuously at war for the last century. And indeed, Kim's and Jennifer's husbands are not men untouched by militarism: Jennifer's husband had some military experience (above), and Kim's husband moved to Scotland as an adult from Algeria, a country with a recent history of violent conflict.

Such an argument, though it seems neat, is insufficient. First, many of the emotional and psychological dynamics and 'military' tactics discussed above can be found among men and women worldwide with no direct experience of the military or of war. Second, processes of militarization do not automatically create militaristic practices in the everyday. Bernazzoli and Flint's (2010, 158) study of US military communities, for example, challenges assumptions about 'the ways in which elite viewpoints are received, adopted, contested, or otherwise negotiated 'on the ground''. And third is Cowen's (2012) question of whether geographers' desire to expose militarism everywhere has moved us beyond binaries or simply recharges them: the framing of intimacy-geopolitics suggests exploding any spatial binaries around violence and fear (see Pain & Smith, 2008; Pain & Staeheli, *in press*).

However, the chief reason that militarism is an awkward concept in this context is because it might imply that domestic violence arises directly because of military activity elsewhere, or is inflected by its traces. The analysis of Jennifer's and Kim's accounts does not tell us that war leads to violence in the home. What it identifies is that violence in the home, whatever its causes, happens to mirror some patterns of warfare. Military tactics are not only military, but arise from more widespread cultures of masculinist aggression, protection and control (Sjoberg, 2013). The intimate may be saturated with geopolitics, as feminist political geographers have ably shown, but at the same time the geopolitical is preceded and forged by intimate relations. Through Jones's (2013) tracking of violence and destruction from the US, to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and back again as soldiers return home, she shows how intimate violence accompanies and follows war. But she also suggests that intimate violence has forged military violence itself over history (Jones, 2010): in 1869, John Stuart Mill condemned the Englishman's habit of 'wife torture' as establishing the pattern and practice for his foreign policy. These violences are similar and reciprocal, running in parallel and at times directly connected. There are fragilities and discontinuities between them, because they do not always take place in exactly similar situations and contexts, but both violences wind through the intimate-geopolitical complex.

### The uneven impacts of war

This spatial configuration is uneven. Structured by race, class and gender, the landscapes of victimization, survival, outcomes and aftermath are unequal. As I have argued elsewhere, as scholars we often display contradictory tendencies, distancing ourselves from sites of violence and any direct involvement in them, and downplaying the ways that (our) histories of power relations shape these objects of study (Pain, 2009). The white universalism that sometimes results can be read in mainstream analyses of domestic violence and other forms of conflict (Holmes, 2009; INCITE!, 2006). Black feminists have long argued that globalization, societal and

institutional racism, and political contexts of routine violence from the state or colonizing powers shape experiences of intimate violence (Crenshaw, 1991; Hooks, 2000; Hammer, 2003). This profoundly affects opportunities and resources to resist violence, to access formal and informal support, and to find security (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). In international warfare, these same geographically located intersecting structures of gender, class, nation, race, caste and religion determine who loses most (Giles & Hyndman, 2004): women, children, ethnic and religious minorities. Loyd (2009) has critiqued western activists' attempts to draw parallels for affective purposes between the effects of war in Vietnam and the United States, arguing that such comparisons erase the structural differences in the meaning of home and motherhood in the two contexts. Similarly, these differences trouble universalised accounts of domestic violence.

There are certainly commonalities in how violence does its work, as the analysis of Jennifer's and Kim's experiences shows; similar dynamics can be found in the accounts of women and men from diverse backgrounds. But common experiences of the dynamics of intimate war have different impacts in particular national and local contexts. The choice of these two women has been deliberate; while they are both mothers from middle class backgrounds, they occupy very different structural positions which are a crucial part of the ways that war works across intimacy-geopolitics. The outcomes and aftermath of war have been very different for the two women. Jennifer, retaining her stable, high income employment, was able to support herself and children after separating from her partner, to pay solicitor and court costs leading to a financial settlement allowing her to remain in the family home, and private therapy for herself and her children. She had good support from her family and friends once she eventually disclosed the abuse. These advantages were not available to Kim, an Algerian migrant to Scotland at the time of the research. Her husband used this status, and his own status as an undocumented migrant, to persuade and blackmail her to stay in the marriage. Though well educated and financially independent before marrying, after she left her husband she had no means to house herself and her children. Both her and her husband's families tried to deter her from leaving. A black and minority ethnic women's organisation provided refuge space and counselling, and helped Kim move on to live independently. Knowing the situation of other migrant women in Scotland, Kim considered herself lucky to qualify for benefits because she was awarded permanent residency. Of course these material trajectories are not the only aspects of leaving that matter; children's welfare is almost always the primary consideration for people in this situation, violence often continues into 'peace', and the emotional aftermath once war is over makes for another story. But appraisal of the economic and social consequences of leaving – future security in its widest sense – is an important part of the complex risk assessments undertaken as people plan from the rocky ground of violent relationships (Pain, 2014b).

As Cowen and Gilbert (2008) make clear, war always raises questions of citizenship: who is constituted as a social and political subject with rights and freedoms. Nationalism, ethnicity and gender intersect in conflict (Giles & Hyndman, 2004; Hays-Mitchell, 2008), and those whose claims to citizenship are contested are more at risk from all forms of gender-based violence (Cowen & Gilbert, 2008; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). In the aftermath of intimate war, women on lower incomes and ethnic minority women are more likely to be forced to migrate (Bowstead, 2014; Hans, 2004; Hyndman, 2000). Holme's (2009, 89) nuanced analysis underlines the need to 'explore the multiple contexts of violence in women's lives' if we are to challenge violences of whiteness, class, colonialism and heteronormativity alongside violence in the home. Consequently, while intimate violence is one



line of connection between women's security needs in different global contexts (Hoogensen & Rottem, 2004), these contexts demand that security needs cannot be universalised. More 'fluid context-based interpretations of gender' (Hudson, 2005, 155) that differentiate as well as connect these needs are vital.

## Conclusions

Framed by an understanding of intimacy-geopolitics that rejects scalar or spatial hierarchy, domestic violence and international warfare can both be understood as intimate war. As feminists have argued for decades, war is not separate from the private realm. Nor does it simply drip down into domestic space as it impacts on the men, women and children who live there. War is both driven by intimate dynamics and, in turn, exacerbates their violence. This is less a two-way flow, and more a single winding complex of violence; when the shared emotional and psychological dynamics of violence are exposed, intimacy turns inside out and is seen to be already a foundational part of the geopolitical. The brutal effects of globalization, colonization, race, class and gender are wound into this structure, shaping the presence and aftermath of intimate war.

This has implications for how geographers and others study violence, emotions and the intimate. There are many prospects for working from the intimate as a starting point. In so doing, political geographers might focus in more depth on what Butler (1997) has called the 'psychic life' of power relations, and extend psychoanalytical and psychotherapeutic approaches in our work, both to understand violence and to enrich research practices (Bondi, 2005). Firstly, this might be helpful in extending analysis of the intimate relations of violence, that seem at once everywhere and absent in analyses of the political, and in connecting apparently separate, differently scaled and situated forms of violence and insecurity. Exploring the role of emotions as political forces – if we are to go beyond broad statements about emotions inhabiting and being deployed by states and factions and apparently living outside of bodies – involves asking *whose* emotions are felt, deployed and mobilised, whose bodies they inhabit, whose bodies they damage, how the intended targets of violence marshal emotions to resist and act against it, and who is permitted to tell these stories. Secondly, this task requires serious ethical reflection and deep research engagements, drawing on feminist practice and recognising the value as well as limits of psychotherapeutic approaches as research tools (Bondi, 2013).

Resistance itself has also only been mentioned briefly in this paper, but is always present in intimate war (Flint & Falah, 2004; Pain, 2014b), and just as intimacy is deployed in oppression and violence, it also sustains resistance (Marshall, in press). As Fluri (2009) has argued, alternative geopolitics are formulated and actioned by a range of activist movements in warzones, often working against state and military violence through more informal and private spaces rather than the formal arena of politics. The intersection of such spatial accounts with analysis of emotions, resistance and activism in domestic violence provides another potential line of enquiry (Pain, 2014b). The relations between state responses to private and public violences also demand further interrogation (Phillips, 2008; Pratt, 2012); for example, the logic of masculinist protection has been drawn out in domestic violence policing in the US (Cuomo, 2013) and in family reconciliation in Cambodia (Brickell, 2014). Carefully situated work of this nature is able to attend to the different structural positions of those affected by violence (see also Holmes, 2009). Multi-scalar and gendered analysis of warfare not only illuminates ways forward for conflict resolution (Cockburn, 2004; Moser, 2001), but adds to recent debates around peace in political geography, particularly given Koopman's (2011b, 194) assertion that war and peace are not

separate states, but 'peace(s) are always shaped in and through the space and times through which they are made' (see also Brickell, 2014, who connects this analysis to domestic violence). Koopman (2011a) has also been a leading advocate of a pro-peace agenda in geography that involves scholars directly in resistance and social change, strategically deploying our own hearts and minds.

Thirdly, while in the last few years there have been more political geographies of the intimate, there are still important questions to ask about the relative absence of intimacy, and its relegation as less significant than the public realms and violences that are more often labelled as political. Asking why this separation persists also raises questions about the psychic lives of scholars. Intimate violence is confronting in a way that international violence is not for many in the west. Rather than being an object that is comfortably distant, it permeates Anglo-American families, colleges and universities and the wider power hierarchies that we and our institutions are part of. I end with the call, then, for a political geography that is comfortable with turning the analytical lens on our own lives, workplaces and scholarship.

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