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Visions of Peace in International Relations

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Abstract

In this paper, we engage with IR's recently rediscovered interest in peace and connect it with the visual turn in international relations. We move the field's focus on representations of war to representations of peace and develop the concept of peace photography. We suggest both understanding photography as a social agent promoting visions of peace and incorporating analysis of peace photography into IR's emerging agenda on peace. Our illustrative examples show that it is insufficient to think about and analyze visual images only in connection with representations of large-scale violence and inter-state war. In contrast, we provide an alternative approach which aims to broaden our understanding of (the study of) peace in IR. First, we explore a positive conception of peace at the individual and everyday level of analysis. Second, we advocate methodological pluralism by examining different analytical sites of peace photography. Third, we concentrate on the potentialities of peace photography in Colombia and Brazil – notorious spaces of everyday violence. We argue that the analytical perspectives developed in this paper have also relevance beyond our examples: if peace photography can be found here, than it can also be found elsewhere. Put differently, everyday visions of peace constitute particular instances of the international.

Keywords: peace photography, everyday peace, visual IR, Colombia, Brazil.

Visualizing Peace in Contexts of Violence

The "visual turn in IR" (Callahan 2015) – part of the discipline's aesthetic turn (Bleiker 2009; Sylvester 2009; Moore and Shepard 2010; Shapiro 2013) – is a peculiar one. On the one hand, it helps expand IR's toolbox (Bleiker 2015). On the other hand, however, these new tools are applied to a narrow range of issues, among which the study of war and violent conflict figures prominently (e.g. Campbell 2003, 2004, 2011; Mirzoeff 2005; Danchev 2009; O'Loughlin 2011; Van Veeren 2011; Apel 2012; Batchen et al. 2012; Kennedy 2012; Roger 2013; Kennedy and Patrick 2014). IR has yet to understand that visual representation and meaning assigned to such representation contributes to the construction of *everything* (Thompson 2013, 4), including peace (see Der Derian 2016). Indeed, although we still do not know *exactly* how images operate in the wider context of social relations, that they *do* operate in one way or another has long been established in the social sciences (Mitchell 1994; Bleiker forthcoming). There is no reason to assume that questions pertaining to peace would be unaffected by visual representation. The study of the relationship among peace, visual representation, and international relations would therefore seem to be an important ingredient of a research agenda on peace, peaceful adjustment, and peaceful change.

As Paul Diehl (2016) noted in his presidential address to the International Studies Association (ISA), the discipline of IR has largely addressed questions of war and violent conflict as its objects of study. While war and armed conflict have ever since been everyday practices in international politics – now and then, in the

beginning of the 20th Century when the field became institutionalized as an academic discipline – Diehl suggest that greater attention be paid to the study of peace (see also Richmond 2008). This call is well reflected in both the program of the 2016 ISA annual convention titled "Exploring Peace" and in a number of recent publications by eminent IR scholars explicitly dedicated to the study of peace (Wallensteen 2015; Goertz, Diehl, and Balas 2016; Kriesberg 2015; Richmond 2016). This literature includes a recent forum in *International Studies Perspectives* on the role of technology in peacebuilding (Firchow et al. 2017). What is missing from both Diehl's call and the emerging IR literature on peace is analysis of the ways in which visual culture may address peace, thereby potentially contributing to the emergence of more peaceful international relations.

In order to explore the connection between visual images and peace, we will further develop the notion of peace photography as explored in journalism studies (Allan 2011; Ritchin 2013) and IR (Möller 2017). More precisely, we will explore one specific dimension of such a photography, namely, the photography of everyday peace. While the notion of everyday peace has been explored recently in related literatures like geography (Williams 2013), peace education (Dutta, Andzenge, and Walkling 2016) and peace building (MacGinty 2014; Berents and McEvoy-Levy 2015), none of these authors conceptualize photography as an everyday practice of peace. By everyday peace, we mean the continuation of mundane, everyday actions on the quotidian level in spaces dominated by physical violence. By so doing, we will complement existing scholarship on the visual politics of peace and war and, ultimately, enhance IR's understanding of peace. Thus, we will take up Diehl's call for pluralizing the study of peace by exploring peace at the individual and quotidian level of analysis: the everyday. Whereas IR tends to focus on the state as its main object of inquiry, numerous studies have examined the everyday as a particular level of analysis for IR (Enloe 2011, Guillaume 2011; Shim 2016). Aiming at broadening the theoretical junctures through which international relations can be studied, this scholarship showed why and how an inquiry into the quotidian is central for IR. In this vein, a bottom-up analytics informed scholars to inquire the everyday spaces of, for instance, home (Shim 2016), leisure (Davies and Niemann 2002) and work (Kessler and Guillaume 2012) as sites of the international. By deviating from conventional, statist understandings of the referent object of peace, we will contribute to look beyond and below the state (cf. Diehl 2016). At the same time, we note both that "*quotidienneté* [everydayness] implies community" and that it "has a historicity that is embodied, shared and ever-changing" (Sheringham 2006, 360).

The visual turn in IR calls for multi-disciplinarity and the constructive combination of different methodological and analytical perspectives (Bleiker 2015; Shapiro 2013). In this paper, we will use both aesthetic approaches to the study of the international and peace concepts as developed in peace and conflict research to illuminate the interaction between visuality and peace. The case studies that we will present in the second half of the paper reflect current trends of peace and violence in South America, i.e., in social contexts characterized by high levels of violence (Mares 2012) including on the everyday level. We argue that if it is

possible to show the existence of peace photography in such contexts, then it can reasonably be assumed that such photography can also be shown to exist in social contexts characterized by lower levels of violence.[1]

We start this paper by reviewing recent approaches to visual representation in IR and criticize the discipline's focus on representations of inter-state war and large-scale violence. In a second step, we engage with current scholarship on peace journalism, in particular Ritchin's approach to peace photography. We note merits and limits of this work, in particular its lack of engagement with theoretical and conceptual discussions of such key concepts as war, conflict, and peace. In the following part, we elaborate on the problems emanating from the lack of a universally agreed understanding of peace, which cannot but shape any discussions of peace photography. We then zoom in on two photographic projects, one in Colombia and the other in Brazil, in order to elucidate photography's potentialities with regard to (visions of) everyday peace. In accordance with methodological pluralism demanded above, we acknowledge that these projects are radically different from one another just as are our analytical approaches. However, given photography's interpretive openness, its context-dependency, different degrees of visual socialization among viewers, and numerous forms of discursive designations of meaning, we argue that limiting our discussion to only one approach – and implicitly or even explicitly claiming its superiority to others – would misrepresent the potentialities inherent in peace photography. In this article, we are not aiming at establishment of a comprehensive typology of peace photography; rather, we are looking at such photography in one specific constellation: the coexistence of violence and peace or, in other words, islands of peace in circumstances otherwise dominated by violence.

Visual Studies, Violence, and International Relations

Both IR and film and photography studies are fascinated by violence. Indeed, the photojournalistic tradition, like IR, is intimately connected with war and violence, as the exhibitions *War/Photography: Images of Armed Conflict and Its Aftermath* (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, from 11 November 2012 to 3 February 2013) and *Conflict ▪ Time ▪ Photography* at Tate Modern, London (from 26 November 2014 to 15 March 2015) have shown. The first exhibition celebrated the tradition of photojournalistic representations of war and its immediate aftermath (Wilkes Tucker, Michels, and Zelt 2012). The second one visualized an extended understanding of the aftermath of violent social encounters and decoupled aftermath photography from immediate post-violence scenarios (Baker and Mavlian 2014). However, violence remained the main reference point. Both exhibitions reminded visitors of the strength and power of photojournalism and supported the idea

[1] With regard to constructivist approaches to national security, Peter Katzenstein wrote in 1996: "If the style of analysis and the illustrative case material can establish plausibility here, it should be relatively easy to apply this book's analytical perspective to broader conceptions of security" (1996, 11). In a similar manner, we hope that, if we succeed in establishing plausibility here, it should be relatively easy to apply our article's analytical perspective also to contexts characterized by lower levels of violence.

that photography is the main visual medium through which knowledge on war can be communicated and empathy with its victims generated.

Numerous scholars have critically engaged with photojournalism's focus on violence in light of, for example, the ethics of representation (see Grønstad and Gustafsson 2012), aesthetics and anxiety (Reinhardt, Edwards, and Duganne 2007), exploitation, re-victimization, and re-traumatization. Scholars also noted the seeming confirmation, in photography, of that which this medium (supposedly critically) engages with: war and violence. After all, photography, like film and television and in contrast to such older modes of visual representation as painting, exposes violence to millions of people, thus helping to naturalize violence in viewers' perception. Visual representation has been criticized for its alleged failure to change the conditions depicted (Sliwinski 2004; Edkins 2005) and to raise sufficient awareness among audiences to demand political change. The existing literature is both substantial and necessary to illuminate merits and liabilities of visual representations of human suffering and people in pain (Sontag 2003). Such representations are often said to be themselves acts of violence (Solomon-Godeau 1991; Bal 2007; Kennedy and Patrick 2014), *necessary* acts of violence (Hagopian 2006; Roberts 2014) but acts of violence all the same. This is not to suggest that photography is completely ignorant of peace. Photojournalism, for example, references peace but it does so negatively; it alludes to peace by depicting its absence. It shows the horror of war and its consequences for soldiers and civilians realistically – within the limits of photography – in order to visualize the need for peace. And it intervenes photographically in violent situations as invitation to others to intervene in the conditions depicted with different and politically more efficient means. However, because they are predicated on violence, these approaches do not unreservedly, if at all, qualify as peace photography – despite their many merits (see Linfield 2010).

At the same time, recent writings in the social sciences and humanities go beyond criticisms of existing photographic work (Strauss 2003) and explore alternative representations of violence aiming to "keep violence at a distance … in order to reserve respect for sufferers, but at the same time expose the structures and outcomes of violence" (Roberts 2014, 148). Furthermore, some studies elaborate on visual strategies with which to get viewers involved in the viewing experience in subject positions other than mere spectator (Alphen 2005) without implying that "participant witnesses" (Möller 2013, 36–55) who self-critically engage with the conditions depicted in a given image are automatically or necessarily peaceful witnesses. Indeed, in response to a viewing experience, viewers may wish to change the conditions depicted in a given image, but such a wish can be translated in progressive *or* regressive, violent *or* peaceful politics (Möller 2013, 192). What is largely missing from the literature in both visual studies and IR, then, is systematic engagement with the idea that photography's social role may be found in engagements with *peace*.[2] As noted above, photographers do engage

[2] From an IR perspective, Cynthia Weber writes briefly about the difficulties of referencing peace in photography and film (2011, 53).

with peace but their standard approaches to peace represent, and are dependent on, representations of violence; they are "in complicity" with violence (Sontag 1979, 12). This is so quite regardless of the intentions motivating photographic work, which may very well be pro-peace intentions. Inspired by Sontag's assessment that photography "is a way of at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening" (Sontag 1979, 12) we ask: can photography be "in complicity" with peace? Can photography be understood as a way of at least tacitly, if not explicitly, encouraging peace to keep on happening even in contexts of violence?

Exploring Peace Photography in the Context of Photojournalism and IR

Current research on peace journalism partly overlaps with our focus on peace photography; both explore possibilities of alternative perspectives on visualizing conflicts. For example, recent studies in the field of communication and journalism inspired by Johan Galtung's work (1986) on peace and war frames in news reporting about war examine how conflict situations are visually depicted in international news (Schwalbe, Silcock, and Keith 2008; Fahmy and Neumann 2012; Greenwood and Jenkins 2015). Shahira Fahmy and Rico Neumann (2012) empirically test the prevalence of peace and war frames in the news coverage of the 2008–2009 Gaza War. In their quantitative analysis of newswires, they found a range of visual patterns indicating a comprehensive reporting of the conflict, covering all sorts of issues. In contrast, Keith Greenwood and Joy Jenkins (2015) in their study of news imagery of the conflict in Syria confirmed a dominant visual frame on violence in news magazines.

However, there are a range of conceptual differences between peace journalism and our understanding of peace photography. Most obviously, peace journalism is primarily interested in textual rather than visual representation (Wolfsfeld 2004). Indeed, "almost everywhere" in journalism images are "considered secondary to the text" (Ritchin 1999, 99). Furthermore, scholarship of peace journalism tends to examine, often in quantitative terms, the mere arithmetic of balanced news coverage by testing a pre-given and unquestioned set of criteria and counting the number of images containing a visual reference to either peace or war. While the role of producers of news (journalists, photographers, editors and newswires) is scrutinized in view of reality's accurate representation (verisimilitude), it is not clear why, for instance, depictions of victims in news photography are *per se* a visual frame of war or, for that matter, peace journalism. Imagery of civilian suffering, for example, reflects a war frame for Fahmy and Neumann (2012) whereas Schwalbe, Silcock, and Keith (2008) see in these pictures a contrast to visual frames of military activity. In contrast to the prevailing focus on language in peace journalism, Stuart Allan (2011) in his pioneering article explicitly proposes to work towards peace photography. He suggests rethinking "photographic form, practice and epistemology" (Allan 2011, 163) to leave behind generic binaries of "us/them" or "good/evil." It is Ritchin (2013), however, who

provides a fuller elaboration on the notion of peace photography, demanding in connection with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the Arab Spring that "some thought [be] given to how photography can be helpful to those trying to move beyond the conflicts that were so vividly depicted":

> There are enormous numbers of photographic books and exhibitions on the conduct of war, but might we begin to pay equivalent attention to the multiple, perhaps less visually spectacular, efforts that go into the making of peace? … Why don't we have a more developed photography that explores in some depth the move from pain to its resolution, creating reference points for those striving to move forward, rather than continually searching for, and dwelling on, the cataclysm? (Ritchin 2013, 122–123)

Ritchin also answers these questions. First, "today's [1999!] overheated media climate" does not favor publication of "quieter, more empathetic images" (1999, 27) such as the ones peace photography may require. Secondly, he argues that professional photojournalists are "notoriously better at depicting misery than envisioning happiness" (Ritchin 2012, 66). However, he neither explains what he means by "better" nor acknowledges the extent to which any understanding of "better" or "worse" is derived from photojournalistic discourses, assigning meaning to photographs. Thirdly, "attempts at peace and rebuilding are usually considered much less photogenic" by picture editors than war and destruction (Ritchin 2013, 62). Again, "being photogenic" is a social construction still mostly understood in terms of – and limited to – "great shots" inspired by the photojournalistic tradition. The dominance of this tradition results in "a conformity … that constricts possibility" (Ritchin 2013, 51). War photography, thus, is to some extent a social construction and, as such, potentially subject to change. Likewise, peace photography depends for its very emergence on designations of meaning in photographic discourses (in photography studies and IR) assigned to selected bodies of images. Thus, our paper is a contribution to the emergence of peace photography and an attempt at writing peace photography as a distinct category of photographic work and analysis into existence – not as an exclusively academic endeavor but as one with notable implications for international relations.

Ritchin presents several photographic projects that he regards as peace photography. However, neither does he pay close attention to the question of "the text 'in itself'" (Couldry 2000, 77), i.e. how to move from first-person assumptions to generalizable knowledge, nor does he explain what he means by "peace" or "violence." His approach, as inspiring as it is, is not a systematic one to peace photography, informed by theoretical discussions on peace and violence in IR, in search of a body of photographic work that could meaningfully be referred to as peace photography (in contrast to other bodies of work that could not). Thus, what is required in addition to an enumeration of interesting projects is an approach that is informed by concepts of peace and violence in the social sciences. What such an approach might look like is suggested in IR work on aftermath photography, criticizing such photography for its lack of future-oriented perspectives (Möller 2017). Aftermath photography understands the violence preceding the aftermath as the event that

photography should represent and critically engage with. Such photography is important, among other things, because it shows that for many people the experience of violence is not over once physical violence has stopped; it continues as political discrimination, social marginalization, traumatic memories, and so on (see, for example, Torgovnik 2009). It also offers important avenues for the visual-discursive renegotiation of past violence (Lisle 2011; Roberts 2014, 95–120). However, aftermath photography keeps returning to past violence as its main visual reference point rather than moving forward from the aftermath to peace or to peace as a potentiality. It does not understand the aftermath of violence as an event in its own right, visualization of which may help stabilize the situation and prevent violence from recurring. The critique of aftermath photography also includes engagement with the notions of generalizability, universality, and causality in connection with peace photography (see Möller 2017, 322–325) which we will return to below. Furthermore, it acknowledges that peace can be visualized, not only *after* violent conflict but also "*during* violent conflict" (Möller 2017, 316) – an idea that we will discuss in more detail in what follows.

Photography and Everyday Peace

Galtung's classical work helps illuminate difficulties pertaining to feasibility, generalizability, and universality inevitably emerging in connection with a more differentiated approach to peace photography. It is relevant also because peace photography is derivative of peace: concepts of peace are the condition of possibility for peace photography concepts. Galtung-inspired work understands peace as "*absence of violence of all kinds*" (Galtung 1996, 31) including absence of structural violence, cultural violence, and even intended violence. Dietrich Fischer (2007, 188) adds that, in addition to the absence of direct violence, structural violence (either caused by economic or political power) and cultural violence, "the presence of mutually beneficial cooperation and mutual learning" appear to be integral components of a comprehensive understanding of peace. This is one approach to peace among others and, arguably, a rather utopian one. If peace does not (yet) exist or cannot exist, then peace photography cannot exist, either – at least as long as we stick to the idea that lens-based photographs "are inextricably linked to the real world" (Thompson 2003, 3). There is need, thus, to apply a slightly less ambitious understanding of peace that can be operationalized easier.

Peace photography following an understanding of peace as absence of *direct* or *physical* force would seem to be less utopian. However, would it also be more manageable photographically? If the absence of physical violence would be the crucial standard for establishing a given photograph as a peace photograph, then the vast majority of photographs produced at any given moment including the most trivial ones would, due to the absence of depictions of physical force, qualify as peace photographs. Such an extended understanding of peace photography would not make much sense: when (almost) every photograph is a peace photograph, then no photograph is a peace photograph. Thus, while one approach to peace – peace as absence

of all kinds of violence – is utopian and cannot therefore be photographed, the other approach to peace – peace as absence of direct violence – can be photographed but the resulting photography would, in most cases, be irrelevant.

Furthermore, the absence of physical forms of violence does not prove the absence of other forms of violence inherent in the structures or conditions depicted. For example, Ritchin seems to regard an aerial view of the World Trade Center taken months before 11 September 2001 as a peace photograph: "the Towers as if in heavenly repose – a peaceful reflection on what was no more" (Ritchin 2013, 98). This interpretation, however, is unlikely to be shared by those people for whom the Twin Towers symbolized economic inequality, North-South divide, arrogance of power, and forms of institutionalized exploitation inherent in global politico-economic structures and, thus, structural violence. Photography, as Ritchin notes, "is highly interpretive, ambiguous, culturally specific, and heavily dependent upon contextualization by text and layout" (1999, 72) and this poses severe obstacles to any approach to peace photography claiming *global* relevance. A different understanding of peace may understand positive peace as "presence of activities to bring relief for past or present violence and to prevent future violence" (Fischer 2007, 188). The issue here is not relief of past or present violence or prevention of future violence but merely *activities aiming at* relief of violence and prevention of future violence. Such activities can be photographed in connection with reconciliation, mediation, peace processes, peace negotiations, truth commissions, and forms of restorative justice. Indeed, photographs of such activities are taken all the time but these images are not (yet) discursively constructed as peace photography.

The above discussion clarifies that, in the absence of a universally agreed-upon understanding of peace, there can be no universally agreed-upon peace photography concept, either. For example, photographs showing the everyday dimension of peace will inevitably be different from photographs aiming to visualize peace among nations. Indeed, different representations of peace can be radically different from one another. What appears as a depiction of peace in one context is not necessarily regarded as a representation of peace in other contexts. Yet, the variety of different photographic approaches to peace is a merit, not a liability. Tension emanating from both different interpretations of the same image and different representations of the same subject – peace – can result in fruitful and constructive dialogue, as long as it is not connected with claims to interpretative superiority. Indeed, one potential that peace photography inheres is change of the discursive patterns within which politics, including the politics of peace and war, are negotiated, moving the focus from war to peace.[3] Thus, by alleviating societal trauma and facilitating collective memory, peace photography can be seen as an agent of change and as a part of "a necessary cultural response to the gloom-laden chorus that

[3] Peace photography faces the same limitations all forms of photography face, e.g., dependence on the positionality of the image maker, embeddedness in (discursive) power relations, partiality of representation, context and layout dependence, situatedness of the viewing experience, and so on.

there is no alternative to the current doctrine of pre-emptive war and the politics of fear" (Mirzoeff 2005, 25). However, images do not operate on observers in isolation; they are always embedded in larger political, social, and cultural configurations. It is for this reason that we refrain from causal claims between peace and photography in this paper. Instead, we understand the connection between peace and photography episodically, i.e. as happening "in a multilayered, concurrent, loosely structured arrangement" (Taylor 2003, 274). We think peace and photography together, not because they are causally connected to one another but, rather, owing to their "placement either in space or time" (Taylor 2003, 274). Furthermore, rather than constructing a typology of peace photography, we analyze photographs in one specific constellation – *everyday peace in times of violent conflict*. In line with the above mentioned understanding of peace as activities aiming at relief of violence, we conceptualize photography as an everyday practice of/for peace. With this, we complement the notion of everyday peace by shedding light on the role of photography in the formation of peace (Berents and McEvoy-Levy 2015; MacGinty 2014; Williams 2013).

By everyday peace in times of violent conflict we refer to what Simon Dell calls the "register" or "the temporality of the everyday" in contrast to "the everyday overturned" (2010, 46) – the continuation of ordinary, quotidian life in circumstances dominated by physical violence. Dell explores this temporality in the context of Spanish Civil War photography. Visual representations of ordinary lives certainly served political purposes. However, as Susie Linfield (2010, 187) notes, by showing people who "have maintained a sense of themselves, of their world, of their place in the universe," such images also refused to depict people as victims and acknowledged that even in a time of war, victims are never *only* victims; violence is never *only* violence. This is another potential of peace photography: without changing overall political configurations, it can help the people depicted maintain or build a sense of themselves. And, as shown in the context of the Spanish Civil War, it can help foster solidarity (Brothers 1997; Dell 2010, 46). In the remainder of the article, then, we want to apply these trains of thought to two different bodies of photographic work because, in contrast to generalization, "conceptualizations" (such as peace photography) "are best developed in the context of specific historical episodes" (Shapiro 2004, 35). Therefore, we will zoom in on two such episodes rather than making broad general claims. We explore different analytical sites and modalities of peace photography (cf. Rose 2016), highlighting the image itself in terms of black and white versus color photography (*Mirar de la vida profunda*) or the conditions of production (*Imagens de povo*). In order to grasp this photography analytically, we follow Michael Shapiro's distinction between "macropolitics" and "micropolitics." The focus of this photography is not on "macropolitics" – war strategy and policy in Shapiro's analysis, "the everyday overturned" in Dell's terminology, political or drug-related violence in the present paper – but, instead, on "micropolitics" – "the individual and communal coping with danger and loss" (Shapiro 2009, 137).

The Everyday Dimension of Peace in *Mirar de la Vida Profunda*

Quick consecutive developments in autumn 2016 made international headlines drawing global attention to the prolonged conflict in Colombia. These included the narrow rejection of a peace agreement in a national referendum, which the Colombian government and the country's largest left-wing rebel movement the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) negotiated for years, the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos shortly after the rejection and the announcement of the Colombian government to both continue the peace process with the FARC and enter into formal peace negotiations with the second largest rebel group the National Liberation Army (ELN). While the broader implications of these developments are rather uncertain, they point to persistent efforts to sustain a momentum for peace in a country, which is characterized by one of the longest-running conflicts in the world. For since the mid-1960s the Colombian government is fighting a war against different groups including left-wing guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries and drug cartels, which are also partly fighting each other. According to a report of Colombia's National Centre for Historical Memory (NCHM) about 220,000 people died between 1958 and 2012 and 5.7 million people became internally displaced as a result of the decades-long conflict (NCHM 2016).

Memory of the conflict is, not surprisingly, deeply connected to Colombians' experience of violence. This everyday experience has been the guiding theme of Jesús Abad Colorado's work, one of Colombia's most recognized photographers of the conflict. Colorado (2015) recently published the photo book *Mirar de la vida profunda/A gaze at life profound*, which provides an overview of his witnessing of Colombia's conflict during the last 25 years. In this time, he has built a visual archive, a photographic memory of the conflict to document the stories and histories of the people affected. Having himself experienced violence – he was kidnapped twice in 1997 and 2000 and his family was forced to flee their home in 1960 following the murder of his grandfather and an uncle – Colorado reimagines the perspective of the victims in his photography.

The following paragraphs discuss Colorado's way of showing Colombia's experience of violence in *Mirar de la vida profunda*. Particular attention will be paid to how he makes sense of the conflict through photographs, what his images do as a result of his way of depicting and, ultimately, outlines why his work, in contrast to other recent documentations of violence in Colombia (in particular Stephen Ferry's 2012 *Violentology: A Manual of the Colombian Conflict*), can be considered a photography of peace. In this way, the following discussion provides a significant departure from current studies of the Colombian conflict in the wider field of IR (cf. Camacho and Rodriguez 2012; Cuesta and Alda 2012; Ugarizza and Craig 2012).

Mirar de la vida profunda begins with detailed statements by Colorado (2015, 10-12), Álvaro Sierra Restrepo (cited in Colorado 2015, 13-24), a fellow journalist and photographer, and Carolina Ponce de León (cited in Colorado 2015, 25-67), an art critic and curator. In the opening remarks, Colorado describes how he tries to balance what he calls "the horror" that he documented and the efforts of the people affected to defy that horror. As his aim is to show the faces and names of the victims to a society that, he claims, often

disregarded their testimonies, Colorado's photography is not only documentary but also political. In other words, the subject of change and social transformation resides in his artwork.

The book consists almost entirely of black and white photographs, which are arranged into segments depicting successively everyday fighters of the conflict (Colorado 2015, 71-99), displacement and return of civilians (Colorado 2015, 101-127), grief (Colorado 2015, 129-157), vanished education (Colorado 2015, 159-171), violated landscapes (Colorado 2015, 173-185) and actions for/towards peace (Colorado 2015, 187-199). As the segments follow a particular sequence – showing the human costs of the conflict parties' violent actions, but also the initiatives to withstand fear, pain and violence – the photographs tell a story about human despair and, more importantly, resilience in daily life.

Colorado's decision to capture his subjects in black and white is worthwhile to follow in-depth, in particular with regard to the effects it unfolds (for another photographic enactment of the Colombian conflict see Ferry 2012).[4] It also points to central questions which were raised above: How to represent photographically that which does not exist? How to represent "peace" in the absence of a globally shared understanding of what is meant by peace? How can a photography of peace move beyond merely depicting the absence of war in order to alleviate societal trauma and facilitate collective memory?

In the first segment of the book (Colorado 2015, 71-99) he depicts the members of the parties, which are at war with each other: guerrillas from the ELN, paramilitaries of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) and servicemen of the country's armed forces. What these portrayals have in common is their sight on the ordinary subject, the everyday fighter in the conflict. It is not the respective elite of each war party – the leaders, generals and commanders –, which is the focus of Colorado's depiction, but the foot soldier, the common fighter and the simple combatant. By juxtaposing army soldiers and rebel forces in one page (e.g. Colorado 2015, 80-81; see Figure 1), Colorado is blurring the line between the enemy parties. While the opponents and their goals are worlds apart, no difference between them is visible in these pictures. Instead of emphasizing distance, Colorado highlights sameness. The effects of narrowing difference, also enacted in other segments of the book, is arguably enhanced through the monochromaticity of his black and white photography.

[4] As one reviewer rightly pointed out, black and white photography has a long historical tradition in photojournalism (and certainly beyond) and, if one thinks of for instance Sebastião Salgado's work, is also subject of controversial debates on the aestheticization of violence and human suffering. While we are aware of these rich debates on the politics of aesthetics in documentary photography, we pursue a more modest goal: to add for consideration, in this particular context, the possibility of black and white photography as *one* modality of peace photography among many others.

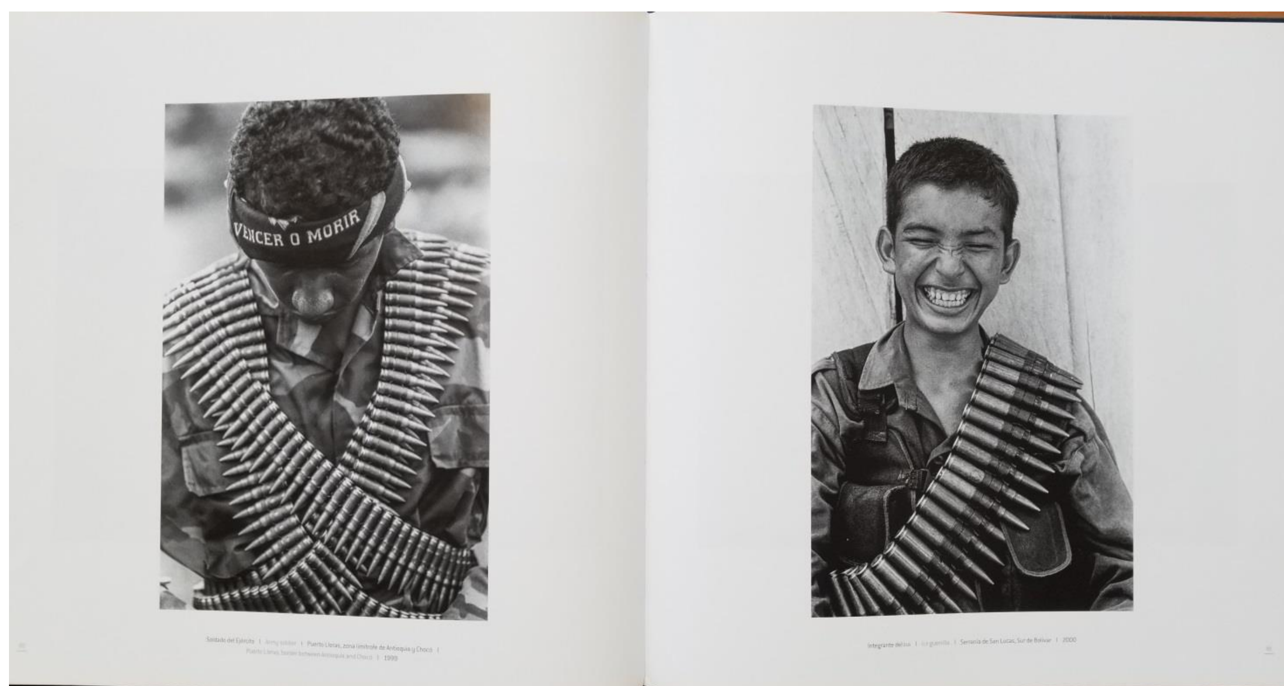

Fig. 1. Juxtaposition of soldier (left) and rebel (right) in *Mirar de la vida profunda*.
Source: Photograph reproduced with permission of Jesus Abad Colorado.

Furthermore, Colorado's black and white juxtaposition of pictures taken from different moments in time – for instance showing side by side the displacement of people in 2005 and 1997 (Colorado 2015, 104), two funeral processions in 1998 and 2003 (Colorado 2015, 155) and the aftermaths of the killing of peasants and soldiers in 2005 and 1993 (Colorado 2015, 144-145) – ultimately works to level temporal difference in/of these depictions. In this way, the monochrome juxtaposition approximates temporality by claiming that what has happened as a result of conflict is a thing of the past, a matter for memory.

At some point in the book Colorado is asked by Restrepo why he does not use color photographs. Colorado responds,

> There are some color photographs in the book. But black and white is more respectful. It is more apt for memory. Color tends to be aggressive in situations of violence. Sometimes there's desire to not see that which assaults, because it also offends. It assaults human dignity. It's morbid. Black and white serves to document what has happened (Colorado 2015, 22).

Elsewhere later in the book he quoted as saying:

> I prefer to present nearly everything to do with war and pain in black and white, out of respect and a sense of aesthetics. It is the character that I learned to see over the years, where color is often annoying. It's also a more universal way of talking about the events that have to do with our memory. In portraits of people, I think black and white has more personality and allows

> for more creativity. Sometimes I work in color, but that has to do with the richness of the places I visit (Colorado 2015, 38).

These explanations are remarkable for several reasons. First, Colorado engages what Mark Reinhardt (2007) in regard to images of human suffering calls "the limits of representation" in a particular way. Whereas these limits refer to images showing that which cannot or should not be shown, such as torture, atrocity and killing, for Colorado it is not necessarily the depiction of the violent acts themselves which constitute the limits of representation but, rather, the modality of coloration. As he mentions, the desire not to see that which assaults, that is extreme violence, is fueled by its colored illustration.

What becomes clear, and is important for addressing the guiding questions of the paper, is that, second, Colorado is thinking the nexus of presence and absence that underlies visualizations of violence – what (not) to capture and show and how – by means of black and white photography. In addition to not seizing moments of graphic violence such as mutilated bodies, it is precisely through the absence of colors that he intends to alleviate pain and suffering, bringing instead to presence people's stories, dignity and the collective memories of local communities. So rather than understanding peace in terms of depicting merely the absence of all kinds of violence including physical force – as mentioned above, an undertaking which would render the notion of peace photography either utopian or meaningless – Colorado is looking beyond violence, exploring avenues to prevent conflict, heal wounds and rehabilitate affected communities through his photography. In this vein, Colorado's photography implies a positive conception of peace (cf. Fischer 2007; Ritchin 2013) as the recovery of collective memories and testimonies through his work became also part of communal initiatives and efforts aiming at the conflict's documentation and reconciliation in Colombia (Colorado 2015).

As a result, Colorado's black and white photography stands in stark contrast to other recent photographic work on the conflict in Colombia; in particular Ferry's *Violentology* (2012), which does not only feature cruel images of death, violence and mutilation, but also shows them in full colors. As *Mira de la vida profunda* engages that which is (not) there and that which should (not) be seen, it challenges a discourse of showing and seeing violence by highlighting everyday experience of life, not death, in the conflict. In this vein, Colorado carries out the necessary step from representing violence to representing peace. *Mira de la vida profunda*, hence, reveals a photography of peace in that it articulates restraint and an impetus of overcoming pain, resisting a politics of visual stigmatization. People are not reduced to mere victims of violence, nor does he foreground depictions of death, which are rather common sights in war photography. After all, Colorado invites the viewer to take *A gaze at life profound*. Put it in his own words, and responding to those who refer to him as a war photographer, "I am a photographer of life; if I have documented the war, it is because I deeply treasure life" (Colorado 2015, 32).

Islands of Peace: *Imagens de Povo*

While the previous discussion highlighted an *individual* photographer's vision of peace staying close to the site of the image itself, we now explore the potentialities of *participatory* projects for peace photography in the context of Rio de Janeiro. Our emphasis here is on the conditions of image production. As pointed out, (photography of) peace has a strong everyday dimension: a sense of peace may emerge from the continuation of everyday activities in conditions otherwise dominated by or exposed to violence. The very idea of being permanently exposed to violence is, however, somewhat misleading: a sense of peace and violence can coexist, as seen in Colorado's photography. To be sure, the omnipresence of violence – awareness that violence may erupt at any moment – is one reason for "the loss of peace of mind" Janice Perlman observed among residents of those communities in Rio de Janeiro affected by violent structures composed of drug gangs, police, and militias (2010, 189). However, *islands of peace* may be found in environments otherwise characterized by violence; they can be found in both time and space; and they can be photographed.

In order for such photographs to qualify as peace photographs, however, additional knowledge on the part of viewers about the overall contexts is required: "Everydayness lies in practices that weave contexts together; only practices make it visible" (Sheringham 2006, 360). For example, in the present context it is helpful to be aware of both city policies of acquiescence to violence exerted by the police and/or criminal, drug-related interest groups and international trends in drug trafficking beyond the purview of the city authorities (McCann 2014). *Without* such knowledge, photographs of islands of peace may appear trivial; *with* such knowledge, they may appear to be peace photographs. In order to appreciate the photography project discussed below, it is also useful to be cognizant of the history of revolutionary art in Latin America with its emphasis on democratization, social transformation, and dialog between artists and audiences (see Craven 2015). As David Craven (2002, 168) explains, audiences are malleable, fluid, heterogeneous and always in the process of becoming. Revolutionary art in Latin America went beyond "already existing audiences" and aimed at "the reconstitution of the audiences in different terms." It envisaged new art forms: art forms derived from existing ones, and thus recognizable by ordinary spectators, but going beyond existing ones; new art forms for new audiences with new attitudes not only to art but to society in general. Indeed, "aesthetic revolutions" (Erjavec 2015) always point beyond art and aim to transform, rather than merely represent, the world. This, too, is useful to know if one is to fully appreciate the below photography project as what Sheringham (2006, 365) calls "an act of individual self-inquiry concerned with *art de vivre*" in adverse circumstances.

Before transformation comes representation. In the context of Rio de Janeiro, that which is to be represented is life in an urban environment exposed to violence (see United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013). Violence is a permanent feature of the city; it cannot be reduced to homicides, which are currently

increasing again in Brazil,[5] and other forms of physical violence. Rather, its structural dimension appears to be the more pervasive one (Perlman 2010). It can most clearly be observed in the *favelas* – poor, marginalized, popular communities[6] – regardless of gentrification and pacification in selected communities. This marginalization reflects empirical socio-economic developments but also representations in diverse media constructing popular communities as marginal, violent, and different from the rest of the city (Freire-Medeiros 2013; Jaguaribe and Lissowsky 2014, 92–102). However, participatory photography projects initiated by artists but involving ordinary citizens engage in deconstructing standard patterns of representation. The conceptual approaches underlying such projects can briefly be summarized as follows:

First, participatory photography projects are collaborative efforts linking photographers with their subjects in such a manner and to such an extent that the subjects *become* photographers. The resulting photographs are *self*-representations, transforming people who have formerly been represented by others (and often, especially in the media, in ways they do not find appropriate) into agents of their own image (Möller 2013, 99–123). However, dissemination channels are complex and often include editorial decisions outside the purview of the photographers. Participatory projects also have to compete with a huge number of photographs, including by prominent photographers (Testino 2009), catering to rather traditional views. Although participatory photography does not automatically influence perception patterns, the resulting photographs invite others to rethink standardized attitudes to the popular communities and their inhabitants. They expand the visual-discursive frame within which the city and its residents are permanently constructed. Participatory projects reflect "visual inclusion," and such inclusion occurs "by means of the technical appropriation of the image by the young people of the favelas; by the circulation of these images in the communities so as to allow favela dwellers to portray themselves in a manner distinct from the usual clichés of the media; and by attempting to give the general public images of the favela made by the favela inhabitants themselves" (Jaguaribe and Lissowsky 2014, 95). Secondly, participatory photography projects also have a performative element which is often ignored in photographic discourses with their typical emphasis on "icons" (see Hariman and Lucaites 2007). The resulting image is only a part of the project and not always the most important one. In many projects, the process of a photograph coming into being is more important for the participants than the resulting image. This process of becoming involved in the project as co-artists is *by itself* an important experience for the participants. The production process of a participatory photograph – the process in the course

[5] See https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/nov/02/genocide-brazil-black-youth-day-of-the-dead-extra-resonance (Accessed 10 November 2017).

[6] As numerous writers have observed, the translation of "favela" with "slum" is misleading. The aggregate term "favela" is also problematic as it lumps together areas with hugely different living conditions. Every distinction between "favela" and "the city" obscures the interrelationship between different parts of the city; obscuring this interrelationship is precisely one ingredient of the ongoing marginalization of popular communities. The term "popular communities" is Perlman's (2010). See also McCann (2014) and Meade (1997).

of which an idea becomes a photograph, a subject becomes an artist – is as important as, or even more important than, the resulting image; such a performance refers to itself; it is of intrinsic value (see Möller 2013, 99–123).

All of the above can also be said with regard to *Imagens de povo*, a project in Complexo da Maré. Maré, belonging to Rio's largest popular communities, is a conglomeration of "low-lying, flood-prone neighborhoods" (McCann 2014, 36) located in the city's Zona Norte. Neighboring the main campus of Rio's Federal University and the international airport, Maré is sandwiched between two major traffic arteries connecting the Baixada Fluminense (lowland) and the airport with the city center. The complex, formerly notorious for drug-related violence and "pacified" in 2014 and 2015 with ambivalent results,[7] originally featured canals and homes on stilts. Landfills and more solid structures replaced these unhealthy living conditions in the 1980s. NGOs operating in Maré succeeded in preparing local residents for "college entrance exams and public employment exams," as a result of which the "number of local residents winning coveted spots in public universities and white-collar civil service jobs rose dramatically" (McCann 2014, 167).

Imagens de povo, initiated in 2004, is a project run by the NGO Observatório de Favelas (founded in 2001) and follows standard patterns underlying participatory photography projects (see Delgado 2015) including involvement of professional photographers teaching local residents photography techniques. The project develops activities in the areas of education, communication and art. It aims to facilitate access to the photographic language in order to strengthen identity bonds and to train and promote documentary photographers who are seen as potential "multiplyers [multiplicadores] of the acquired knowledge, capable of developing authorial work [trabalhos autorais] [and] recording popular spaces, valuing cultural stories and practices inside their communities." The project promotes photographs *by* ordinary people *of* ordinary people *for* ordinary people. By focusing on documentation, research, training and integration of popular photographers into the labor market, it goes beyond representation and addresses one of the fundamental problems for residents of popular communities: social exclusion, in particular exclusion from the labor market (Perlman 2010, 155–156). By "recording the everyday life of the favelas with a critical perspective that takes into consideration respect for human rights and local culture," *Imagens de povo* "combines photographic techniques with social issues." The photographic language thus promoted "becomes an instrument for accessing and mapping different cultural and social expressions in the territories where they reside, thus increasing the possibilities of diffusion of new images from these sites."[8] The focus here is on peace in times of violence and on the lived experience of ordinary people refusing to be visually stigmatized as victims of violence. In light of the circumstances in which they are taken, these pictures qualify as peace photographs: their very triviality

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[7] See http://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-politics/pacification-force-to-stay-in-complexo-da-mare-6-more-months/# (accessed 9 February 2016).

[8] For all quotations, see http://www.imagensdopovo.org.br/en. This and the document quoted in footnote 10, accessed on 9 November 2017, are translated from the Portuguese by Giovanna Sanchez Nieminen. See also http://of.org.br/projetos/cultura-projetos/imagens-do-povo.

or everydayness signifies peaceful adjustment. Additional knowledge, derived for example from media and film representations, helps strengthen this signification.[9]

Crucially, the program is not only about representation. Rather, Observatório de Favelas aims to establish "Rights to the City, based on a redefinition of the favelas, also in the context of public policy." Such redefinition aims at social transformation – transformation beyond representation. Indeed, "to be effective, such policies must be guided by the expansion of rights, full citizenship and the guarantee of human rights in popular spaces."[10] These are far-reaching, transformative aims in a city characterized precisely by the absence of full citizenship and human rights for many of those living in popular communities. *Imagens de povo*, thus, combines claims to ownership with claims to democratization and, ultimately, social transformation in the city. Visual representation can contribute to such transformation by addressing new audiences or by addressing established audiences in a new way. Audiences are always in the process of being reconstituted in terms different from established ones. Photography is not a new art form but digitization has changed it to such an extent that it offers possibilities that hitherto did not exist (Ritchin 2009). Participatory photography in the digital age is based on an existing art form; it is recognizable by, and involves, ordinary citizens; and it goes beyond existing forms of human expression to create new audiences with new attitudes not only to photography but to society in general.

Conclusion

In this paper, we moved IR's interest in visual images from representations of war to representations of peace. We advanced a methodologically pluralistic approach in the study of peace photography by highlighting in our discussion different analytical sites which included the image itself (as in *Mirar de la vida profunda*) as well as the conditions of its production (as in *Imagens de povo*). Contributing to IR's emerging research agenda on peace, we suggested both understanding photography as a social agent promoting visions of peace and incorporating analysis of peace photography as an important field of study. In this vein, we offered an alternative approach to broaden our understanding of peace in IR. Our illustrative case material from Colombia and Brazil presented different ways of seeing and studying peace. Yet, both examples have shown that it is radically insufficient to think about and analyze visual images in IR only in connection with representations of large-scale violence and war. Therefore, we put emphasis on the lived experiences of ordinary people in spaces of violence. We did not propagate a mutually exclusive understanding of peace photography, that is, either peace or violence, but rather argued for their simultaneity and the possibility of visualizing peace in

[9] A selection of the photographs can be seen on the project's Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/pg/programaimagensdopovo/photos/?ref=page_internal. See also Observatório de Favelas (2005). We tried to obtain permission to reproduce some of these images in this paper but Observatório de Favelas did not respond to our emails.
[10] See http://of.org.br/apresentacao.

contexts of violence. As a result, we showed that people affected by violence refuse being defined by it. Ultimately, this might help move from representation to transformation: attempts to overcome pain, resolve grief and rehabilitate local communities through photography resulting in social change. The notion of peace photography introduced in this paper is essentially a micropolitical one, envisioning the individual and communal aspects of grappling with danger and loss and highlighting the quotidian and everyday dimension of conflict. For it is precisely this dimension of conflict that can best be represented photographically while photographic representations of large-scale violence tend to result in "generally interchangeable images of violence's apex" (Ritchin 1999, 27).

We suggest that our examples have relevance beyond the confines of regional boundaries: future research on this distinct category of photographic work could further explore local visions of peace as sites of the international. Other avenues of research might address a top-down form of peace photography as elites likewise operate at the level of the everyday or delve into more "familiar" spaces of violence (or non-violence for that matter), that is, imagining a photography of peace in, for instance, the context of gun violence in the United States or of the ongoing refugee crisis in the European Union. This could help prevent looking at particular world regions as generic spaces of exception in IR and global politics.

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