

Society, Space and Power. Challenges, deficits and news regarding critical geopolitics (Part 2)

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Deconstruction of geopolitical concepts: expansion and systematisation

Images and counter-images in the battle of discourses

Notions and (pre)conceptions of *The Self* and *The Other* shape the highly diverse geopolitical concepts and lead, in politico-geographical analysis, to a common rhetoric of justification and create an eloquent alliance. Although this article mainly deals with *western* concepts, it cannot be said that the other worlds do not have or employ their own concepts. Two examples: Russian President Vladimir Putin has succeeded in concealing the permanent geopolitical problem that is Chechnya from the world's public opinion; the issue is hardly ever discussed in (western) media. The Arab world, too, possesses a powerful language myth, namely the meta-narrative of the *holy war* (*Jihad*). This is why John Agnew, the 'Pope' of political geography, has no problem with an offset and integrates Osama bin Laden in the conceptual analysis:^[1] "*Bin Laden is the Samuel Huntington of the Arab World ... He is a prophet and organizer of inter-civilizational conflict. Bin Laden is the modern Arab geopolitician par excellence.*" At least this counter-image has been taken care of with the liquidation of Bin Laden.



A very different assessment of the West and the USA in the Arab world is illustrated by Hussein de Araujo (2011)[2] through his evaluation of Arab print-media. This is an initial attempt to counter the overwhelming dominance of 'western' research. It also serves to show how critics and opponents of the western alliance are under the spell of their own geopolitical concepts. Needless to say, these concepts are perceived very differently by each region's respective information carriers (politics, the media, the military and public). In future, global geopolitics will be strongly shaped by a battle of discourses and by the use of geopolitical concepts as powerful weapons in these conflicts.

In the last two years, discourse-theoretical approaches in critical geopolitics have become so important that many authors have come to regard them as a new, fourth pillar of postmodern political geography. In this, the analysis moves away from geopolitical concepts to an analysis of discursive patterns of space-oriented constructions of identity and the power effects connected with them. Besides international geopolitics, these topics reach deep into regional and local political events and lead to new connections with approaches based on action-theory.

Characteristics of geopolitical concepts in the archives of geopolitics

The following remarks have been made possible by Paul Reuber's compilation (2012, 188-190)[3]. The importance and diversity of geopolitical concepts as a research-guiding element of critical geopolitics should have been made clear in the previous chapters. What was lacking, despite empirical evidence, was an attempt at a systematisation of characteristics. In the style of Michel Foucault, who referred to the orders of knowledge which are deeply rooted in historical and social discourse as "*archives*", Reuber suggests *archives of geopolitics* and creates the following *drawers* concerning a comparative study of geopolitical concepts:

- *Cyclicality and limited duration*: eloquent concepts, such as the ones from the Cold War or from *The Clash of Civilisations*, have a certain life span and then have other narratives superimposed on them, or re-appear in a different form.

- *Re-updating*: 'Forgotten' areas of geopolitical discourses do not really disappear forever, but remain in the discourses' archives subcutaneously in the shape of "*story lines*". As and when required, these discourses can be dug out and serve as a pattern of justification for new conflict situations. Moreover, they need not be transferred on a one-to-one basis but can be adapted to new circumstances (example: current problems of Russia with its neighbouring states and the rehabilitation of old language-patterns).

- *Janus-faced (ambivalent) logic*: political opponents can turn the tables and employ the same logic of discourse to different ends. Osama bin Laden, for example, was also an ardent supporter of *The Clash of Civilisations*: anyone who does not support the *Jihad* is an *infidel* - the USA is therefore the rogue state *par excellence*. The linguistic connections of space and power create the framework necessary for the demonization of the other: cf. the 'free West' denouncing the 'Eastern Bloc' and *vice versa*.

- *Regionally-limited claim to validity*: The concept of *The Clash of Civilisations* was Western-centric (previously Euro-centric) and its universal validity implicitly taken for granted. A backlash against this mistaken belief came in the shape of new counter-discourses concerning domestic and foreign policy (e.g. *Black Power* or ancient Chinese ethics), and produced the current political ramifications, which strongly interfere with present 'Western-driven' discourse.

- *Interference*: If the assessment of a space involves several risk-factors, one can speak of risk-spaces (cf. Barnett's *core and gap thesis*) which produce manifold threats, e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa's combination of climate change and 'failed states' (state-terrorism and violence-based economies). Here I also see the 'logical' interconnection of geopolitical with geo-economic and geo-ecological concepts. The Middle East, South Asia, etc. also lend themselves to multiple labelling.

If it were possible to classify the multiplicity of geopolitical concepts and their discourses in such a rule-based manner, it would significantly improve the ability of critical geopolitics to (timely) forecast possible conflict causes, their conflict spaces, as well as possible solutions. Critical geopolitics could thus continue to be a main strand of political geography, despite it being, like other fields of human geography, a social science, with the 'political' part of society retroactively influencing geography as an institution, as well as its research. This is why there is only a fine line to be trod between traditional political consulting for those currently in power and the new approach of critically analysing the discursive relationship-triangle of society, space and power.

On the current international situation of political geography and critical geopolitics

Congresses in Germany as a reflection of efficiency

In the summer of 2012, two international congresses in Germany conveyed a positive image of the situation of geography and its efficiency in general, and in particular of the situation of political geography and critical geopolitics. From 26-30 August, the 32nd *International Geographical Congress*, titled *Down to Earth-IGC Cologne 2012* (Nissel and Embleton-Hamann, 2012)[4], took place. Despite the international predominance German geography had shared for generations with Anglo-American and French geography, it was surprising that this international geographic congress was only the second to take place in Germany for 113 years (Berlin, 1899)! Geography's highest-ranking *Olympiad* boasted over 3,000 participants from 90(!) countries.

Four main topics structured this event: *society and environment, urbanisation and demographic change, global change and globalisation, as well as risks and conflicts*. It is not difficult to see that the relationship of society-space-power held a prominent position in these topics. A keynote lecture by Derek Gregory (Vancouver) should be singled out: "*Deadly embrace: war, distance and intimacy*" - linguistically brilliant, rich in content, but alarming for the majority in the auditorium - the future of Cyberwars has already begun: "...remote wars in remote places tend to sneak up on us and destroy us" (H.N. lecture notes). Core issues of political geography were conveyed by one of its leading exponents in real-time (by video conference) to geography's global community. Naturally, several of the hundreds of presentations given by the IGU (*International Geographical Union*), its commissions and task forces, dealt with political geography. What appeared to be even more interesting was that many contributions from other geographical branches discussed 'our' questions under different headings, e.g. region-specific sections (an example: high altitude mountain research in South and Central Asia). Geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-ecological conflicts, concepts and discourse-theoretical approaches are found in a myriad of research designs, dealing with 'the spatial'. Nevertheless, one important topic was largely ignored at this congress, namely a focus on the theories, paradigms and concepts of this discipline. This deficit must be addressed here, also concerning political geography and critical geopolitics.

The second event was planned as a traditional IGC preconference and led us thematically to the forefront of research: *Spatialising the (Geo) Political. Political Geography and Critical Geopolitics Preconference 2012. 24-25 August 2012 - Frankfurt am Main* (Nissel 2012)[5]. This event can be seen as a follow-up conference to the *Critical Geopolitics 2008* conference that took place at Durham University (United Kingdom) from 23 to 24 September, which attempted, for the first time in Europe, to survey and discuss this postmodern-constructivist field of political geography. The present article could end here. However, in order to document the current standard, the internationalisation of the research community, the wide variety of topics as well as possible misguided developments in the field of critical geopolitics, this essay will enumerate conference topics and contributions. We are dealing with a colourful kaleidoscope, in which the puzzle as a whole, rather than its details, reflects the current situation. Two main topics formed the backbone of this conference: "*Integration and Disintegration of the Nation State*" and "*Critical Geopolitics 2012*". Each of the five parallel meetings dealt with three contributions each. The subjects of the meetings were: "*Narrating Changing State Structures*" - "*Producing Geopolitical Rationalities*", "*Geopolitics, the State and Beyond*" - "*Language and Media*", "*Sites and Spaces of (In)security*" - "*Social and Political Movements*", "*Knowledge Diffusion in a Geopolitics of Sport*" - "*(The) Critical Geopolitics of Global Inequality and Aid*" as well as "*Territoriality and the Nation State*" and, finally, "*Geopolitical Visions and Imaginations*". This list makes clear that the conference dealt with highly topical questions and the latest international developments. David Newman's (Ben Gurion University, Israel) inaugural speech "*Bringing Political Geography and Critical Geopolitics Together*" already led to a lively discussion, but also showed the participants' disagreement on this core question. Alexander B. Murphy (University of Oregon) gave a lecture on the meaning of territoriality, state and power in Europe during the Euro-crisis and (once) from an American perspective.

Further meetings and presentations dealt with, *inter alia*, the following questions: what effect does the rising importance of international organisations/institutions have on individual states and on the way they handle power, how do/can social and political movements influence societies, how can the use of language and media obstruct or promote power? Anton Gosar's (University of Primorska, Slovenia) unusual contribution "*Territorial Identity in the Integrating and Disintegrating Europe. Biographical Reflection*" was particularly impressive. Gosar illustrated in his own as well as his family members' biographies the absurdities of ideological stubbornness, political as well as border changes - a plea for a united Europe. The other presentations were also of a theoretical and empirical high standard; a subjective selection includes Sami Moisio (University of Oulu, Finland): "*Critical Geopolitics of the State*" and Virginie Mamadouh (University of Amsterdam): "*Projecting National Languages Abroad: French, German, and English as European lingua franca*". Geopolitical images of and by aid organisations and the marketing of poverty and hunger, the marginalisation through uneven knowledge distribution as the starting point of political conflicts, or 'unusual' states (in geopolitical discourse) such as Ukraine (Ivgenii Rovnyi, Goethe-Universität) or Somalia (Anita Kiamba, University of Nairobi, Kenya) were carefully examined. One bloc was dedicated to the relation between sports and geopolitics, with particular reference to the current Olympic Games in London and Sochi. Many topics were non-conformist, however excitingly structured, e.g. Elena Dell'Agnese (Università di Milano-Bicocca), who showed film clips dealing with utopias concerning future developments (or the demise) of humanity, and attempted to deduce a concept of eco-critical geopolitics from them.

Political geography has - not least because of developments in critical geopolitics - moved beyond its "moribund backwater"-status (as formulated in the 1970s by the prominent American geographer Brian Berry). The majority of contributions at this conference was stimulating, exciting and provided food for thought. What had not changed since Durham 2008, however, was, on the one hand, the enormous spectrum of possible topics, applicable methods and up-to-date discourses on political events, and, on the other hand (unfortunately), the continued absence of a more stringent theoretical basis. Should we content ourselves with saying (A.E.Parkins, 1934), "geography is what geographers do"?

A view across the pond – a critical analysis of critical geopolitics in and from the USA

Knowledge is power. Bearing in mind the theses of Lyotard, Foucault and Derrida, we must say that 'postmodern knowledge' emphasises the roles sciences play as interpretative and disciplining powers of 'Western' knowledge-based societies. Political geography thereby shapes the object it examines. Determining something as being worthy of examination simultaneously rules out other options. Political geography analyses and interprets political phenomena from a geographic point of view. Joe Painter (2003, 637) stated:[6] "it [Political Geography, ed.] polices what counts as legitimate enquiry and disciplines, literally, the practices and productions of 'political geographers'. Both the generation and the limitation are the outcomes of the apparatus of academic disciplinaryity; the journals, conferences, study groups, text books, courses and historiography". In the meantime also this (sub-)discipline has become an "academic activity that is trained to conform with Anglophone internationality" (Reuber, 2012, 32). This entails the exclusive use of English in international symposia (even the last vestiges of Francophone resistance are fading). Joan Robinson speaks (ironically imitating post 9/11 discourses) of an "axis of analysis which establishes the US-EU as a hegemonic zone of the production of knowledge" (2003, 648)[7]. However, it is more a question of a US-GB axis than a US-EU axis, thus explaining the dominant position of the Anglophone system of science and its concomitant science establishment. Robinson defines this as a KPIC (*Knowledge Production Industrial Complex*). In the same issue of *Political Geography* Häkli goes a step further and applies Peter Taylor's well-known model of the world from radical geography: "The hegemony could be seen as a set of concentric circles centred on Anglo-American Geography, followed by the circles of up-to-date Northern and Western Scholarship, more 'parochial' geographies of the South and East, and finally Third World geography" (Häkli 2003, 660)[8].

These statements strike home. Behind the knowledge (the *lectern truth* of those in the know) rises science-internal geopolitics which regards the powerful US-GB discourse as *state of the art*. Thus, dependencies are created by political geography - i.e. by the one scientific field which has put the critical function of spatially recognisable disparities on a pedestal. Unreflected western codes and values, which assume the primacy of *The Self*, frequently serve as the basis.

Given the sheer size of the USA's academic world, the importance of its elite universities as well as its researchers and lecturers, its domination in media and publications, its material possibilities for research, and its networking with official governmental institutions and private think-tanks, the USA's endless production of knowledge - also in critical geopolitics - enjoys a hegemonic position in international academia. A brief glance at the tables of contents of *Political Geography*, *Geopolitics*, *AAAG (Annals of the Association of American Geographers)* and *Antipode* confirm this assumption.

The most important gathering of American geographers, the *Association of American Geographers*, regularly organises conferences (also on *New Directions in Critical Geopolitics*). In its 29th volume (2010)[9] *Political Geography* produced a special issue (edited by Marcus Power and David Campbell) on *The State of Critical Geopolitics*. Likewise, Laura Jones and Daniel Sage analysed "New directions in critical geopolitics: an introduction" (*GeoJournal*, 2010)[10]. *Ashgate* publishes a series titled *Critical Geopolitics* (edited by Klaus Dodds and Alan Ingram)[11] and, most recently, a lengthy volume edited by Klaus Dodds, Merje Kuus and Joanne Sharp: *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics* (2013)[12]. In the following I will comment on this release. The aforementioned dominance of the Anglo-American knowledge-industry, however, should have become apparent.

This is a vicious circle, and in response to the question of what geopolitics actually is or should be, Jason Dittmer responds candidly with: "The term has a long history of meaning different things to different people." [13] How true. And why should it be any different with critical geopolitics? In the past few years, research in the USA has indeed developed differently than in German-speaking areas. Simply said, it has moved into everyday life, its worries and needs and, at the same time, somewhat away from analyses of the global state of politics, as well as from the strictly constructivist deconstruction of texts and images. Evidently, links to action analyses are now being established. Jennifer Hyndman (2010, 247)[14] poses the crucial question about the "political" in critical geopolitics: "the question of whether critical geopolitics is largely a discursive critique of prevailing knowledge production and geopolitical texts or critique with an implicit, normative politics of its own." Ó Tuathail answers this question in a new way, saying: "Obviously, the affective [my emphasis] dimension of human behaviour is a very exciting agenda and one quite relevant to the practice of geopolitics" (2010, 316)[15]. However, even he, the most important founding father of critical geopolitics remains sceptical: "...But in exposing geopolitics as a convenient fiction, *Critical Geopolitics* reveals itself as a similarly convenient fiction of opposition. It is merely the starting point for a different form of geopolitics, one hopefully burdened less by nationalism and chauvinistic universals and more committed to cosmopolitan justice and self-critical analysis."

This seems to be a real turning point in how critical geopolitics is received. Should its central task remain the deconstruction of existing concepts etc. or should it give in to a moral impetus to improve the world? The Anglophone area is increasingly moving in this new direction. Critical geopolitics is regarded as less of a theory on how space and politics are connected, but rather as (simply) a method of uncovering the production of knowledge. It is not enough (anymore) to deconstruct causes and coalitions (e.g. of wars), but 'moral proximity' must be created between "us and them" (the victims of war) so as to permit (personal) heartache. This new dimension has, in particular, been used by Feminist Geography and the representatives of Feminist Geopolitics, Judith Butler, Jennifer Hyndman, Linda McDowell, Joan Robinson and others.

At the same time, this puts the local level of human behaviour up for discussion, on a par with the 'big questions' of world politics: "make space for non-essentialist politics on the ground" (Hyndman, 2010, 317). This move towards the 'little things that count' also takes place in other areas of postmodern human geography, and it was only a matter of time before it would also reach critical geopolitics. In the USA it operates under the name "non-representational theory" (NRT). Fraser MacDonald explains (with reference to an essay by Nigel Thrift 2002) (2010, 318)[16]: "It's the little things - slating our mesmerized attention to texts and images ... attentiveness to 'little things': to objects; to the human body; and to the arena of words, namely, the dialogic significance of utterance itself and the ways in which 'little' words like 'the' and 'we' can have geopolitical importance. NRT's interest in matters of percept, affect and emotion, as well as the focus on the most ordinary ('precognitive') forms of sociality is reframing the object of our geopolitical enquiry." I would like to counter this by noting that one could thereby easily throw out the baby with the bath water. If critical geopolitics loses sight of classical geopolitics, the respective 'powerful' countries' military geo-strategies can again expand without hindrance. If critical geopolitics becomes concerned with 'little things' only and neglects its primary concerns, there is the risk that it only manages fitfully to interfere with the making of politics and strategy and, in the medium-term, degenerates to an academic niche.

In order to substantiate the leadership and diversity of American Critical Geopolitics, further topics/titles will be listed here. *Ashgate's series Critical Geopolitics* [17] (edited by Klaus Dodds, Alan Ingram and Merje Kuus) is representative of the subject and covers the whole spectrum – 'big as well as little things'. The introduction illustrates this:

"Over the past decades, critical geopolitics has become a prominent field in human geography. It has developed to encompass topics associated with popular culture, everyday life, architecture and urban form as well as the more familiar issues of security, inter-national relations and global power projections. Critical Geopolitics takes inspiration from studies of governmentality and biopolitics, gender and sexuality, political economy and development, postcolonialism and the study of emotion and affect... Methodologically, it continues to employ discourse analysis and is engaging with ethnography and participatory research methods."

Of course, the purpose of such an introduction is to address the largest possible audience; it is surprising, nevertheless, how the 'little things' are given priority and how, consequently, the core area appears to be relegated to second place. The I.c. 2012 *Frankfurt Conference* also influenced this list of topics. To date, the following volumes, which are of high standard and written by well-known authors, have been released:

Alan Ingram and Klaus Dodds (eds.) (2009): *Spaces of Security and Insecurity. Geographies of the War on Terror*. This is a collection of essays, which analyses the global and historical complexity of security and insecurity, with contributions by Alex Jeffrey, Nick Megoran, Jason Dittmer, etc.

Jason Dittmer and Tristan Sturm (eds.) (2010): *Mapping the End Times*. In this volume, the world's biggest conflicts are attributed to religious disputes and their political implications. American exceptionalism is traced by means of recourses to *apocalyptic geopolitics, missionary geopolitics, the missionary geoscience of race, difference and distance*. The discussion of apocalyptic scenarios is a particular pleasure.

Scott Kirsch and Colin Flint (eds.) (2011): *Reconstructing Conflict*. The attractive spatial and temporal dichotomy of war and peace is rejected, because reality is far more complex. This ugly truth is empirically tested, *inter alia*, on genocide from a perspective of reconstruction: Cambodia, Aceh, Burma, Iraq and more. Finally: Luiza Bialasiewicz (ed.) (2011): *Europe in the World - an analysis of "EU Geopolitics and the Making of European Space"* especially for an American readership.

A large number of individual titles outside of this series, dealing with politico-geographical and geopolitical questions, has also appeared in recent years, *inter alia*. *Conflict Hot Spots, Constructive Anarchy – Building Infrastructure of Resistance, Critical Toponymies – The Contested Politics of Place Naming*.

This is further proof of how much (too much?) fits under the umbrella of Critical Geopolitics.

Finally, the latest large reader should be mentioned, which reflects the discipline's current state of the art: Klaus Dodds, Merje Kuus, Joanne Sharp (eds.) (2013): *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics* (576 pages).

Methodical-theoretical critique of critical geopolitics and future prospects

"*Geography is what geographers do*". The American geographer A. E. Parkins's (1934) succinct and famous statement can be used to put an end to any and every discussion. However, it is no help in an assessment of the situation concerning critical geopolitics. The most recent conferences on the subject in Germany as well as research in Anglophone publications prove one thing: the identity crisis of critical geopolitics continues, just as that of geopolitics does. Its subject matter, methods and contributions to socio-scientific theories remain contentious. A clear definition of critical geopolitics and what it stands for will not be determined. The problems of critical geopolitics already start with its name. Within human geography it seems clear what it stands for, in opposition to classical geopolitics. However, the term *geopolitics* carries different connotations in neighbouring sciences, such as political sciences, international relations or in the media. They consider the term *critical geopolitics* an *oxymoron*, it is, at best, a bogus combination of terms. Since the days of Ratzel and Haushofer, geopolitics stands for the use of power by the strong against the weak and cannot, by definition, be 'critical' with regard to the condition of a society or its power-relations. The deconstruction of geopolitical discourses and, thus, the revelation of underlying dependencies was only introduced subsequently by geographers. Virginie Mamadouh (2010, 320)[18] says it very clearly: "*In geography, critical geopolitics seems a popular notion, but its attractiveness is possibly the sole result of the sexy combination of space and power. Nevertheless as all popular concepts it tends to become diluted into the variety of meanings attributed to it while being used ... Expanding in all directions is good to reach a critical mass and get leverage for a sustained research effort, difficult to achieve in geography, a rather small, though – in terms of topics, epistemologies and methodologies – extremely diverse discipline. It is, however, detrimental to the power of a notion to define its niche and to communicate its specific expertise to the outside world.*" So, what are the weak points of this "sexy combination of space and power"?

I already outlined three important points of criticism in my article in the *Austrian Military Journal* 1/2010. Not only have these points not disappeared, the list has, in fact, expanded. At the time, it concerned the unexplained relations between discourse and action theory (the two most important research areas of postmodern political geography), the lack of self-reflection when exposing 'classic geopolitics' and the hubris of one's own actions (regarded as the only correct ones); and the question of one's ability to govern (ethics or morals of critical responsibility). The biggest problem, however, lies in the conceptual heterogeneity of the approach, which, in turn, is based upon pluralistic imports of (sub-) theories. As modern and postmodern macro-theories are incompatible, attempts at combining some of their individual sub-areas have not proven successful. What does 'critical' actually mean? Perceptions differ greatly. The interesting question arises, whether critical geopolitics is ultimately just a new (disguised) form of geopolitics. Accusations have been made of indiscriminate theory imports, selection of methods, and differences of interpretation. Let us take the core-term *deconstruction* – is it to be understood ontologically or as a tool to analyse power? The current US fad of combining a subject-oriented perception of agents with the discursive examination of geopolitical notions and presentations does not really work. The concept of agents derived from action-theories (of methodological individualism) is employed in such a manner that the geopolitical concepts of key agents are analysed. Consequently, discourses are mere strategic resources, which can be used for the agents' goals. It is, however, exactly this mixture of, strictly speaking, incompatible parts that has contributed to the popularity of critical geopolitics. This is a core problem of the social sciences' *travelling theories*. Does the lack of a *big theory* save critical geopolitics from its 'ideologisation' (many experts categorically reject, precisely on these grounds, the creation of a binding, theoretical-methodological canon), or does such an attitude inevitably lead, sooner or later, to the destruction of the subject's core competence (in my opinion, the deconstruction of geopolitical discourses and concepts)?

Still unrefuted is Marc Redepennig's identification of preferential treatment given to the 'empirical integrability' of critical geopolitics at the expense of 'terminological lucidity' (2006).^[19] The deconstructive approach seems incompatible with the concomitant demand for an accentuated politico-normative localisation in 'critical social constructivism'. The call for a politically active commitment, whose moral goal is to better the world, clearly emanates from the aforementioned Anglophone developments in this field. A relevant quote by Jones and Sage (2010, 322): "*For what this eclecticism reflects is also what makes critical geopolitics both a stimulating and necessary 'intellectual and political project', that is its ability to critically engage in some of the most pressing issues and debates concerning the global spatialisation of political struggles – war, terror, security, migration, domination and imperialism, religion, human rights, environmental risk – across multiple theoretical and methodological perspectives, from which more progressive and/or ethical alternatives to 'how things might be' may be explored and put into practice.*"

Some authors do not even see the difference between *explaining the world* and *improving the world*, and contradict themselves and others within the same publication. Should representatives of critical geopolitics produce knowledge and publish it, or should they become active in public (political) life? Many researchers advocate such an expansion, which would entail adopting concepts from radical geography, critical geography, feminist geopolitics, and others.

This also leads to the question of active political consulting, with the inevitable accusation that this only creates new geopolitical representations – how can deconstruction and policy development go together? Which politician wants to hear that her/his values, world view and actions are actually built on sand? Think tanks are financed and expected to produce feasible and concrete instructions or versions of geopolitical reasoning: if they only censure and frustrate active policy-making concerning the 'important things' and only shape the 'little everyday lives', the representatives of critical geopolitics make themselves expendable.

Other paths seem to be more promising for this field:

Moving away from the *West's* hegemonic discourse and turning our attention to the *rest* of the world; spending less time on formal and popular geopolitics and more on practical geopolitics; forging stronger links with political economy and political ecology, with geo-economic and geo-ecological approaches in general; stressing the examination of the media and media analyses. Then again – in a future defined by network societies, it is perhaps not so important to set collective research priorities. It is conceivable that, outside of (critical) geopolitics, a counter-public (through the internet, *Twitter*, *Facebook*) is formed, which acts eloquently and blocks the plans made by policy-makers and their aides. The media's scare campaign (particularly on TV) aimed at ensuring the acceptance of military operations (in Iraq and Afghanistan) has recently suffered big setbacks. The u-turn concerning retribution operations against Syria materialised because of the (no longer) silent majority of US citizens.

[1] John A. Agnew, 'Not the Wretched of the Earth: Osama bin Laden and the „Clash of Civilizations“.' In: *The Arab World Geographer*, 4, no. 2; in: *Forum on 11 September 2001 Events*, 2001.

[2] Shadia Hussein de Araujo, *Jenseits vom „Kampf der Kulturen“. Imaginative Geographien des Eigenen und des Anderen in arabischen Printmedien*, Bielefeld, 2011.

[3] Paul Reuber, *Politische Geographie*, Schöningh UTB, Paderborn, 2012.

[4] Heinz Nissel and Christine Embleton-Hamann, 'Down to Earth - IGC Cologne 2012. 32. Weltkongress der Geographie in Köln, August 2012.' In: *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Geographischen Gesellschaft (MÖGG)*, 154, Vienna, 2012.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 347-349.

[6] Joe Painter, 'Towards a post-disciplinary political geography.' In: *Political Geography*, 22 (6), 2003, p.637-639.

[7] Joan Robinson, 'Political Geography in a postcolonial context.' In: *Political Geography*, 22 (6), 2003, p.647-651.

[8] Jouri Häkli, 'To discipline or not to discipline, is that the question?' In: *Political Geography*, 22 (6), 2003, p.657-661.

[9] Marcus Power and David Campbell (eds.), 'Special Issue on „The State of Critical Geopolitics“.' In: *Political Geography* 29 (5), 2010, p. 243-298. Includes contributions by Gerrard Ó Tuathail, Jennifer Hyndman, Simon Dalby.

[10] Laura Jones and Daniel Sage, 'New directions in critical geopolitics: an introduction. With contributions of Gerard Ó Tuathail, Jennifer Hyndman, Fraser MacDonald, Emily Gilbert and Virginie Mamadouh.' In: *Geojournal* 75, 2010, p.315-325.

[11] Alan Ingram and Klaus Dodds (eds.), *Critical Geopolitics Series*, Ashgate, 2009.

[12] Klaus Dodds, Merje Kuus and Joanne Sharp (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, Farnham (GB) and Burlington (US), 2013.

[13] Jason Dittmer: 'Buchbesprechung von R. Pain and S.J. Smith (ed.), *Fear: critical geopolitics and everyday life. 2008*.' In: *Progress in Human Geography* 33 (6), 2009, p.874.

[14] Jennifer Hyndman, 'The question of the ‚political‘ in critical geopolitics.' In: *Political Geography* 29 (5), 2010, p.247-255.

[15] Geraoid Ó Tuathail, 'Opening remarks', in: Jones and Sage, Ic, 2010.

[16] Fraser MacDonald, in: *Geojournal* 75, 2010, Ic, p.318.

[17] cf: www.ashgate.com/humangeography and www.ashgate.com/politicalgeography.

[18] Virginie Mamadouh, 'Critical geopolitics at a (not so) critical junction.' In: Jones and Sage, Ic, 2010, p.320f.

[19] Marc Redepennig, *Wozu Raum? Systemtheorie, Critical Geopolitics und raumbezogene Semantiken*, Leipzig, 2006.