

Decolonial Peace & Resistance Theory

This entry delves into the notion of Peace and offers a critical analysis that highlights the crucial importance of resistance as a key concept and theory in the decolonization of the Peace and Conflict field. It is imperative to acknowledge that resistance is not merely an act of opposition but rather a central component in the process of challenging and dismantling oppressive structures. By recognizing resistance as a pivotal element in the pursuit of decolonial Peace, we can forge a path towards a more equitable and just society.

Richard Jackson's 2015 article "How Can Resistance Save Peace Studies" proposes a transformation in the approach of peace studies towards the "ontology, epistemology, pedagogy, terminology, and values of resistance". This change would entail a deeper focus on concepts such as inequality, power, domination, oppression, and the historical materialist conditions of economic and social organizations. Jackson asserts that prioritizing resistance leads to a better understanding of power imbalances and fosters the achievement of social justice and peace on a local level.

Jackson acknowledges the potential risks and challenges associated with adopting resistance, particularly due to its association with violence. Although resistance is sometimes necessary when countering structural violence, such as state violence, it is often viewed negatively. Jackson proposes that combining resistance with conceptions of emancipation could eliminate the peace and conflict field's stigma of being a "system collaborator" (p.21). However, I think that this approach may not be sufficient to completely remove resistance's negative connotations. It is crucial to redefine resistance and normalize it as a natural aspect of human political behavior.

It is crucial to recognize that resistance is not only a means of fighting against oppression but also a form of human political behavior that needs to be normalized in research. As Foucault observed, power is everywhere, and so is resistance. By legitimizing different actions and agents, resistance widens the space of politics and underscores the importance of values such as justice. Critical research, therefore, must consider resistance as an essential factor.

In peace studies, emphasizing the role of resistance can provide a unique perspective on the meaning of peace through the eyes of those who are not in power. Resistance theory challenges conservative approaches to managing conflicts and contributes to decolonizing and desystematizing the field. By empowering the oppressed, resistance theory gives a voice to those who have been silenced and provides a pathway towards a more just and equitable society.

In this entry, I aim to provide a critical view of the classic definition of Peace and share my thoughts on achieving decolonial peace. It's important to understand that achieving peace involves more than just ending wars. We must emphasize the decolonial perspective to fully comprehend conflicts and find effective solutions. By understanding the underlying power dynamics and histories of colonization, we can work towards a more just and sustainable peace. It's a complex issue, but with a deep understanding and commitment to change, we can make progress towards a world free of violence and oppression.

