

Coloniality of Peace

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PEACE; COLONIALITY; MODER-LIBERAL PEACES; OTHERWISE.



"May the peace be like a feather... Beautiful, soft and resistant."

The artwork was provided by [\(Un\)Stitching gazes](#). The group is an interdisciplinary collective of reflection, research and praxis, which tells and collects stories of peace and encounters in Colombia, especially after the signing of the 2016 Peace Agreement. They do so through textile narrative, that is to say through threads, needles and fabrics.

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The coloniality of peace describes how appeals to peace can be complicit with coloniality by supporting and reinforcing modern/colonial purposes of domination, control and extraction, among others. To provide analytical tools to identify the *coloniality of peace*, this contribution builds on a range of critiques of 'peace' that have been offered from post- and decolonial stances. It includes three analytical steps: 1) identifying the coloniality of peace; 2) problematising the coloniality of peace; and 3) destabilising the coloniality of peace. The contribution sets out to outline this critique along with some of the core analytical concepts of decolonial theories, and locate the function of the *coloniality of peace* in the modern/colonial system.

Introduction

The origins and evolution of peace and conflict studies (PACS) are deeply entangled with colonial and imperial histories, profoundly shaping its methodologies and trajectory. With some exceptions, peace research often overlooks the systemic and explicit violence of racism and white supremacy, despite their creation of zones of violence like the border regimes along the Mediterranean Sea or areas of urban conflict intensified by increased militarised policing in Western cities (Albahari, 2015; Azarmandi, 2016; Cazzato, 2016; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018). Initially emerging in response to the aftermath of World War II, the development of PACS has been significantly influenced by broader geopolitical dynamics, including the struggles for decolonisation and the Cold War era.

Despite its initial aim to understand and address the roots of war, PACS has remained ensnared within Eurocentric frameworks, predominantly locating researchers and solutions in the Global North while relegating war and violence to the Global South (Azarmandi, 2018, 2023). Although there have been attempts to commission case studies from the Global South, policymaking in PACS continues to be heavily influenced by scholarship originating from academics based in the Global North (MacGinty, 2019; UNESCO, 2018), thus sidelining the examination of peace and conflict dynamics within Euro-American contexts where peace is often presumed to be established. While PACS often assumes and preaches the normative desirability of peace based on a distinction between negative and positive peace (Galtung, 2013; Standish et al., 2022), it rarely reflects upon its colonial underside, thus overlooking the colonial question (Azarmandi, 2022; Cruz, 2021). This contribution aims to offer an analytic framework to identify and destabilize the coloniality of peace by tracing the historical and political roots of peace discourses that highlight the Eurocentric, colonial and imperial relations of power embedded in dominant notions of peace.

Coloniality/decoloniality are intertwined concepts that are crucial for understanding the lasting continuities of colonialism and racism in our contemporary world. They emphasise the structural nature of racism, which extends beyond individual 'biases' to encompass systemic inequalities rooted in colonial experiences. Colonialism relied on processes of marking, differentiation and hierarchisation to establish and maintain power dynamics, shaping societal structures that persist today (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The concept of coloniality underscores the pervasive

influence of colonial continuities (rather than legacies) across various aspects of society, including culture, labour relations, personal interactions and knowledge production. It permeates academic standards, cultural norms and even individual desires, profoundly shaping modern experiences and perpetuating unequal power dynamics. Decolonial perspectives challenge the notion that colonialism is a thing of the past, highlighting the presence of coloniality in contemporary global relations (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). They trace the origins of today's world order back to early European expansion into the Americas, emphasising the inseparable interplay between colonialism and modernity.

Definition and Framework: The *coloniality of peace* exposes how mainstream approaches to peace have been used to sustain modernity/coloniality and to oppose decoloniality.¹ It traces the historical and geopolitical origins of peace discourses, revealing their inherent racial underpinnings in modern-liberal frameworks. By historicising and repoliticising 'peace' a plurality of possible peaces comes into view, opening pathways to thinking peaces otherwise. The framework we offer operates through three analytical steps aimed at systematically identifying, problematising and destabilising the coloniality of peace. While each step is important, the focus here is on the second step, which elucidates the core analytical categories constituting the coloniality of peace.

1. Identifying the Coloniality of Peace

'Peace'² is an established concept in the rhetorical repertoire of modernity, associated with non-violence, liberalism, security and the nation-state, among other things. However, its colonial underside often remains obscured, which is why we require tools to identify the coloniality of peace. The coloniality of peace can be identified by showing its genealogy in modernity, and by taking into account the political dynamics that underlie these historical trajectories. Through historicisation, the concept of peace is de-universalised and exposed as modern-liberal, paving the way for pluralisation and [pluriversal understandings of peace](#).

¹ With regard to their term 'coloniality of justice', Maldonado-Torres et. al. (2023) highlight "the ways in which the very meaning of justice is limited or transformed to serve colonial and racist purposes – i.e. the colonization of the meaning and concept of justice – as well as the ways in which different meanings and uses of justice, whether colonized or not, can serve to sideline or oppose the imperatives of decolonization, deracialization, and decoloniality" (2023, 534). While these authors refer to the coloniality of justice, however, we see parallels to the coloniality of peace, especially because (social) justice has been a normative concept more rooted in the US, and 'peace' a European ideation.

² We specifically focus on peace in Western academic and political discourse.

Historical events like European colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade and the scramble for Africa underscore how race has shaped colonial conceptions of peace and order (Acharya, 2022). ‘Peace’ has been used as a legitimisation for conquest and colonization:

“the insistence on the term “pacification” and its semantic family (pacificar, paz, pacificador) has been used to account for the processes of conquest, colonization and confrontation, and forms a crucial part of a war rhetoric that gestated irreconcilable allies and enemies, and that, by its very logic, places the “pacificadores” on the side of good, correctness and morality. These differential reappearances configure a metonymic thread that exhibits the problematic continuity of coloniality and the way in which the uses of language suture or silence its persistence.”³ (Rufer, 2019, para. 2, cited after Cruz, 2021, 276)

Processes of *othering* (Azarmandi, 2018; Pauls, 2022) accompany the usage of the word ‘peace’ in colonial contracts and discourses surrounding the Crusades, the Cold War and other wars. In this way Europe presents itself as harbinger of peace and democracy, emblematic in the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union in 2012, while violence is located elsewhere, often in the Global South. This was clearly demonstrated by High Representative Josep Borrell’s comments during the European Diplomatic Academy’s inauguration, where he described the Ukraine war as a transformative phase shaping a new European Union (EEAS, 2022). In his speech he likened the EU to a “garden of order, prosperity, and harmony”, contrasting it with the rest of the world characterised as a “volatile jungle”. This perpetuates the portrayal of non-Western regions as lacking modernity and democracy, while reinforcing a post-racial discourse within the West and externalising racial tensions to the Global South and East (Azarmandi, 2023). These regions are depicted as sites of violence and war which require intervention to protect human rights and promote liberal peace. Meanwhile, however, Europe’s own contributions to violence are morally justified or outright concealed – whether this is its share of the global arms trade or direct military interventions. Neda Atanasoski’s examination in “Humanitarian Violence” (2013) reveals how humanitarian rhetoric is manipulated to obscure

³ Translated by author. “la insistencia en el término “pacificación” y su familia semántica (pacificar, paz, pacificador) se ha utilizado para dar cuenta de los procesos de conquista, colonización y enfrentamiento, y forma parte crucial de una retórica bélica que gesta aliados y enemigos irreconcilables, y que, por su misma lógica, coloca a los “pacificadores” del lado del bien, la corrección y la moral. Estas reapariciones diferenciales configuran un metonímico hilo conductor que exhibe la problemática continuidad de la colonialidad y la forma en que los usos del lenguaje suturan o silencian sus persistencias.”

geopolitical interests and imperialist agendas. Consequently, the perception and preservation of peace vary based on whose violence is acknowledged and whose is concealed (Azarmandi, forthcoming a).

Fundamental to understanding the *coloniality of peace* is the history of the field of peace and conflict studies (PACS), the origins and evolution of which are deeply intertwined with the historical contexts of imperialism and colonialism, as well as disciplinary distinctions from international relations (IR). While both fields address war and conflict, PACS distinguishes itself through a normative dedication to advancing peace, viewing war as a pressing issue requiring (complete) elimination (Webel & Galtung, 2007; Lawler, 2008). At the beginning of the 20th century IR emerged from concerns over global “race relations” (Vitalis, 2015, 1), with early scholars preoccupied with the maintenance of white hegemony and the threat of decolonisation movements. The similar holds true for origins of area studies or programme institutions such as SOAS (the School of African Studies at the University of London), which was established in 1916 with the purpose of training colonial officers in African, Asian and Middle Eastern languages and history. This background influenced the development of PACS, with some scholars advocating for nonviolence and the eradication of war while others focused on studying global conflict without necessarily taking a moral stance.

In the 1950s and 1960s the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) were founded, establishing the field of peace and conflict studies (PACS). This period marked a shift towards an academic understanding of conflict dynamics and peacebuilding, along with growing interest in humanitarian missions and internal conflict mediation. After the Cold War PACS focused on humanitarian missions, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, although the peace narrative was often politicised by Western powers, overshadowing anti-colonial movements and global solidarity efforts (Atanasoski, 2013). The field also saw increased focus on human security and the role of third-party involvement in peacebuilding efforts.

However, these developments were accompanied by persistent challenges related to the field's Eurocentrism and limited perspectives on violence and peace. Notably, PACS's enduring tendency to prioritise research agendas from the Global North perpetuates narratives that obscure structural violence and racism within Western societies, while framing violence as predominantly taking place within the Global South. This Eurocentric and colonial view

reinforces unequal power dynamics and further marginalises voices from already historically marginalised communities (Byrne et al., 2018; Cunliffe, 2015). Moreover, evolving peace activism and resistance movements are challenging traditional notions of violence and nonviolence, particularly in the context of anti-colonial struggles and racial justice movements. Radical peace activism underscores the interconnectedness of different forms of violence and oppression, complicating simplistic binaries about where violence is located and peace resides. As such, the peace theorised by PACS has been a uni-versal⁴ (Grosfoguel, 2012) rather than a universal peace.

2. Problematising the Coloniality of Peace

Problematising the coloniality of peace entails the visibilisation of the intricate layers of oppression that are reinforced through peace discourse. By interrogating some of the ontological, epistemic and symbolic dimensions of coloniality along the three core concepts of decolonial theories, we can unravel the complexities of power and resistance within the modern-liberal notion of peace.

Coloniality of power: The dominant form of 'peace' is tightly and historically knit to the modern nation-state, through which it sustains the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000, 557) within the international and intra-national order. Due to its claim to the monopoly of violence, the nation-state is the central enforcement instrument for modern-liberal peaces. It controls the distribution and implementation of law and order through state institutions such as the police, the justice system and prisons, among others (Maldonado-Torres, 2020). It controls the classification of humans into subjects through the recognition of citizenship, but also their different statuses according to racialisation and other dynamics of subjectivation. The nation-state thus defines the zones of being and non-being *within* its territory, but also acts upon "populations *outside* its self-defined parameters and towards whom there is no relationship of emerging equality, only of domination" (Bhambra, 2018, 203, emphasis added). It also controls much of the dominant knowledge production through educational facilities such as

⁴ Ramón Grosfoguel (2012) distinguishes between "universal" and "uni-versal" to highlight the contested nature of universality. "Universal" refers to traditional Western-centric conceptions that often homogenise diverse knowledge systems into Eurocentric norms. In contrast, "uni-versal" emphasises the partiality and exclusion inherent in dominant notions of universality, operating through systems of power and coloniality.

schools and universities, mass media and collective memory. The close connection between modern-liberal peaces and the nation-state is also reflected in international peacebuilding, which often converges with modern-liberal statebuilding (Sabaratnam, 2017).

Coloniality of knowledge: Western academic writing on peace has long been Eurocentric, marginalising non-Western perspectives and perpetuating [epistemic violence](#) (Brunner, 2020). Alternative knowledges and voices are silenced, appropriated or erased, reinforcing the colonial hierarchy of knowledge production and dissemination. For instance, the exclusion of indigenous perspectives from mainstream peacebuilding discourses overlooks centuries of indigenous resistance and resilience. Contemporary movements like Black Lives Matter and indigenous-led land defence struggles challenge dominant narratives and demand the recognition of historically marginalised knowledges. Meanwhile, the academy has also appropriated indigenous knowledges without indicating their origin; for example, it is often neglected how the federalism of the Haudenosaunee in Turtle Island inspired the federal democratic political system of the white US settler state (Young, 2007, 19). When indigenous knowledges are 'included' in modern-liberal ways of knowing they are often appropriated and modelled according to Eurocentric needs and logics (Akenahew, 2016). In the effort to epistemically pluralise PACS, it is important to consider *how* encounters with indigenous knowledges take place.

Additionally, as Victoria Fontan argues, the epistemic structure of the dominant liberal peace paradigm is based on Cartesian thinking, which conceptualises peace and war as “the two ends of an Aristotelian dualistic model” (Fontan, 2012, 64). Such a dualistic (and linear) structure of either peace or war, with nothing in between, entails a transcendent vision of peace which requires an active promotion, historically according to Eurocentric values and practices (such as liberalism, liberal democracy and the rule of law, among others). Inversely, the concept of war also derives from provincial European experiences of nation-state formation (Barkawi, 2016) and is applied as a universalised template against which times and zones of war are assessed. This in turn maintains coloniality and the structures of domination it contains.

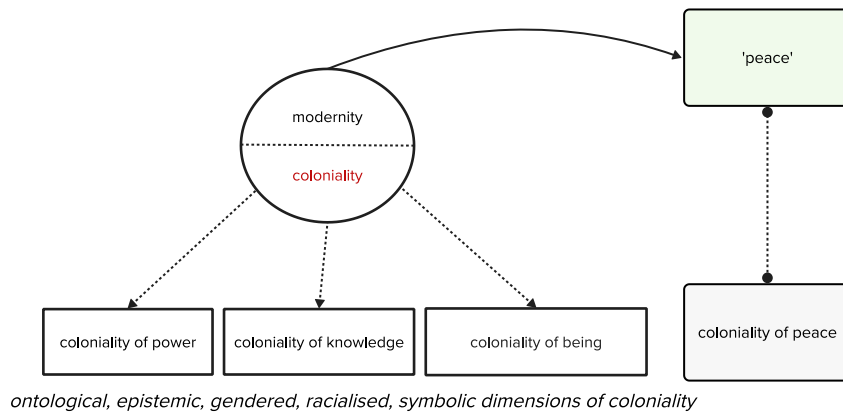


Figure 1. Locating the coloniality of peace (author's own illustration)⁵

An effective tool for sustaining the coloniality of peace is control over historical narratives. Just as modernity itself is based on the oblivion of coloniality (Vázquez, 2009), modern-liberal peaces tend to be characterised by a future-oriented mentality in a linear timeframe, which reduces differences in the present for the sake of a future, transcendent ideal of peace, without sufficiently tending to the colonial wound and colonial violence in particular. This applies both to the narrated history of peace itself, but also to its practical application in peace work. Although this has increasingly changed in recent decades through approaches like [transitional justice](#) and the temporal expansion of frameworks for peacebuilding (Lederach, 2005, 131–149; Sawatsky, 2005), the selective ahistoricism of modern-liberal peaces remains largely intact as it is still embedded within a linear timeframe and continues to neglect historical and ongoing colonial violence and trauma, as well as the importance of healing. This becomes visible in the current struggles for historical justice, e.g. through demands for the restitution of cultural heritage and human remains that have been looted and are still stored across institutions of the Global North.⁶ Also, the tearing down and 'vandalising' of statues of mostly white, male historical personages who were complicit in colonialism illustrates the frustration of the many who are longing for

⁵ For this contribution we focus on the coloniality of power, being and knowledge. There are more dimensions that need to be explored in problematising the coloniality of peace, such as the [coloniality of gender](#) and the [coloniality of nature](#).

⁶ A prime example of this is the collection of hundreds of skulls from Rwanda that is currently owned by the German *Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz*, stolen mainly by Jan Czekanowski from graves during colonial times (Heeb & Kabwete, 2022). Another poignant case is "El Negro", a human exhibit housed in Darder Museum in Spain. For over a century this Tswana man was displayed without consideration for his dignity and humanity. The exhibit was only removed in 1992 following large-scale activist organising and international pressure. It was not until 2000 that Spain agreed to repatriate the remains to Botswana for a ceremonial reburial. However, even in this act of restitution colonial residues linger, as his skin remains in Madrid (Azarmandi & Hernandez 2017; Doward, 2019).

justice and healing. The monumentalisation of white, male individuals who embody a single historical narrative of modern national glory is tantamount to the 'pacification' of public memory. Those who are memorialised are often depicted as 'heroes', without addressing the violence they perpetuated. Therefore, questioning national history as well as public memory has become a crucial site for post- and decolonial resistance.

To conclude, addressing the coloniality of knowledge in peace studies necessitates a pluriversal approach. By amplifying marginalised voices and interrogating dominant narratives, we can begin to dismantle the Eurocentric structures that perpetuate epistemic violence. Embracing epistemic pluralism and decolonising knowledge production offers a pathway towards a pluriversal understanding of peace, where epistemic disobedience and embracing knowledge from the Global South play a central role in shifting the coloniality of knowledge.

Coloniality of being: Colonialism has not only shaped material conditions but has also influenced fundamental perceptions of self and world, shaping not only how knowledge is produced but also how identities are constructed and lived. Linked to the construction and narrative of 'peace', the coloniality of being shows how 'peaceful' and 'unpeaceful' subjectivities are constructed and assigned with different agencies in the quest for 'peace'. Fanon's conceptualisations of being reveal the intricate connections between genetics, existentialism and history, exposing the colonial nature of identity formation (Fanon, 1967).

Drawing on Fanon, Maldonado-Torres writes that the "coloniality of Being raises the challenge of connecting the genetic, the existential, and the historical dimensions where Being shows most evidently its colonial side and its fractures" (2007, 243). If the coloniality of knowledge was premised on the notion of the non-rationality of the colonial other, with the implication that "others do not think" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 252), then the coloniality of being referred to the denial of their very humanity. Rooted in the assumption of the colonial other's irrationality, the coloniality of knowledge underpins the denial of their humanity, perpetuating power imbalances and distorting ethical norms.

This fosters a world where dominance and supremacy overshadow ethical considerations, leading to the emergence of the *damné*, representing the dehumanised colonial subject. The *damné*, relegated below the threshold of humanity, epitomises the systematic denial of dignity

to the majority of the global population. Suárez-Krabbe emphasises racism as the affirmation of one’s existence at the expense of others (Fanon, 1967), which underscores the correlation between racial thinking and its manifestation in social, political and legal practices (Suárez-Krabbe, 2013, 81–82). The racialised dimension of being informs a hierarchical understanding of ‘humanity’, and this notion of humanity deployed in the West, and in particular in the universal human rights discourse, sustains precisely because colonisation deemed subhuman those whose lands, resources and epistemologies it exploited and extracted, or at least placed their humanity in doubt⁷ (Azarmandi, 2023).

The power dynamics and racial constructs stemming from colonisation are integral to the global order. Fanon’s conceptualization of the *damné* exposes a system that denies the humanity of the majority of the globe’s population, shaping paradigms of peace (Azarmandi, 2017). Colonisation and racialisation are more than an event and a structure; they present the “dark side of being” and the ‘underside’ of modernity (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 259). The other is not other or different *per se*, but becomes other through a process of denial of their humanity, placing blacks and non-whites in what Fanon describes as the zone of non-being and even non-humanity (Fanon, 1967). This Fanonian separation of zones of being and non-being is constituted through an “abyssal line” (Santos, 2014, 189 ff.), addressing an ontological colonial difference.

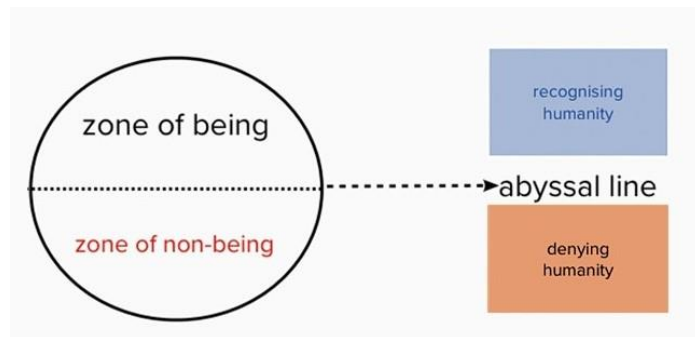


Figure 2. Zones of being and the abyssal line (author’s own illustration)

The construction of different subjectivities and their localisation in either of the two ‘zones’ leads to a differential application of ‘peace’ and corresponding practices across the zones. Maziki Thame (2011) describes the ‘zone of non-being’ as a space where the colonised are constructed as inferior beings, where their humanity and personhood are perpetually questioned. In this context the stigmatisation of the black poor emerges, attaching values of nothingness to their

⁷ Maldonado-Torres terms the imperial attitude of questioning the status of indigenous people ‘Manichean misanthropic skepticism’, where statements like ‘you are human’ are turned into ‘are you completely human?’ (2007, p. 246).

lives and existence. The zone of non-being represents a hellish and liminal state, rendering the black poor “dispensable” and “invisible” to the state, elites and even themselves (Thame, 2011, 77).

In zones of being, particularly among European powers, the rule of law prevails, and conflicts are resolved through regulation and non-violent means (Grosfoguel, 2016, 13). The zones of being accommodate whiteness, which becomes the marker against which degrees of humanness are drawn. Not only does whiteness represent rationality and reason, but whites are also positioned as civilised, while those deemed non-white are seen as violent and barbaric. Peace is seen as a ‘white privilege’ which is applicable to white Europeans and their descendants, but not to People of Colour (Diallo, 2017, 329).⁸ The ‘abyssal line’ defines which lives matter and which do not, setting the limits of grievability and dividing populations into grievable and un-grievable lives: “An un-grievable life cannot be mourned, as it has never counted as a life at all. This division is evident in conflicts where certain lives are defended at the expense of others” (Butler, 2009, 38).

In the zones of non-being, on the other hand, the logic of ‘peace’ is inverted: violence is the rule, and the rule of law, including international law, tends to be suspended, as in the current war in Gaza (Azarmandi, forthcoming b). As Tatour asserts, colonialism has historically utilised race as a tool to justify its dominance, creating a division between settlers and natives, a tactic that is echoed in Zionism (Tatour, 2016, 31). While the October 7th attack on Israel horrified the Western world, the violence perpetrated by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza is framed as their own doing. Despite calls for a ceasefire and peace, violence and what has lately been described by experts in the field as genocide⁹ against Gazans is rationalised or tolerated in the international community’s response. Thus, the current situation in Gaza disrupts simplistic distinctions and should prompt an examination of the intricate dynamics among peace, decolonisation and violence.

⁸ In race-critical and decolonial scholarship, the concept of ‘privilege’ is frequently scrutinised. Instead of solely emphasising ‘white privilege’, Helen Ngo suggests it is more instructive to regard whiteness as part of a broader system referred to as ‘white supremacy’.

⁹ See [report A/HRC/55/73](#) by Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories (25 March, 2024). See also the report on ‘[Genocide in Gaza](#)’ from the University Network of Human Rights (15 May, 2024).

3. Destabilising the Coloniality of Peace

Through identifying and problematising the coloniality of peace, the notion that is commonly referred to as ‘peace’ has been historically situated and scrutinised, allowing us to acknowledge the plurality of other potential peaces. In contrast to a transcendent approach to peace, in which an either-or paradigm prevails and a hegemonic peace must be established (*top-down*), destabilising or troubling (Ahmed, 2010; Azarmandi, 2023) the coloniality of peace goes along with a paradigm shift towards ‘immanence’ or ‘the everyday’, positing that “peace does not simply happen to people, but is embedded and felt in their everyday lives” (Suffla et al., 2020, 344).

Peace is thus not a transcendent vision to be achieved, but rather an action. According to the plurality of human experience in cultural, social, gendered and historical contexts, the potential plurality of peaces needs to be acknowledged. This plurality challenges Western universalisms and opens avenues for alternative narratives. For instance, scholars like Grosfoguel have emphasised the denaturalisation of claims to Western universalisms (Grosfoguel, 2012), urging a recognition of multiple, context-specific ‘peaces’ (Guzmán, 2000; Guzmán & Ali, 2008). While they hold a hegemonic status, modern-liberal peaces are thereby exposed as provincial perspectives that are padded by a colonial underside (Pauls, 2022; Krohn & Pauls, 2023a).

We suggest defining ‘peaces’ in terms of at least two dimensions (Krohn & Pauls, 2023a; 2023b): as (a) a normative point of reference for reducing violence, and (b) embedded in specific value systems and ecologies of knowledge. With regard to violence, peaces can look different depending on the underlying definition of violence. Where the primary focus lies on the reduction of direct forms of violence, less visible forms of violence such as structural, epistemic and ontological violence might be overlooked and even reproduced. The values and knowledge systems that underlie peaces need to be denominated as such, because they influence how we shape relationships and how we

deal with conflict and violence (Maldonado-Torres, 2008, 3;¹⁰ Pauls & Rungius, 2022). This is why we expose dominant frameworks of peace as *modern-liberal*; they are rooted in *liberal* premises, such as individualism, the nation-state, the rule of law, constitutionalism and the pacifying power of the market, among others. As such, appeals to this kind of peace are functional for *modernity/coloniality* – while liberalism is intended to advance modernity, it also serves to advance modernity's underside, i.e. coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, 5; Maldonado-Torres et al., 2023).

On the other hand, the myriad of *other* peaces are rooted in alternative knowledge and value systems. Examples from indigenous movements and grassroots initiatives highlight alternative forms of peace, prioritising community autonomy and solidarity over Western-centric progress (Suffla et al., 2020, 344). Notions of indigenous peaces, decolonial peaces and feminist peaces have received increasing attention in academia. However, as we indicated above, the mere inclusion of indigenous and other forms of knowledge into the PACS canon is not sufficient, because:

“the incorporation of multiple ways of knowing (grafted onto the same hegemonic ontological foundation that is left unexamined) through strategies of equity, access, voice, recognition, representation, or redistribution, does not change ontological dominance.” (Andreotti et al., 2015, 27)

The coloniality of peace represents an ontological dominance of modern-liberal peaces, because, as Cruz argues, “the colonial apparatus that mobilises the peace concept – as understood from the Global North – imposes itself as a power device over local peace expressions” (Cruz, 2021, 1). Hence we emphasise the imperative not just to pluralise peace, but also to sharpen our understanding of the coloniality of peace through identifying, problematising and deconstructing it, and to work towards reducing its dominance.

¹⁰ Maldonado-Torres addresses the notion of a ‘paradigm of war’ as “a way of conceiving humanity, knowledge, and social relations that privileges conflict or polemos” (2008, 3).

Decolonial peaces do not only advocate for alternative ways of knowing and being, but also challenge colonial paradigms as both [disruption and action](#), addressing violence's material conditions and seeking justice and reparations (Azarmandi, 2023; Krohn & Pauls, 2023b). Therefore, destabilising the coloniality of peace requires *pluriversalisation*, taking into account both the plurality of potential peaces and the modern/colonial power imbalances that structure the relationships between them (Krohn & Pauls, 2023b). Focusing on subaltern perspectives and a [pluriversal approach to peace](#) opens up a horizon of 'peaces otherwise', where new frameworks for peacebuilding emerge that transcend coloniality and embrace the diversity of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems.

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