Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology

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CITATION

Toussaint, J. G., & Rosino, M. L. (2024). A false peace: Bringing racism and race into peace scholarship in the metropole.. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*. Advance online publication. https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pac0000739

A False Peace: Bringing Racism and Race Into Peace Scholarship in the Metropole

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Peace and conflict scholarship cannot afford to ignore the challenges posed by ongoing racial oppression. The dominance of racially silent research in the United States and Europe has significant implications for how peace is examined and framed and thus shapes the implementation of peace processes and policies. Examining the five leading journals in peace and conflict studies and many institutional reports, we find significant omissions of race and racism scholarship and Black peace activists and scholars who presciently connected issues of conflict and peace with racism, antiracism, and social and racial justice. To help address these omissions, we demonstrate the implications of examining race and racism from a critical sociological perspective and how it can address distortions in peace and conflict studies and contribute to significant epistemological and practical shifts in the field. We show how the inclusion of these concepts and theories of race and racism challenges race-neutral scholarship's preponderance in the field and upends many of its core assumptions.

Public Significance Statement
The present study demonstrates pathways for integrating critical sociology theories and concepts of racism and race into models of peace and conflict to help address the harms and distortions of the field's racial silence. We also outline how the inclusion of these ideas, and the contributions of Black peace activists can inform new ways of thinking about and practicing peace.

If peace means a willingness to be exploited economically, dominated politically, humiliated, and segregated, I don't want peace. (King, 1956)

The past few years in America have awakened many to enduring racism and racial inequality. For example, protests surrounding racial issues in policing and the debate over Confederate statues have opened a much-needed discussion and call to examine how America seeks to define itself as a nation (Cox, 2021). An essential aspect of exploring human and civil rights in America is to assess which groups have access to peace and human rights (Rosino, 2018; Toussaint, 2024). The United States is a racialized country. Race (as a socially constructed set of categories, structures, and practices)

matters in almost every social indicator of fundamental importance, from income and wealth to life expectancy and negative interactions with the criminal legal system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Gilbert & Ray, 2016).

The destructive and ongoing relationship between racial oppression and notions of peace, justice, and conflict is a fundamental social problem of our age. Acknowledging the challenges and possibilities at the intersection of peace and racial justice remains crucial to those who actively engage in antiracist struggles. However, mainstream peace studies work and conceptualizations produced in the metropole (primarily in the United States and Europe) neglected it as an area of critical inquiry (Connell, 2010). When protests and activists challenge

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work emphasizes social change, policy, and community and civic engagement. His second book, *Democracy is Awkward: Grassroots Progressive Politics and Racial Inequality*, forthcoming in 2025 with University of North Carolina Press, examines how activists within progressive grassroots political organizations engage with racial and political inequality through their identities, habits, and political strategies. This project illuminates pathways to building more robust spaces for multiracial grassroots democracy and advances new understandings of racial politics grounded in everyday social life.

The authors would like to thank Travis Linnemann and Ray Block Jr. for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this article.

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the current status quo of racism and racial injustice in America, what lessons can we learn from the slogan "No justice, No peace!"?

In a 2002 article, Berlowitz called into question the idea that peace studies are gender and race neutral. He challenged the field to acknowledge its Eurocentric approach and to incorporate Black peace activists and African American studies. Despite its essential intervention, Berlowitz's article was cited five times, including once by him and his coauthors, in conflict resolution or peace education journals with little outside engagement (Berlowitz, 2002).

Fortunately, a cadre of other peace and conflict scholars have joined Berlowitz to call for examining racially silent approaches to peace studies in the metropole (see Azarmandi, 2018; Corazza, 2021; Perez & Salter, 2019; C. E. Thompson & Wells, 2021; Weiner, 2012). Accordingly, this article is not the first to acknowledge the absence of race and racism scholarship in peace and conflict studies. In this article, we not only offer further support for these critiques but, more importantly, show how theoretical contributions from the critical sociology of race and racism can help address this limitation.

Other contemporary Western peace research offered ways to examine race, racism, and the connection to peace (Brewer, 2004; Davenport et al., 2018). For instance, Davenport et al. (2018, p. 186) note that peace is not simply the end of violence but is "defined in such a way that it can be observed in any society or any relationship between groups." Examining which groups have equitable access to peace and justice in society is connected to deconstructing systemic racism and its corollaries, direct, structural, and cultural violence. Dutta and Atallah (2023) argued that the prevailing European and U.S. hegemonic concepts of peace and violence often fail to incorporate perspectives from the global South and to address the issue of White supremacy. Our article complements their efforts by shifting the emphasis away from dominant hegemonic ideas of peace and conflict. Instead, it places the spotlight on the contributions of radical Black scholars and critical sociologists in the United States.

Human interest in peace as a philosophical or practical endeavor spans millennia. However, the academic field of peace studies formalized in the mid-20th century in the United States and Europe, prompted by concerns about escalating conflict between global superpowers (and their empires) in the aftermath of the World Wars (Thee, 1983). Yet the discipline sidelined ongoing and related concerns, such as the violence of colonialism or domestic and global forms of racial oppression.

Simultaneously, at the end of World War II, W. E. B. Du Bois noted the contradictions of advocates for peace among predominantly White nations of the global north, Europe and the United States, relative to countries in the global South, such as nations in Africa and South America, and within nations (Du Bois, 1945). While engaging in peace and conflict resolution among states, we can also see a need to examine and mend conflict within nations. This article addresses the quality of peace in this tradition. We argue that critical sociological theories of racism and race help upend Western peace and conflict resolution models that support hegemonic White notions of peace and leave existing racial power dynamics untouched so long as it does not devolve into overt conflict within or between nations.

Racialized societies like the United States lead to a racialized social system where the "economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories" (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 469). Racialized societies produce racial inequities in access to a life of peace and justice

and influence over the goals and strategies of efforts at a more peaceful world. However, dominant understandings of peace are whitewashed under the guise of meritocracy, law and order, and colorblind racial ideology (see Bonilla-Silva, 2010). In this article, we highlight racial omissions within dominant approaches to peace and conflict and their harms and distortions. We argue that examining the implications of White supremacy and racism are vital interventions in Western peace studies and propose conceptual tools (colorblind racial ideology, systemic racism, intersectionality, the White racial frame, and interest convergence) drawn from critical sociological works suited for this crucial endeavor.

Background: The Mission of Peace Research and Its Omission of Racial Justice

The distinction between negative and positive peace is an early and prevailing framework for examining peace and violence (Galtung, 1969).[1] Early theories in this tradition conceptualized negative peace as the absence of direct violence from another person or group, yet structural violence remains (Galtung, 1969). Positive peace is the absence of direct, structural violence, and cultural violence and the presence of social justice (Galtung, 1969).

Structural violence upholds unequal power among societal groups and operates via institutional arrangements that prevent certain groups from accessing resources for human growth (Galtung, 1969). Cultural violence is any aspect of culture that legitimates direct or structural violence (Galtung, 1990). In contrast, cultural peace results from cultural patterns (social norms, forms of representation, dominant discourses, etc.) that "legitimize direct and structural peace" (or the absence of structural violence; Galtung, 1990, p. 291). For instance, the U.S. Civil Rights Movement exemplifies how, through peaceful means, efforts at racial justice can promote a culture of peace (E. Boulding, 2000).

This typology has been the bedrock of metropole peace studies since the 1960s (Gleditsch et al., 2014). Yet, peace scholars have often conceptualized it in isolation from problematizing the racialized structural and cultural conditions inhibiting the manifestation of justice and, thus, positive peace. As noted by Azarmandi (2021, p. 8) this

> Paradigm is fundamentally marked by coloniality with racism as one of its core features. To ignore how racial stratification, among other oppressive structures, shapes society would mean to deny how racism continues to cause and maintain discrimination and premature death for a significant portion of the world's population.

Consequently, it enables the perpetuation of systemic racism as a form of structural violence.

The field has also advanced beyond this binary framework. Emerging works offer alternative typologies to conceptualize nuances. Contemporary conceptualizations of peace span the arc from negative to positive peace and offer more specificity via stable peace, justpeace, liberal peace, warm peace, and proactive peace (see: K. E. Boulding, 1978; Chenoweth, 2017; Klein et al., 2008; Lederach, 1999; Miller, 2001).

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[1] We acknowledge that Galtung's scholarship forms a significant foundation of peace and conflict studies. Yet, we would be remiss that it has come to light that Galtung has espoused antisemitic views. While we cite Galtung's contributions to the field, we adamantly disavow any opinions or statements that support antisemitism in any form.

Notably, a recent book *Measuring Peace*, which seeks a more rigorous approach to conceptualizing peace, while acknowledging ethnic conflict, has no mention of race, racism, or White supremacy (Caplan, 2021). By drawing this distinction, we do not suggest that ethnic conflict is not an important facet of conceptualizing peace and violence, but it is not the same, nor does it operate in the same way as race in global, national, and interpersonal contexts (see Valdez & Golash-Boza, 2017). More recently, scholars suggest exploring peace within a nation through a continuum from conflict or opposition to peace or political mutuality, which can elucidate the quality of peace based on a "quality of respect and good will between relevant actors" (Davenport et al., 2018, p. 3). In this article, we examine the United States and argue that the connections among racialized societies to peace and violence is directly connected to global racialized power dynamics (Du Bois, 1945; Weiner, 2012).

Let us focus on violence to demonstrate the connection between racial justice and peace. Over one third of Black people believe they will be attacked or threatened due to their racial identity almost daily, compared to only four percent of Whites in the Unites States (Gramlich, 2022). Twenty-eight percent of Black people have changed their daily routines out of fear of racial violence or threats versus twelve percent of Whites (Gramlich, 2022). Fear of direct violence due to racism is genuine for Black people in the USA. In 2021, 61% of reported hate crimes were racially motivated, and Black folks made up 35% of those attacks while only comprising 12% of the U.S. population (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2021). How can the United States describe itself as a peaceful and just nation when Black people live under a system that embeds fear and violence in our culture and social structure?

First, political peace, the cessation of violent conflict between political parties or factions, is not the same as social peace. So, while political peace resolved the civil war it did not implement social peace within the United States. Connecting these ideas, Brewer (2010, pp. 200–201) notes that political peace must incur social peace:

> The social peace process is about the repair and rebuilding of social relationships, interpersonal and inter-group reconciliation, the restoration of community and the social bond, and social and personal healing. Defined in this way, the social peace process realizes positive not negative peace.

Unfortunately, the United States and other nations have maintained two primary forms of distance that inhibit positive or a social peace and justice: relational distance and spatial separation (Brewer, 2010). First, relational distance–closeness continuum refers to the degree groups which share a common culture or nation still have conflict and avoid adequately addressing atrocities of the past, such as the causes of the Civil War and continuing racial oppression (Brewer, 2010). In addition, separation-territorial integrity is when former combatants share a common geographical space and history. For example, institutions and ideology perpetuate segregation and discrimination and thus structural violence in the United States wherein Black and Indigenous people are denied opportunities and resources (Brewer, 2010; Massey & Denton, 1993).

Rosino and Hughey (2018, p. 852) make a similar point about the impact of the War on Drugs and its cultural representation on racially marginalized communities, families, and individuals:

> Militarized policing, dominant ways of thinking and talking about race and racism, and an emphasis on incarceration—significantly shape

(and reproduce) racial inequality through the distribution of social, economic, cultural, and symbolic resources. Racial meanings in mass and digital media buttress racial oppression by helping to distribute symbolic resources (or racialized symbolic capital) that are used for identity construction and ideology.

These points get to the heart of our argument that one crucial aspect of the peace process, reconciling issues of White supremacy and racism, is a vital antidote to ensuring the implementation of political peace processes to ensure social peace. As peace is relational, so is racism and race in a racialized society. However, race and racism, like peace, are not merely relational but also a matter of power dynamics. Systems of racial oppression determine who has the collective power to define events and situations as peaceful or conflictual or to leverage state-sanctioned or socially normalized forms of direct, structural, and cultural violence (Rosino, 2016).

Peace Studies, Racial Silence, and Racial Violence

There has been a deficiency of engagement between peace and conflict studies and structural understandings of racism and racial inequality. As seen in Table 1, among five major journals (*Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, *Journal of Peace Education, and Peace Review*), racial silences abound, particularly around more systemic and structural conceptions of racism or those drawn from critical sociology. The term "racism," when authors did use it, often referred to a myriad of conceptualizations and contexts ranging from racial attitudes and ethnic prejudice to racial discrimination, institutional racism, and full-on systems of apartheid (e.g., Klitgaard, 1972). These varied uses of "racism" (often without qualifier) suggests a lack of theoretical development and refinement to distinguish forms of racism (i.e., interpersonal, institutional, systemic, etc.) and address the polysemic nature of the term (Byrne et al., 2018).

Berlowitz (2002) argued a significant failure of Eurocentric peace studies was ignoring the contributions of Black scholars that distorted the field and ignored the role of multiracial and racial justice coalitions in work to advance peace. He points out that while White scholars in the field debate the merits of negative and positive peace, Black people are "almost unanimous in subscribing to the idea of positive peace" (Berlowitz, 2002, p. 63). He critically defines how Black peace activists connected racial oppression to social justice, antiracism, and antiwar movements and draws on the work of Du Bois, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and Martin Luther King to provide examples (Berlowitz et al., 2006).

More recently, Maiangwa et al. (2022) argued that the field "remains marginally silent on racism/racialization as a form of violence" and requires theoretical and substantive interventions. Similarly, C. E. Thompson and Wells (2021) noted that among studies in the *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, focusing on people of African descent, most ignore the persistent role of racialized violence and colonialism. They argue that a focus on racialized violence and racism-informed research contributes to the work of peace and conflict scholars. Moreover, more recently, Durrheim (2024) pointed out that the issue of racial silence extends to the field of Western psychology writ large, shaping dynamics in the field and knowledge production. This scholarship provides essential pathways toward rectifying ongoing omissions and points

Table 1

Overview of Key Concepts in the Peace and Conflict Literature

Journal	Racism	White supremacy or supremacist	Systemic racism	Critical race theory	Intersectionality	Colorblind	Du Bois	Total
Journal of Peace Research (1964–2023)	90 (94.7%)	4 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	95 (100%)
Journal of Conflict Resolution (1957–2023)	46 (85%)	7 (13%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	54 (100%)
Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology (1995–2023)	80 (95%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	84 (100%)
Journal of Peace Education (2004–2023)	112 (83%)	3 (2%)	1 (0.07%)	7 (5.1%)	9 (15%)	1 (0.07%)	2 (1.4%)	135 (100%)
Peace Review (1996–2023)	253 (80%)	38 (12%)	3 (0.09%)	3 (0.09%)	14 (4.4%)	3 (0.09%)	2 (0.06%)	316 (100%)

Note. The authors used a basic search of major outlets for peace studies research to quantify the use of terms relevant to analyzing the intersection of racial justice and peace. We totaled results from full-length journal articles and excluded book submissions, book reviews, front matter, volume information, books received, back matter, and recommended films. Some of the concepts are cross-listed in the same journal articles as other concepts (e.g., racism and White supremacy in the same article). Percentages shown under raw number may not always equal one hundred percent due to rounding errors.

to the need for further synthesis and theorizing to build the groundwork for this critical scholarship.

These omissions conform to larger patterns of avoidance, aversion, and ignorance found throughout the sociological literature on how most Whites think and talk about racism and inequality (Doane, 2003; Lewis, 2004; Mueller, 2017). They construct a false consensus. They normalize the idea that analyzing and achieving meaningful peace is possible without also addressing racial oppression and its impacts on the distribution of material and symbolic resources and power. They present matters of peace and conflict as somehow untouched by the specific and enduring legacy of White supremacy, colonialism, and racial oppression in nations like the United States (Mills, 1997).

Racial silence extends outside academic research and into organizations that report on the state of peace. While there is a commitment in some reports to include diversity, inclusion, and social justice measures, these reports on peace in the United States do not include systemic racism or racism measures (Azarmandi, 2018; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Henry, 2021). The 2019 Institute for Economics and Peace report on positive peace includes some relevant measures, such as the acceptance of rights of others, equitable distribution of resources, good relations with neighbors, and high levels of social capital. Yet, much like recent reports from the Freedom House (2021), they did not report how these measures may differ among racial and ethnic groups (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019). When organizations and institutions present data on peace as race neutral, peace practitioners cannot adequately understand and address systemic racism and its manifestations in racialized violence.

In contrast, racial justice advocates in the Black radical tradition advocate racially conscious practices for a more peaceful and just society, from W. E. B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. to modern-day movements like Black Lives Matter and Black Alliance for Peace. They provide crucial articulations of the abundant connections between racial justice and peace. However, mainstream peace and conflict models have marginalized their insights (Black Alliance for Peace, 2022; Burden-Stelly, 2019).

Visions of Peace and Justice From the Struggle Against Racial Oppression

In no way is the list of Black peace scholars and activists exhaustive, but we offer several examples to demonstrate the importance of their work. Throughout his lifetime, W. E. B. Du Bois's work and peace activism addressed connections among systemic racism, White supremacy, racial justice, and peace in the struggle against racial oppression. "Du Bois's understanding of peace was a dialectical and dynamic concept, rooted in material conditions of humanity, and based upon an absolute commitment to social justice" (Marable, 1983, p. 390). Given the breadth and depth of Du Bois's work on the study of peace, the absence of his work in peace and conflict scholarship is baffling.

For Du Bois (1944), peace was not simply the end of war but the presence of equity and justice. He called for the abolition of White supremacy and its corollaries as essential to peace (Corazza, 2021). He pointed out that dominant understandings aimed at peace and prosperity for Whites while denying human and civil rights to groups of color (Du Bois, 1945). His insights go beyond the power-blind notion that improving and stabilizing relations between nations

and groups is essential for achieving peace. They point us instead to unequal racialized power dynamics within and between nations as barriers to meaningful social peace.

Claudia Jones also advocated for racial justice and peace through the radical Black peace tradition (Burden-Stelly, 2022). Jones' contributions to the peace movement against racial oppression incorporated antisexist and anticapitalist critiques in combating how these intertwined forces led to anti-Black oppression. Her work clarified how racism, sexism, and the exploitation of capitalism presented barriers to sustained peace, not simply because they disrupted peaceful group relations but also because they denied justice and equality as prerequisites for peace. Jones' internationalist, intersectional, and anti-imperialist contributions to the peace movement, Marxism, and the fight against racial oppression were deemed such a threat to the government during the time of the 1950's Cold War red scare, resulting in her dubious arrest for violating the Smith act (Burden-Stelly, 2019).

Moreover, Martin Luther King persistently assailed White moderates for their definitions of peace in the United States. In the oft-quoted *A Letter from Birmingham Jail*, he writes, "the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice" (King, 1963, p. 84). For King, White moderates saw law and order as peace, or negative peace, when the apparent disparities of systemic racism imbued in U.S. society demanded a reckoning with racial oppression in the form of justice and, thus, positive peace. Since the election of Trump in 2016, political leaders and pundits have revived the rhetoric of "law and order" under the shadow of racism and ethnocentrism (Azari, 2016). Furthermore, contemporary White understandings of peace espouse liberal ideological foundations of meritocracy and individualism (Toussaint, 2024).

Throughout the 20th century, activists within movements such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee have drawn meaningful connections between racial oppression, peace, and conflict (Berlowitz, 2002). Today, contemporary movements continue to advocate and practice insights around how peace is incompatible with racial oppression, how a host of policies and practices across institutions uphold racial oppression, and the need for coalitions and contestation. The Black Alliance for Peace (2022), for instance, "seeks to recapture and redevelop the historic anti-war, anti-imperialist, and pro-peace positions of the radical black movement … through educational activities, organizing and movement support." This vision of peace and justice requires ending the violence, dehumanization, and exploitation of racially oppressed groups that routinely occur via military and prison industrial complexes. The Black radical tradition calls for global solidarity against empire and White supremacy and demonstrates how racist and jingoistic cultural norms bolster these systems and practices.

The field of peace studies in the United States and Europe has primarily ignored these clear and abundant linkages between racial justice and peace. In furtherance to ongoing critical interventions in the field, we interrogate this disconnection and relevant omissions. However, our contribution is not simply to document these silences. To address them, we draw from the critical sociology of race to propose concepts and theories that can illuminate racialized dimensions of peace and conflict and highlight new areas of research and practice.

The Critical Sociology of Race and Its Promise for Peace Studies

Since racism and race are structuring features of society, they must be part of models of peace and conflict scholarship and practices between and within nations. In support of efforts to address the harms of racial silence, we offer further conceptual tools from critical works in the sociology of race and racism which can be leveraged by scholars and practitioners. Sociological works demonstrate how the United States is a racialized social system (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). Peace and conflict models that do not consider racism and race in their models suggest that societies are not shaped by racialization and racial oppression. They imply that racial disparities in how communities experience peace and conflict are not linked to these concrete historical and structural factors.

By taking a holistic view of racialized societies peace scholars can identify the myriad connections between racial oppression and matters of peace and conflict at multiple levels of scale. This intervention draws attention to the social conditions produced by macrolevel racialized institutions, meso-level organizations, and microlevel everyday interactions in endeavors for positive peace. As an empirical social science, the subfield of peace psychology is particularly well-suited to utilize these critical sociological concepts to build a more power-reflexive and structural approach to racialized matters of peace and conflict. As pointed out by C. E. Thompson and Wells (2021) and others, peace psychology has much to gain by further engaging the impacts of routine racialized violence and its structured elements. Here, we introduce concepts from the critical sociology of race and racism—namely, colorblind racial ideology, systemic racism, intersectionality, the White racial frame, and interest convergence—that can help articulate the linkages between racialization, racial oppression, and both peace itself and its conceptualization in peace studies in the metropole.

The dominant approach to peace scholarship reflects the dominant racial ideology of contemporary society, colorblind racial ideology. Colorblind racial ideology is a set of social and political narratives and ideas that interpret "contemporary racial inequality" in matters such as access to meaningful and positive peace "as the outcome of nonracial dynamics" (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, p. 2). It draws on postcivil rights era social norms yet still functions to justify racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Importantly, racial ideology "acquires relative autonomy in the social system and performs practical functions" (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 474). Colorblind racial ideology obscures the challenges that systems of racial oppression provide in generating a more peaceful world. From this vantage point, such barriers are invisible and impossible to overcome.

One major frame of colorblind racial ideology, abstract liberalism, has served as the consensus among peace scholars that have come to define the terrain and subject of the field. Influential studies and reports that shape the field apply "ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., 'equal opportunity,' the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner" (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, p. 28) to construct colorblind definitions and measures of peace and conflict.

Peace scholarship often presents factors such as free trade or liberal cultural norms as forces for peace via reduced international military conflict (e.g., Oneal et al., 1996). Yet, these approaches ignore the internal routinized violence and exploitation in racialized societies. They take for granted that since the advent of colonialism,

"race as a marker of difference has created precisely this distinction between lives that matter and those that do not" (Azarmandi, 2018, p. 74). As noted by Fanon (1968), the social and ontological impacts of colonialism, that is, coloniality, deny the recognition of the full humanity of its racialized subjects. In a related dynamic, their experiences and interests remain devalued in hegemonic Western peace studies (Azarmandi, 2018).

Focusing on "international relations" rather than relations between social groups across and within nations elides the barriers that obstruct meaningful peace for oppressed communities including coloniality and racial capitalism (Azarmandi, 2018; Perez & Salter, 2019). Colonial and racial power dynamics continue to undergird many national claims to legitimate sovereignty, relationships of resource and labor extraction, and political domination that maintain a global racialized hierarchy. A lack of armed conflict between nations does not tell us whether economic and political relationships between governments, corporations, institutions, and communities allow everyone to be free from structural violence within these nations (Lau & Seedat, 2017; Neocleous, 2010).

We encourage peace scholars focused on international conflict to rethink their approach to internal power relations and which groups are positioned as representing "the nation" and its interests. These barriers to peace require a multidimensional approach. Nations are not monoliths but rather stratified by ethnoracial categories, social classes, and other groupings. For instance, Du Bois (1920) demonstrates that the implications of military conflicts like World War I vary by nation, class, and race. Apparent geopolitical peace between nations can merely mask a negative peace that normalizes exploitative relationships between groups and countries. The imposition of neoliberal cultural norms focused on individualism and free markets also serves as a form of cultural violence and repression that reduces conflict without increasing justice (Perez & Salter, 2019).

Minimization of racism, another frame of colorblind racial ideology, can be seen in other assumptions underlying the omission of racial justice matters from analyses of peace and conflict. The dominance of race-neutral frameworks in the field implies that "discrimination is no longer a central factor" (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, p. 29), shaping matters of peace and conflict in racialized communities. We encourage peace scholars to engage the concept of colorblind racial ideology to identify and dismantle the assumptions that obscure an accurate and critical vision of how peace and conflict are racialized.

Colorblind racial ideology also prevents engagement with structural and systemic understandings of racism such as systemic racism or the racialized social system. These theories allow us to move beyond individualistic approaches to illuminate how institutions enact racism through policies and practices and how as a whole, Whites enact racism through their everyday normative behaviors (Bonilla-Silva, 2021). They identify the normative and structural forces that shape how racialized individuals and communities experience peace and conflict.

Maiangwa et al.'s (2022) analysis of infrastructural racism in Canada as a matter of peace and conflict demonstrate the utility of a systemic approach. They define structural racism as "the tangibles of racism or its obvious manifestations performed and enacted in real time" which "evoke a sense of racial violence imbued with enormous physiological and psychological consequences for victims" (Maiangwa et al., 2022, p. 1). They define infrastructural

racism as "the intangibles, the biased rationale, ideologies and hidden or normalized ideas, which, although mostly disguised at first, condition daily interactions" (Maiangwa et al., 2022, p. 6). Along these lines, by advocating for the integration of concepts from critical sociology of race and racism into the repertoires of peace scholars, we offer further pathways to address the role of the material structures and cultural and normative buttresses that contribute to racial injustice and therefore, at best, a false peace.

Deeper engagement with the concept of intersectionality, which draws on Black feminism, critical theory, and American pragmatism, would illuminate the relationship between the multitude of social structures and how differently positioned social groups live through, enact, and experience peace and conflict (Collins, 2019). This mode of inquiry and epistemology centers the relations between social action, social power, and complex forms of community and identity. Eurocentric peace studies, if they do acknowledge discrimination or inequality as relevant, often fixate on one specific social grouping such as gender, religion, or economic class. In contrast, there has been little emphasis on how overlapping systems of oppression create unique experiences and challenges relevant to peace and conflict.

An excellent example of how intersectionality can shape social change and offer a toolkit for improving peace and conflict studies can be found in Zinn's (2017) *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*. This book offers numerous examples on the breadth and potential impact of the contributions of intersectional frameworks for inclusion and justice that are central to peace-making initiatives. While gender violence is an important entry to examining peace and conflict studies, utilizing simultaneous multiplicative standpoints can enable peace scholars to enlist various viewpoints in the peace-making process and achieve more sustainable and equitable outcomes (Confortini, 2006). Last, there can be substantial implications of applying intersectionality in the pursuit of human rights and justice (James, 2021).

An intersectional approach does not merely highlight the complexity of peace and conflict within fragmented and unequal societies. It provides ample insight and clarity on collective social action, coalition formation and solidarity, and power dynamics. For instance, material disparities such as the racial wealth gap in the United States have clear implications for exposing structural violence (Darity et al., 2018). These disparities are not merely products of "race" or "economic inequality" but rather the interconnected impacts of systems like colonialism and global capitalism and processes like racial classification, exclusion, expropriation, and exploitation (Kelley, 2017). Intersectionality and related approaches that engage multiple processes and systems help us uncover root causes of peace and conflict.

Another sociological concept relevant to the maintenance of White supremacy and thus negative peace is the White racial frame (Feagin, 2020). Feagin (2020, p. 11) states, "the White racial frame is an overarching White worldview that encompasses a broad and persisting set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, ideologies, interpretations and narratives, emotions, and reactions to language accents, as well as racialized inclinations to discriminate." In contrast, we can see how Black antiracist movements such as the Black radical tradition use counter frames to challenge dominant frames and assert resistance to White supremacy as essential to peace and justice (Coates, 2007; Feagin, 2020). Peace and conflict scholars can apply these racial frames to examine a myriad of conceptions and implications of peace and peace-making initiatives.

Moreover, many mainstream Eurocentric views of peace suggest that conflict from above and below is equally reprehensible (see Dutta & Atallah, 2023). The measures and concepts used by many peace scholars and organizations suggest that a developed system of laws and social order is an antidote to conflict, even when it produces or protects injustice. As King (1963, p. 73) wrote, "law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose, they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress."

In mainstream conceptions of peace among White Americans, resistance movements must be entirely peaceful, respectful, and nondestructive, or they are illegitimate. Bad faith commentators have long derided protests and social unrest in response to racist state violence as a threat to peace (Joseph, 2018). They accuse mass movements of promoting conflict and violence through a false equivalency that normalizes state violence against protestors as inherently just. Media pundits and political leaders described Black Lives Matter protests as rife with "violent looting and rioting," when they are predominantly peaceful (Chenoweth & Pressman, 2020). These same politicians and commentators then pushed policies to criminalize and deliberately target Black Lives Matter protesting and widely expand the definition of "rioting" (Press, 2021).

In response, peace scholars must continue developing models that account for "unruly, confrontational protest" as a meaningful catalyst for social change (Mische, 2020). The uprising of dispossessed communities, even if it damages property or escalates social disruption, "is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality" (King, 1963, p. 73).

Problematizing the White racial frame opens space for examining the structural factors that shape how racial groups envision peace. For instance, a critical sociological perspective unearths Whiteness as a component of hegemonic peace (Toussaint, 2024). Hegemony occurs when ideology becomes natural as people begin to view and accept power differentials as inevitable (Gramsci, 1971). Hegemonic peace reflects power and not justice (Robinson, 2001). It reflects hegemonic Whiteness wherein being "white" is taken for granted as normative and ideal and thus becomes "a collective social force" that is "not merely an ideological or cultural artifact but carries material rewards" (Lewis, 2004, p. 634). Whiteness and its role in hegemonic peace is a key structural mechanism to understand how peace is conceptualized and implemented (Henry, 2021). As dominant White approaches define peace as law and order, meritocracy, and the maintenance of the status quo, the implementation of social and positive peace is inhibited and may cease to be a goal altogether.

Further building on these insights, critical race theorists in legal studies and sociology argue that through a process of interest convergence, laws and policies are passed only when the benefits accrued enhance the lives of those racialized to White as opposed to Black, yet they are seen as colorblind solutions that will benefit everyone equally (Bell, 1980). For example, laws and policies that support "law and order" over equality and justice only reaffirm the myth of a colorblind criminal legal system which obscures the continuance of racial violence in the United States (Alexander, 2010; Bracey, 2015).

In tandem, Whiteness and interest convergence provide yet another seemingly colorblind benefit in the opportunity to live in relative peace and lesser violence for White people relative to Black people (Harris, 1995). Critical race theory can also be applied to examining peace at a global level to explain how power differentials and racialized practices define people of color as "other" and thus reproduce domination and oppression, and to the extreme, justifications for war and violence (Weiner, 2012). Therein, lessons from racialization in America can be applied within and among other nations (Du Bois, 1945).

Further Points of Synthesis

Drawing on three key points from the *Peace Continuum* (Davenport et al., 2018), we demonstrate how if our conceptions of perceptual peace are grounded in race-neutral definitions then we can never adequately address how racism and race shape matters of peace and conflict in a racialized society. For example, Regan states, "conceptually, peace is an equilibrium condition where resort to violence is minimal and where the highest quality peace exists when the idea of armed violence approaches the unthinkable" (2018, pp. 79–80) and notes the perceptual approach to peace "relies on the relationship between groups and the state."

This article has much to contribute to attempts at developing a more holistic and multilayered approach to peace. For instance, Regan notes that minority groups suffer from discrimination (Davenport et al., 2018). Yet, he does not address how living in a racialized society structures that discrimination. He suggests that the United States does not reflect the "most high-quality peaceful state, but the institutional rules that prescribe that relationships provide a means short of war to redress" (Davenport et al., 2018, p. 95). While there is no Civil War, critical sociology of race explains how the state is "a tool created, maintained by White people to support their collective interests" and thus falls short as a means to address racism in the United States (Bracey, 2015, p. 558).

Second, procedural peace or "defining elements of peace concern peace and the procedures for resolving political conflict" (Davenport et al., 2018, p. 113). Quality of peace from a procedural conception "is measured in terms of the absence of war plus high respect for physical integrity rights (respect for physical person of one's adversary), democratic political institutions (consensual decision making), and widespread respect for women's social right (equality values)," yet noticeably mention of racial inequities lacking (Davenport et al., 2018, p. 113). In relation to Whites, groups of color in the United States are denied or significantly have less access to the three facets applied to quality peace in the United States when applying these dimensions of peace. Here, the use of intersectionality as model would improve how peace and the impacts of interventions toward that aim can be measured.

The demise of consensual political decision making in the United States is also directly tied to procedures to resolve conflict adequately or inadequately. Open political conflict between dominant and marginalized racial groups is often resolved through the entrenchment of domination and the appearance of a consensus under unequal power relations without advancing justice. It becomes necessary to outline what mechanisms for resolving political conflict might be that are attentive to the realities of racial oppression and the need for racial equality. As asserted above, when Whiteness

affirms a hegemonic peace a negative peace or a low quality of peace prevails.

Third, examining peace is relational. Measures of "peace must be between a minimum of two collectivities; from opposition to mutuality; encompass multiple dimensions of interactions; and multiple levels of analysis" (Davenport et al., 2018, p. 158). For example, C. E. F. Thompson (2019) noted how Black people experience violence relative to White people in the United States is a direct outcome of living in a racialized society. Accordingly, we encourage scholars in the metropole to elaborate a more systemic approach to the relationship between peace and racial oppression that examines not only varying types of peace but also levels of analysis.

Every level of U.S. society is an outcome of living in a racialized society from the macrolevel to the microlevel of everyday interactions. At the macrolevel, institutions reaffirm White supremacy and thus violence either directly or through the structure of access to opportunities and power (Bracey, 2015). From wealth and income disparities, differences in health care and life expectancies, media representations to treatment in the criminal justice system, White people possess benefits that lead to a more serene life relative to Black people (Darity et al., 2018; Gramlich, 2022; Harris, 1995; Metzl, 2019; Rosino, 2021).

At a meso-level, recent work elucidates how organizations are not race neutral and provide spaces for agency, legitimate unequal resources, and decouple from formal procedures bolsters the dominance of Whiteness which can reaffirm how peace and justice are not colorblind (Ray, 2019). At a microlevel, Rosino's (2017) work shows how racial power dynamics shape the overarching consensus at play in our everyday social interactions. Oftentimes, Whites can impose their own definition of situations as peaceful, conflictual, or violent. In response, "people of color must disprove interactional expectations *qua* racial stereotypes through performances and presentations of self that signify and symbolize white notions of acceptability or servility" (Rosino, 2018, p. 171). Racial domination in everyday life may not in and of itself be overtly violent but it is backed by the ever-present threat of state and individual violence against marginalized folks who defy the unwritten rules of a racialized society.

Discussion and Conclusions

We addressed three main points in this article. First, we demonstrated major harms and distortions caused by racial omissions within dominant approaches to peace and conflict in the United States and Europe. Specifically, this article points to evidence for this lack of engagement and proposes that examining the implications of White supremacy and racism are vital interventions. We also offered conceptual tools drawn from the radical Black peace tradition and critical sociological works for this crucial endeavor. Moreover, we offer crucial points of synthesis and intervention with dominant models of peace and conflict. As such, we hope to stimulate a discussion of living in a racialized society, namely the United States, in examining peace within a nation.

A relational approach to peace attentive to power dynamics and social structures would encompass as Martin Luther King noted, the beloved community which enables people from various demographic backgrounds to enlist in movements at the intersection of peace and justice: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of *mutuality*, (our emphasis added) tied to a single garment of destiny" (King, 1963, p. 65). Peace in this regard is not power over others or a negative peace but a power with and from human interconnectedness or *ubuntu*.

Desmond Tutu famously stated through the idea of ubuntu, "I am because we are" (Tutu, 2004). As Shields (2017, p. 10) notes "Ubuntu has a radically relational basis, asserting not just that individuals should be aware of the interests of others but that an individual's existence or humanity is dependent on how they relate to others." Analyzing peace through these conceptions along with a reframing through an inclusion of racism and race concepts from critical sociology (i.e., colorblind racial ideology, systemic racism, the White racial frame, intersectionality, and interest convergence) are vital for producing a new epistemology and philosophy of peace compatible with ending racial injustice. Peace scholars in the metropole must consider how the ideas and actions of the powerless can aid in a new vision for mutuality in which racial justice becomes an essential part of the solution (Carroll, 1972).

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