



RETHINKING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Confronting Peace

Local Peacebuilding in the Wake of
a National Peace Agreement

Edited by Susan H. Allen · Landon E. Hancock
Christopher Mitchell · Cécile Mouly



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Rethinking Political Violence

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have been heartened by colleagues' growing interest in local peace and in the stages of conflict that come after peace agreements. Peace is built and experienced locally, shaping individual lives. And, conflict continues in the days and years after peace agreements are signed. Here, we turn our attention to both the local peace and the post-agreement phase. What is the experience of local peace communities, after agreements have been signed? Addressing this and related questions has been a team effort, involving all the authors whose work appears in this book, as well as many additional colleagues.

The editors would like to thank the Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution (formerly the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution) at George Mason University, and in particular the Center for Peacemaking Practice, for offering its facilities at Point of View in Virginia for the initial meeting that led to the idea of writing this book and for providing us with a small grant to make this meeting possible. Susan H. Allen would also like to thank the Carter School for her study leave, which enabled her to work on this edited volume, for funding her participation in a roundtable on the peace process in Colombia that took place in Quito, Ecuador, with the participation of various authors of this book, and for supporting research assistance by Michael Sweigert in the final stages of the manuscript production. Two members of the editorial team took advantage of this roundtable, supported by the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Ecuador and the office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in the same country, to organize a meeting with contributors writing chapters on Colombia and to further discuss the

book. In addition to hosting the roundtable, Cécile Mouly would also like to thank FLACSO Ecuador for funding the research on Samaniego and her travel expenses to meet with other editors and some of the contributors at the conferences of the International Studies Association in Baltimore, San Francisco and Toronto.

Needless to say, this volume would not have seen the light of day without the support and contributions of all the authors. We are grateful to them for their commitment and for accommodating to our requests. Many of them conducted fieldwork to write their chapter and bring significant insights into how local communities and peacebuilding initiatives have confronted the signing of peace at a national level in their respective country. Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to Pedro Valenzuela for translating Esperanza Hernández's chapter into English.

Importantly, we would like to thank all the people of the communities or peacebuilding initiatives studied, who took the time to share their experiences with the authors and made this book possible. We are greatly indebted to them and hope that this volume can contribute to making their peacebuilding efforts more visible and helping them to obtain greater support.

Finally, we would like to thank our families for putting up with us during our work on this collection Sarah Roughley and Rebecca Roberts, our editors at Palgrave Macmillan, for their guidance throughout the process.

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Praise for *Confronting Peace*

“The wider field of peace and conflict studies has long confronted the challenge of ending wars. After thirty years of research tracking negotiations, mediation and agreements, perhaps nothing is more urgent than better understanding of the realities captured in this book. The challenge of confronting peace. The authors and the approach give the volume a deep legitimacy, as the key in this effort requires us to understand the specific processes and innovations needed to bolster and face the many faceted developments that emerge in the aftermath of peace processes and accords. These reflections, research and proposed recommendations offer empirical evidence and grounded learning for improving the chances that social and political transitions can offer both the hope of ending war and of solidifying the changes needed to sustain a more robust peace.”

—John Paul Lederach, *Professor Emeritus, University of Notre Dame, USA*

“This fourth in a series of studies on the relationship between national and local level peacebuilding strategies is fundamental reading for scholars interested in what happens at the local level after a national peace agreement has been signed. A diverse group of academics in the peace sector from around the world reflect on how the problems that arise from national level peace differ from those confronting local communities. The editors provide a carefully cogent analysis of the case studies presented in order to give readers a highly applied, thorough and useful guide to the challenges and possibilities available to local actors in a post-agreement context.”

—Pamina Firchow, *Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution and Coexistence at Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management, USA*

“This book, with its impressive weaving together of peace practice and research, points to a potential new wave in conflict analysis and engagement—*making peace with conflict*. That is, as the case studies in this book amply illustrate, “post” conflict peacemaking is rarely about the end of conflict. Rather, as illustrated in two main “negative” case studies, where peace agreements have so far failed to hold (in Colombia and the Philippines) and other cases of failed peace, seeking and pursuing peace in the face of ongoing conflict is about the daily engagement and commitment of local communities. This is a brave text about the benefits and perils of peace.”

—Jay Rothman, *President, the ARIA Group, USA and Israel*

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INTRODUCTION

Our very first foray into examining local peace in the late 1990s revealed a wide variety of peace “experiences” which could all be seen as a form of “institutionalized” conflict (see Mitchell and Nan 1997). This conception seemed to hold good whether local peace zones, communities or organizations were built from the top down, the bottom up or the outside in. Subsequent research produced three collections of studies seeking to understand better the creation and survival of local-level peacebuilding. The three studies in this series all aimed at dealing with different aspects of local peacebuilding in what might, paradoxically, be termed “normal” abnormal circumstances—that is, when people in grassroots communities and associations were having to deal with an environment characterized by nation-wide violence, displacement, insecurity and death. The first book dealt generally with various examples of a local search for sanctuary—for safety and security in conditions of civil war (see Hancock and Mitchell 2007). The second was more concerned with linkages between local peace initiatives—what Mary Anderson and her colleagues (2013) refer to as “peace writ little”—and national-level peacemaking efforts, together with the manner in which these efforts reinforced (or worked against) one another (see Mitchell and Hancock 2012). The third set considered various ways in which the different actors in intra-state conflicts—insurgents, incumbents and interveners of various sorts—achieved some level of legitimacy that enabled them to carry on with their efforts, constructive or destructive (see Hancock and Mitchell 2018).

By contrast, this present collection focuses on local peace communities and organizations when they find themselves in the aftermath of a negotiated national “peace” agreement, when major combatants have—finally—managed to hammer out an often fragile deal and people at the grassroots have to try to make many of the terms of that agreement “work” at a local level. In other words, local communities and organizations find themselves confronting “peace” and the aftermath of widespread violence and destruction. They do this while—theoretically—enjoying the support of, and resources supplied by, national or regional governments, or by international supporters. However, more often, local communities have to rely upon their own efforts, initiative and resources, with the last often being in very limited supply.

Hence, the chapters in this book are very much focused on the problems of “peace.” They examine how local peace communities have fared in the aftermath of an often long drawn-out, intra-state struggle usually characterized by a widespread violence that is difficult to draw to an end. The context thus involves widespread damage—both physical and psychological—that is difficult to forget, let alone forgive; widespread mistrust and an unwillingness to compromise on all sides. Often, the issues in contention underlying the struggle have not been completely resolved and the danger of a rapid re-ignition of the conflict remains high. New problems have to be faced, old issues—safety and insecurity—emerge in new forms and constant dilemmas—development and unemployment—remain to be faced and even increase in complexity. At the local level these complexities of peace often seem to be no less than those arising from civil war.

Moreover, the authors of the following chapters have themselves faced considerable analytical problems in trying to deal with this focus of local peace communities in times of “national peace” and in trying to suggest some general lessons by comparing cases of local, post-agreement peacebuilding efforts from different countries. However, our shared central theme was initially rather straightforward: What obstacles and opportunities confront local peace communities and organizations—and their previous grassroots initiatives—once some form of national peace has more or less been achieved?

The book, then, is divided into two main sections, together with this introductory chapter and a concluding one highlighting any common lessons we think we may have discovered from our case studies. In this book we feel that the term *post-conflict* peacebuilding is rather misleading. This term is largely focused on top-down, “partial” peace, arranged (or

misarranged) by some kind of a “deal” at the elite level between state agents and the commanders of at least some of the insurgent organizations. Moreover, it suggests that the conflict is ended and that it has been finally resolved, which is often far from the situation on the ground. In most of the cases discussed in this book, an agreement may have resulted in diminished violence (or it may not) but the conflict often continues in some modified form. Hence, in the following chapters, we highlight the challenges and possibilities of addressing ongoing conflict issues in the *post-agreement* phase of conflict.

Following this brief introductory chapter, in the following one (Chap. 1) I begin by outlining some shared analytical dilemmas. These include asking what exactly is meant by a national “peace” agreement following a protracted intra-state conflict, and how does the nature of this peace affect local communities, especially those who may have already established their own form of peace in their own locality. We then look at the effects of previous—often failed—peace agreements on local communities and then at the latter’s actual experience of violence and instability. We then return to issues likely to arise in a post-agreement period. Finally, we present the framework of questions posed to the authors of the chapters.

The chapters that follow in the first major section of the book are all addressed to the recent peacebuilding experiences of local communities in Colombia. Since the conclusion of the Havana Agreement at the end of 2016, local communities there have been dealing with and reacting to the effects of a national peace agreement negotiated between the Colombian government and the leaders of one major insurgent movement, the FARC. Some of these peace communities are organized on a regional basis, while others have arisen to promote local peace, security and development in often remote municipalities. Esperanza Hernández Delgado in Chap. 2 thus describes the impact of the “Women Weavers of Life” throughout a large swathe of Putumayo in the south west of the country, while Mery Rodríguez and Fernando Sarmiento’s chapter (Chap. 3) takes up the study of the Development and Peace Program in the Magdalena Medio region, and examines the effects of the Havana peace accord on this longstanding peace organization based in communities along the River Magdalena. In Chap. 4, Ana Isabel Rodríguez Iglesias, Noah Rosen and Juan Masullo focus on the impact of the 2016 partial peace agreement on ethnic communities in Chocó through their study of the “Humanitarian Agreement Now” movement and its activities, both before and after the Havana accord.

The next three chapters examine the challenges posed by the Government-FARC peace deal on three municipalities, and the way in which local people have had to adapt to new circumstances within those communities. Cécile Mouly and Karen Bustos in Chap. 5 deal with the hopes and fears of local dwellers in the municipality of Samaniego in Nariño, while Camilo Pardo-Herrera and Raquel Victorino in Chap. 6 survey the problems faced by local people in Policarpa, a municipality also in Nariño, which has suffered from prolonged state neglect and an extended period of guerrilla presence. In both communities they find doubts about whether any genuine form of stable peace has been achieved. Chapter 7 by Laura Villanueva, Claudia Giraldo, Luis Mario Gómez Aristizábal and Didier Giraldo Hernández is more up-beat. Their study of Granada in Antioquia focuses on the various initiatives that local groups and individuals have undertaken to restore infrastructure, education and, most importantly, relationships in this hard-hit part of the country.

In the second major section of the book, the focus switches from the effects of national peace on local peacebuilding in Colombia to a wider consideration of how local communities in other countries have coped with the demands of peace implementation once an elite agreement has been concluded. Paul van Tongeren's comprehensive survey of local peace committees (LPCs) in five African countries in Chap. 8 sets the scene for three subsequent case studies on peacebuilding processes in specific countries. Van Tongeren's comparative survey involves an examination of LPCs in South Africa, the DRC, Sudan, Kenya and Burundi, drawing interesting comparisons from seemingly very diverse examples of connections between national peacemaking and local peacebuilding. René Claude Niyonkuru and Réginas Ndayiragije in Chap. 9 extend the analysis by a detailed and up-to-date evaluation of local peacebuilding in Burundi, and ask the question: Whose version of peace will prevail in that strife-torn country, and with what result? The last two case studies in the book focus on the long drawn-out struggle in the south of the Philippines and the impact of the equally long drawn-out peace process between the government there and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Wendy Kroecker and Myla Leguro in Chap. 10 examine the efforts of local religious leaders in Mindanao to bring together their followers into a less contentious relationship. Megumi Kagawa, in contrast, in Chap. 11 focuses directly on the challenges the National Peace Agreement presents to locally negotiated deals in two communities where security had previously been in the hands

of the MILF insurgents, but which at some not-too-distant time would have to be handed on to the state.

All of these different chapters present a variety of insights and lessons for scholars and analysts interested in long-term peacebuilding, “from the ground up.” The book concludes with a chapter (Chap. 12) by Landon E. Hancock and Susan H. Allen, seeking to distill from very different experiences guidelines that might emerge for local leaders seeking to cope with problems of peace. The one thing it initially seems safe to say is that whatever might be the problems of trying to maintain safety and security in the midst of an intra-state war involving widespread violence, those confronting local leaders in the immediate aftermath of any negotiated peace are equally complex and difficult, if possibly a trifle less dangerous. The book is an effort to throw light on the nature of such problems and—hopefully—suggest some practical solutions.

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