ANNOTATION

Díaz Meza, FSC, Cristhian, "Making Peace Possible: Grassroots Peace-Building Leaders Create and Expand Human Capabilities through Local Initiatives in Colombia." EdD dissertation, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, 2017. 212 pp.

This qualitative study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach to investigate local peacemaking efforts in Columbia in the post-2016 Cartagena Peace Agreement era. The researcher developed a semi-structured interview protocol through expert panel review for the collection of data (81), with data triangulation through participant observation. For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined the core research question under investigation as "How do grassroots peace-building leaders create and expand human capabilities through their local initiatives?" (8). This study utilized purposeful sampling of local grassroots peacemaking leaders in Colombia for a study sample of n=15 (78).

The problem investigated in this study was to understand the role of local leadership in constructing stable social and political structures and the importance of conflict resolution skills, to provide material resources, and to understand the root causes of the conflict (1). Specifically, the research investigated the peacemaking efforts that grew out of local attempts within the context of armed conflict in Colombia during the latter half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century (4). This conflict resulted in more than 220,000 deaths, 5,000,000 people displaced, 6,421 children and teenagers recruited by illegal armed groups, and 25,000 missing people (4). The constructivist grounded theory was chosen to enable the development of a theory that synergized and evaluated the experiences of a group of grassroots peace-building leaders regarding the creation and expansion of human capabilities through local initiatives (9). The justification of this study is centered on the need for more literature from the local level to inform scholars, leaders, and activists in understanding the impact and best practices of local peacemaking efforts (10).

The author offers a comprehensive review of literature concerning peace-building leadership, the human development and capabilities approach, and a review of the Colombian conflict and beginning of the post-conflict era (15-65). The review of literature builds an understanding of peacemaking starting with the 1964 construct identified by Galtung as "positive peace" (16). The review then develops the concept of peacemaking through the areas of political development (17), the peace-building triangle (17), and Paffenholz's five main schools of peacemaking [the conflict management school, the conflict resolution school, the complimentary school, the conflict transformation school, and the alternative discourse school] (20). How leadership models build and support peacemaking leaders is discussed through a variety of theories, including mindsets, ethics and personal characteristics (26).

The literature review next gives a significant treatment of the human development and capabilities approach, presenting a value-laden, multi-dimensional, and multi-sectoral process that involves social, economic, and political change whose main purpose is improving people's lives (28). Finally, the author offers a detailed and thoughtful discussion of the Colombian conflict and beginning of the post-conflict era. This section offers a framework with four distinct periods of the conflict: bipartisan violence becomes subversive violence (1958-1982); expansion of the guerrillas, peace policies, and the emergence of the paramilitaries (1982-1996); the years of humanitarian tragedy, the expansion of the guerrilla and paramilitary groups, the State adrift, and the war of blood and fire for territory (1996-2005); and the AUC (the united self-defense groups of Colombia) negotiate and demobilize (2005-2012). As the State forced the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) into its rearguards (47-48), this review of literature section is competed with a discussion of the development of the peace movement in Colombia post-2013 (57-66).

Chapter three contains a detailed development of the framework and methodology utilized in this study (67-90). Of particular interest is the author's attention given to the theoretical and operational parameters of ground theory research (70-74). A detail description of coding protocols and qualitative memo writing are included (74-75, 85-87). The sampling method (75-83) is described as well as instrument validity, reliability and study validity (83-88). The methodology section concludes with a discussion of the ethical parameters and protections employed in the study (88-91).

The results of the semi-structured interviews and observations are presented as themes/ categories and sub-categories after coding (92-136). The three key overarching themes that were identified were: (a) social, political, and formative conditions for engendering peace and freedom; (b) sense of hope, belonging, and identity; and (c) actions for bringing about personal, social, and political transformation (96). In addition, seventeen sub-categories were identified and discussed. The sub-categories under social, political, and formative conditions for engendering peace and freedom (theme a) were: (i) engaging in political and social action; (ii) creating an intergenerational peace; (iii) educating for a culture of peace; (iv) building peace from the grassroots level; (v) promoting senses, imagination, and thought; and (vi) fostering agency. The sub-categories identified under sense of hope, belonging, and identity (theme b) were: (i) inspiring and furthering local leadership; (ii) interpreting the needs, culture, and reality of the local communities; (iii) keeping and protecting the community's memory; (iv) strengthening cultural identity through territory; and (v) increasing the sense of hope, community, and organization. The sub-categories identified under actions for bringing about personal, social, and political transformation (theme c) were: (i) bolstering resilience and resistance; (ii) affirming and defending human rights; (iii) networking with the purpose of supporting peace actions; (iv) producing and sharing knowledge; (v) empowering community members; and (vi) transforming people's lives.

In the discussion of research results, the author offers an engaging diagram which depicts how the three main themes/ categories of findings – social, political, and formative conditions for engendering peace and freedom; sense of hope, belonging, and identity; and actions for bringing about personal, social, and political transformation – interact and work in concert to explain how peace-building leaders create and expand human capabilities (138). The author offers a thoughtful and engaging discussion of the intricacies of how the sub-categories identified in the data inform

the greater themes (138-157). In his recommendations for practice, the researcher clearly articulates the need for continuing research in this area, for more discussion on the relationship between peacemaking and expansion of the human capabilities model, and the importance of open dialogue between national and regional leadership with local peacemaking leaders. Finally, the author offers a number of suggestions for replication and expansion of this study by future researchers.