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GWEN BURNYEAT

Chocolate, Politics and Peace-Building. An Ethnography of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, Colombia.

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 263 páginas.

San José de Apartadó, Antioquia declared itself a "neutral" peace community in 1997, during the Colombian armed conflict between guerrillas, paramilitaries, and security forces, raging in the Urabá region. For more than 30 years, the Community has managed to survive as the longest enduring peace community in Colombia, gaining domestic and international recognition. Based on five years of fieldwork in the 2010s (first, as a Peace Brigades International observer and, then, as a researcher and film producer and co-director), Gwen Burnyeat wrote Chocolate, Cacao, and Peace-building. Her goal is to understand the construction of the Community's collective identity through two key interpretive frameworks, the radical and the organic narratives. These narratives reflect the Community's rocky, tense relationship with the Colombian state as well as the environmentally sustainable cacao and chocolate production that supports the community economically. Together, they undergird the Community members' perceptions of the world and their collective identity as an alternative community.

Drawing from Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory, Burnyeat argues that identity narratives are produced with and thorough everyday cultural practices such as tending cacao groves, residents' interactions with government and military officials and internal community meetings. Her approach is emic, not aspiring to generate another study of state discourses or an exportable model of peace-building or organic production. Rather, Burnyeat strives to understand residents and social movements in their own terms, situating her analysis in the Community members' worldviews, not those imposed on them by the state or outsiders. Hence, out of respect to residents' viewpoints, Burnyeat refers to San José de Apartadó as the "Community."

Consistent with this grounded approach, the book shows that the Community's narratives and collective identity did not develop in isolation. Rather, they grew out of a specific historical context, including

the Community's persecution due to its associations with the leftist political party, the Unión Patriótica, in the 1980s and 1990s, the state's antagonism to the Community's neutrality position, and repeated massacres and displacements of community members (committed mostly by the paramilitaries but also by the guerrilla and the security forces).

The historical context has framed the construction of the Community's two key identity narratives, the radical and organic narratives. Burnyeat describes the radical narrative as a culturally and historically produced interpretative scheme or script, a framework that the community uses to analyze and perceive the state and all its actions. It has developed over time, based on state-Community encounters, including human rights violations and bureaucratic inefficiencies and miscommunications. Among the most difficult relationships have been those with local security forces, especially the army, who have refused to accept that they cannot enter or control a peace community or who have disrespectfully camped in cacao groves, trampled plants, and left trash, putting the groves' organic certifications at risk. Cumulatively, these clashes and interactions, big and small, have hardened the Community's collective identity as a victim of the state and its aggressions.

The radical narrative interweaves with the Community's stance of peacefully resisting all violent actors, including the security forces, the paramilitaries, and the guerrillas. The book explores the origins and different, complex meanings of the concept of neutrality. Originally, this was a short-term survival strategy, centering on not dealing with any violent actor or allowing them into the community. However, it grew into a longer-term organizational process that included denouncing human rights abuses and challenging the dehumanization of armed conflict victims.

Despite support from progressive Jesuits and domestic and international NGOs, the neutrality stance's maintenance has not been easy in a long-standing, conflict situation with continuing physical and symbolic violations against the Community. As a result, the radical narrative has focused on the Community's victimization and an us- versus- them dichotomy. Community members have come to view that the state, regardless of who is president, as being illegitimate and corrupt, and wanting to eliminate them and all social organizations. Furthermore, it sees the state as allying with multinational organizations, powerful

private interests, and paramilitaries, and targeting the Community's land and natural resources. Not surprising, in 2003, after a lacunae of state action surrounding a massacre and a difficult, protracted experience with the federal government commission investigating the massacre (that included putting community members who testified at risk), the Community declared themselves to be in "ruptura" with the state, especially the judiciary.

Along with the radical narrative, the organic narrative shapes the Community's collective identity. Burnyeat (2018, 175) defines the organic narrative as the interpretative framework by which the "Community perceives their relationships with their natural and social environments, which mirror each other symbiotically in the parallel of 'organic' with 'organisation'" Its key components are "the importance of food sovereignty, the contrast with the inorganic, perceptions of development and capitalism, and the importance of being organised" (Burnyeat 2018, 201). Although the organic narrative existed before 1990s, it coalesced as the peace community evolved and developed decisive relationships with fair-trade groups such as the European company, Lush Cosmetics.

The organic narrative intertwines with the Community's emphasis on economic and environmental sustainability. Consistent with her grassroots approach, Burnyeat observed and participated in the daily but complex practices of maintaining and reviving cacao groves, re-establishing and supporting cacao collectives, and manufacturing chocolate products, especially organic ones. These material and cultural acts help form the organic narrative, reinforcing the Community's collective identity, solidarity, agency, self-organization (e.g., weekly community work and work groups to protect against armed groups such as the paramilitaries), and focus on the symbiosis between the natural and social environments.

Like the radical narrative, the organic narrative is deeply political, rejecting capitalistic models and emphasizing autonomy from the state and dominant private economic interests. Together, the radical and organic narratives mutually buttress how the Community sees itself and its collective identity as an alternative community. While the term, "alternative identity," is the author's term not the Community's concept, Burnyeat argues that it expresses the Community's support for nature, peace, non-violence, resistance, grassroots organizational processes,

a commitment to transcending individuals' needs and interests, and a stance of being an alternative to violence, capitalism, and the state.

The book ends with a discussion of Johan Galtung's influential concepts of negative peace and positive peace. Burnyeat links these two concepts to the radical and organic narratives, and the Community's support for alternative concepts. As a peace community that fosters sustainable communities infused with dignity and equality, the Community not only strives for negative peace (freedom from violence and war), but for the more expansive, broader goal of positive peace (reduction of indirect and structural violence that are the roots of war).

As the preceding paragraphs illustrate, Burnyeat's well-researched, complex book makes significant contributions to the studies of the state and peace. Like the radical narrative, academics often view the state as a static, homogeneous entity. Burnyeat, however, adapts a much more nuanced, dynamic view of the state. She stresses the multi-faceted, complexity of the state, including its assorted levels (e.g., local, provincial, federal, and executive), and multiple components with diverse aims and purposes (e.g., defense –versus– education ministries). Additionally, the book's grounds its analysis of the state historically, especially in its examination of the differences between the administrations of Alvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos, their stances about peace communities and the armed conflict, and the Community's invariable views of the state during these presidencies.

Drawing from the anthropology of the state literatures, Burnyeat situates her research within debates, especially anthropological ones that discuss the state's material and imaginative dimensions, and their production and reconstruction via state-society encounters. This leads to her key insight for studies of the state and peace. Regardless of their veracity or not, the communities' perceptions of the state must be taken into seriously in peace- and trust-building attempts. Understanding community interpretative narratives, their collective identities, and the genesis of their worldviews, allows outsiders such as government and NGO officials to contextualize and better understand community members actions and reactions in long-standing conflict situations.

The book offers other insights for Peace Studies, including the formation and maintenance of peace communities, the contributions of the progressive parts of the Catholic Church to peace communities, the

peace communities' relationships with the state, and the difficulties of maintaining neutrality in conflict situations. Moreover, unlike studies that either devote minimal time to the economics of peace building or, conversely, concentrate principally on economic issues, Burnyeat balances her examination of the political and economic dimensions of peace building, including relating economic sustainability to the construction of viable, positive peace.

My main critiques revolve around several areas that Burnyeat could have expanded on more. It would have been illuminating to have more reflections about the author's role in the Colombian conflict situation and the substantive change from international accompaniment to ethnographer to producer and co-director for a film about the Community. These transitions commonly occur, sometimes simultaneously, for ethnographers. What do these shifts mean for the ethnographer and the literatures about ethnographic field roles and ethical dilemmas?

Another topic this book could have explored more is its contributions to the social movements' literature. A discussion about the overlap and distinction between peace communities and social movements would have been valuable. Although many studies focus on social movements and their cultural aspects, they often do so simplistically, without an in-depth focus on the cultural meanings for community members, their interpretative frameworks and their collective identities. A more detailed, expansion of Burnyeat's insights and their implications for studies about social movements would offer an antidote to analyses that employ less sophisticated, grounded approaches to culture, social movements, and collective identities.

Last, the book would have benefited from a brief explanation of domestic and international human rights communities and their narratives and discourses. Except for her discussion about the progressive Catholic Church, Burnyeat often treats domestic and international human rights groups and their narratives and discourses vaguely, as static, homogeneous entities, ignoring the variation within those communities, and their changes over time. At times, she refers to them without summarizing them and specifying how they overlap and diverge from the Community's narratives and discourses. For example, Burnyeat (2018, 232) writes "human rights discourse makes evaluative claims," without specifying whether she is referring to

Colombian or international human rights discourses or both. The quote has an important insight, but it would have also been good to understand human rights discourses better, the narratives that the Community is selectively drawing from, and the effects of the Community's narratives and stances on domestic and international human rights discussions.

Maybe these are topics to be explored in another book. In the meantime, the current book is worthwhile reading. It is of special import to anthropologists, (especially those who focus on anthropology of the state), political sociologists, social movement researchers, political scientists, scholars in Peace Studies and Justice Studies, and scholars interested in the contemporary history of Colombia and its armed conflicts. Burnyeat's sophisticated, grounded approach and valuable research about peace communities and sustainability will contribute to future discussions about the state, the importance of Community members' identity narratives, and how to achieve sustainable, positive peace.

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