

“PEACE IS A PROCESS”

Local Narratives of Peace and the Conflict Transformation Discourse
in South Sudan

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Tutkimukseni tavoitteena on tarkastella eteläsudanilaisten kansalaisjärjestötoimijoiden näkemyksiä rauhasta itsenäistymisen jälkeisessä Etelä-Sudanissa. Tutkimuksen tehtävänä on selvittää, kuinka ”conflict transformation” ajattelu on vaikuttanut paikallisten rauhan narratiivien muodostumiseen ja tämän analyysin kautta pohtia paikallisen ja kansainvälisten toimijoiden suhdetta Etelä-Sudanin rauhanrakentamisessa. Aineistona tutkimuksessa toimii Crisis Management Initiativen (CMI) keräämä haastatteluaineisto eteläsudanilaisten nuorisojärjestötoimijoiden parissa. Kriittisen narratiivisen analyysin kautta tutkimus pyrkii tuomaan esiin paikallisten näkemysten ja kansainvälisten rauhanrakennusdiskurssien välistä suhdetta ja siihen sisältyviä valtarakenteita. Tutkimus osallistuu kriittisen rauhantutkimuksen keskeisiin keskusteluihin ja avaa näkemyksiä myös Etelä-Sudanin tämän hetkisen sisällissodan taustoihin.

Analyysissa haastatteluja jäseneltiin rauhan narratiivien kautta. Haastattelujen esiin nostamat narratiivit tuovat esiin vahvan paikallisen toimijuuden haastateltavien keskuudessa ja narratiivit myötäilevät monin paikoin ”conflict transformation” ajattelun keskeisiä painopisteitä, kuten ajatusta positiivisesta rauhasta ja pitkäjänteisestä työstä. Narratiivit poikkesivat kuitenkin paikoin ”conflict transformation” ajattelun näkemyksistä ja eteläsudanilaisten toimijoiden näkemykset tuntuvat nostavan esiin laajempia vaikutteita kehitysyhteistyön keskeisistä diskursseista. Nämä vaikutteet linjaavat kansalaisjärjestöjen käsitystä omasta toimijuudestaan kohti maltillisempia järjestötoiminnan muotoja kohtaan. Jättäen ”conflict transformation” ajatteluun kuuluvan ajatuksen (väkivallattomasta) konfliktista ja rakentavasta kriittisyydestä muutoksen mahdollistajana marginaaliseen asemaan. Samanaikaisesti narratiivit linjaavat nuorisotoimijoiden intressit pääasiallisesti omien yhteisöjensä toimintaan kansallisen tason sijaan.

Tutkielma tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että itsenäisyyden ensi askeleet Etelä-Sudanissa toteutuivat vielä varsin epävarmassa ja räjähdysalttiissa ilmapiiressä. Pitkän väkivallan historian arvet olivat vielä tuoreena narratiiveissa ja kenties juuri tästä syystä kansalaisjärjestöjen rooliksi identifioitiin yhteisöjen hyvinvoinnin tukeminen ja rauhallisten suhteiden luominen. Narratiivit nostivat myös esiin nuorisotoimijoiden oman toimijuuden ja yritykset oman asiantuntijuuden vahvistamisesta. Nämä osoittavat vahvaa paikallista aloitteellisuutta, joka voi tulevaisuudessa tukea ”conflict transformation” ajattelun mukaista kehityskulkua kohti toimivaa ja tasa-arvoista yhteiskuntaa, jossa kansalaisjärjestöillä on myös kriittinen rooli kansallisen poliittisen tason haastajana.

Avainsanat: conflict transformation, South Sudan, civil society, peace, critical narrative analysis

ABSTRACT

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This research seeks to analyse the informal processes of peace in post-independence South Sudan. Through using conflict transformation and the local turn in peacebuilding as theoretical frameworks, this research seeks to engage with the local narratives of peace. Furthermore, it seeks to investigate the relationship between local agency and international involvement in building sustainable peace processes. With interview data collected from South Sudanese youth activists by Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) in cooperation with local partners, this research hopes to contribute both to the emerging literature on critical peace studies and to the understanding of contemporary conflict dynamics in South Sudan.

In the analysis, the empirical data was conceptualised through narratives of peace. These narratives of peace bring forth a strong local agency and are in line with many of the central ideas of conflict transformation. These ideas include the idea of positive peace (in opposition to peace as absence of violence) and the understanding of the long time-span of the work. These narratives seem to also parallel some other central discourses of international development, which posit the civil society in a moderate form of associational cooperation. As a result, the narratives depart from conflict transformation precisely in terms of the transformation. South Sudanese youth civil society actors do not acknowledge the central idea of (non-violent) conflict and constructive criticism as enablers of societal development. Simultaneously the narratives line the local agency mainly in terms of local communities creating an image of a civil society vacuum in the national scope.

Based on the findings, it can be argued that the first months of independence in South Sudan witnessed an unstable and volatile society. The long history of violence and insecurity was still strongly embedded in the narratives and this led the interviewees to identify their role as bringers of peace and negotiators of more peaceful relationships between different groups in their communities. The narratives also highlighted the strong agency of the local youth as well as their attempts to improve their own expertise. If supported, this agency could support future attempts at conflict transformation towards a sustainable and peaceful society, where civil society functions also as a critical actor challenging national public debate and politics.

Keywords: conflict transformation, South Sudan, civil society, peace, critical narrative analysis

Contents

List of Abbreviations

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. The History of Conflict in South Sudan	1
1.2. Research Question	4
1.3. The Data	6
1.4. Critical Narrative Analysis	10
2. THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK	13
2.1. Approaches to Conflict	13
2.2. The Local Turn(s) and Conflict Transformation	17
2.3. South-Sudanese Civil Society	22
3. NARRATIVES OF PEACE	25
3.1. The Importance of Peace	25
3.2. Governance	33
3.3. National Unity	40
4. THE PREVALENCE OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION	46
4.1. The Prevalence of Conflict Transformation	46
4.2. The Problem of the Local	50
5. CONCLUSIONS	55
LIST OF REFERENCES	60

Attachment 1. Table of Narratives of peace

Attachment 2. The Pre-assessment questionnaire / CMI

List of Abbreviations

CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CNA	Critical Narrative Analysis
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ONAD	Organization for Nonviolence and Development
UN	United Nations
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement (the political wing of the SPLA)

1. INTRODUCTION

This research aims to analyse the informal processes of peace in South Sudan. Through using conflict transformation and the local turn in peacebuilding as theoretical frameworks, this research seeks to engage with the local narratives of peace. Furthermore, it seeks to investigate the relationship between local agency and international involvement in building sustainable peace processes. Through analysis of interview data collected from South Sudanese youth civil society activists by Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) in cooperation with local partners, this research hopes to contribute both to the emerging literature on critical peace studies and to the understanding of contemporary conflict dynamics in South Sudan.

1.1. The History of Conflict in South Sudan

In January of 2005, Sudan and South Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The treaty brought an end to a cycle of civil wars that has been termed as the world's longest running conflict (Jok 2007). Eventually the CPA led also to the independence of South Sudan following a 98,8% vote for independence in a referendum that was held in January 2011. Despite high hopes and the nominal achievement of peace, South Sudan was and still is facing enormous challenges. By the time of the CPA, South Sudan had witnessed sixty years of oppression, out of which almost 50 years it had been in full blown civil war.

Decades of war had destroyed the infrastructure almost completely and the newly independent country was lacking facilities and funds for securing even the most basic services. Additionally according to van Leeuwen (2009, 78) the civil war in southern Sudan had manifested in many regional conflicts that took different forms in local level. This has intensified existing local conflicts such as inter-ethnic conflicts, resource conflicts over land and cattle, conflict between communities, as well as, conflicts between displaced people and local populations. The CPA did provide the chance to change this dynamic. However, for example, Belloni has argued that the years after the CPA represented a "missed opportunity" (Belloni 2011, 424) as during the post-CPA years "[m]ost of the donor resources were directed to provide humanitarian assistance in Darfur at the expense of the implementation of much-needed infrastructure projects in the South"

(ibid.).

In hindsight, the history and burden of war seems to have been too heavy as the newly independent state of South Sudan fell into yet another escalating cycle of violence in 2013. The most recent conflict has taken strong ethnic undertones, as majority of the fighting has been between the Dinka and the Nuer. The conflict has also witnessed the re-emergence of many old divisions from the wars. (Belloni 2011, 425) Although the fundamental cause on the level of leadership is one of a power struggle, the “pervasive poverty, combined with continuing insecurity, lack of infrastructure, and limited market opportunities have combined to create a general landscape of deprivation, discrimination, and marginalization; a landscape in which local conflicts often result in ethnically defined casualties” (Laudati 2011, 21). Despite international pressure and several attempts to negotiate peace, the conflict is still ongoing.

The roots of the previous conflict between Sudan and South Sudan as well as the idea of a place called South Sudan, predate the independence of Sudan (see for example Johnsson 2011, Jok 2007, LeRiche and Arnold 2012). As noted by LeRiche et.al. “[b]y the time of Sudan’s independence, Southern Sudan existed in nascent form as a regional identity and political construct” (2012, 16). As shown by for example Johnson, the regions were initially also approached as separate entities by the British colonial rule (2011, 11). The British only consolidated the two entities into one in 1946. Just ten years before independence. The Sudanese civil wars (the first civil war also known as the Anyanya Rebellion 1955–72 and the second civil war fought by the SPLA 1983–2005) are often painted as a liberation war between the dominant Muslim/Arab north and the disenfranchised Christian and African south. Although as it in most cases is, the reality of the conflict as well as its resolution was more complex.

At least two complexities need to be highlighted. First, as noted by Laudati (2011, 15–16) “[p]roblematic in such a telling of Sudan’s civil war [...] is that it obscures the deep rifts and often hostile and antagonistic relationships among and between the various regional groups, including the largely Dinka led-SPLA’s role as occupier and oppressor within South Sudan”. Especially the second Sudanese civil war was characterized by several fractures in the Southern troops especially between the mainstream SPLA (composed mainly of Dinka) and the various

Nuer factions (see Johnsson 2003, Laudati 2011, LeRiche et.al. 2012). The Northern leadership was often accused of sponsoring dissident groups in the South and these fractures to some extent are still prevalent in the contemporary conflict. For example Riek Machar, the current Vice President and the leader of the main opposition forces in the contemporary conflict, defected from SPLA in 1991 with alleged support from Khartoum (LeRiche et.al. 2012, 44–45; De Simone 2015, 62-63). Due to these internal rifts, a significant portion of the fighting took place between Southern forces. Copnall has stated that “[b]y some estimates, the majority of the deaths in combat came in clashes between different southern Sudanese forces, rather than in fighting between the southern rebels and the Sudanese army. [...] many South Sudanese groups have bitter memories of fighting their southern neighbors.” (Copnal 2014, 26–27). Much of the same dynamic is still prevalent in South Sudan. SPLM has increasingly been criticized for the Dinka domination of the political realm and the old hostilities between the Dinka and Nuer factions of the SPLA are fueling also the contemporary conflict (Rolandsen 2015, 167).

Secondly, the second Sudanese civil war fought by the SPLA and led by John Garang, was fundamentally considered as a revolutionary war (see for example Johnsson 2011; LeRiche et.al. 2012). According to many commentators, the ultimate goal of Garang was not the independence of South Sudan. Rather Garang aimed at revolution and a transformation of the whole state of Sudan and the Sudanese political system. Even the main aim of the CPA was to transform the Sudanese state as a whole and “give unity a chance”. However, the death of Garang in July 2005 changed the course of events. The new leadership of the SPLA/M soon started to aim for the independence of the South. The Southern claims were compounded by the lack of political will on the Northern side to take on the transformation work. Although considered as a mild success in terms of bringing relative peace to the region, many believe the CPA to be an utter failure when it comes to this transformative agenda (see for example Laudati 2011, 19; Pendle 2014, 228).

At the time of the data collection however, we were in the first months of independence. This was a period of relative calm. Although the period experienced some discontent and hostility (see for example LeRiche et.al. 2012, 115), the interviews paint this period as a season of hope. South Sudan was receiving a lot of international attention and assistance, and many who had escaped

the war were now returning home with big plans and high hopes. The war was finally over and after decades of Northern domination, South Sudan was finally in charge of its own resources.

The decades of war had however left their mark on South Sudan. As a result of war, famine and disease, approximately two million people had died in the second civil war. Another four million people had been displaced both inside and outside South Sudan's borders. With the achievement of peace, the newly independent nation was faced with the influx of returnees, a devastated infrastructure and what many argued was a deeply divided society. Expressions of "Southern solidarity" were high around the CPA interim period and the early months of independence, but many researchers and activists were suspicious about the depth of the newly found solidarity (see for example Laudati 2011) and were concerned that the newly independent state would soon collapse into a new spiral of conflict. As noted by Rolandsen (2015, 171) the long civil war, internal conflicts and high insecurity had "militarized the South Sudanese society and generated layers of grievances and animosity".

1.2. Research Question

The focus of this research is in the initial period following independence in July 2011. As noted above the period was a season of hope, but also a time when the society at large was deeply traumatized. The referendum and the independence displayed southern solidarity, but this solidarity seemed to only mask deeper divisions and histories of grievances. As such, South Sudan represents a model case of an intractable conflict. Intractable conflicts, due to their multifaceted and complex nature can often be immune to resolution efforts (Jeong 2008, 12). Additionally, according to Jeong intractable conflicts have widespread effects in "almost every dimension of human life" (ibid.). Intractability can be seen to be sustained specifically by the "subjective processes of meaning making that contribute to inflexibility" (ibid.). It is precisely this comprehensive nature of the conflict, which also requires comprehensive solutions. Conflict transformation has been identified as a suitable approach especially in long, intractable conflict as well as conflicts where the society is deeply divided.

Through analyzing 108 interviews of youth civil society activist in South Sudan, this research

hopes to identify the general narratives of peace in the first months of the independent South Sudan. Through critical narrative analysis, this research seeks to further analyze these narratives from the viewpoint of conflict transformation theory. Especially focusing on questions of local ownership that are central in conflict transformation, this research hopes to analyze the different levels of agency embedded in the peacebuilding processes. The more specific research questions are;

- 1) How do the South-Sudanese youth NGO actors perceive and narrate peace and the issues that hinder and enable the process for achieving peace?
- 2) Can influence of the conflict transformation model be identified in the narratives of local civil society in Southern Sudan? Moreover, if so, does the conflict transformation function as a power discourse among the South Sudanese youth activists?

For the purpose of identifying the influence of the conflict transformation discourse in the local narratives of peace, conflict transformation is defined as follows:

Conflict transformation is a holistic approach to peacebuilding with a very **long time span**. It acknowledges **conflict as a central factor in society** and rather than seeking to suppress conflicts, it aims at resolving underlying causes of conflicts and at enabling and constructing **non-violent ways to resolve conflicts**. Through this, it hopes to empower local communities to actively participate in changing their own communities towards well functioning, equal and peaceful societies. It is centered on the **local non-governmental actors** in the middle and grassroots level. It recognizes local people as resources and not recipients in peacebuilding and it is **focused on people: their skills, attitudes, actions and relationships**. Especially the focus on rebuilding and restoring fractured relationships, sets conflict transformation apart from liberal peacebuilding framework. Activities include, workshops, training, popular education, bridging communities, media and arts projects and advocacy projects. Although local actors are identified as the drivers of the process, the role of outside facilitators in enabling the process is acknowledged.

1.3. The Data

As the source material, I am using interviews collected by Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) in cooperation with the Centre for Peace and Development Studies of the University of Juba and the Organization for Nonviolence and Development (ONAD). The interviews were collected between October and November 2011 - around three to four months after the independence. A pre-assessment report was published based on these interviews in spring 2012 (see Taflinski 2012). The group of researchers consisted mainly of

local staff and a few international experts. I was personally not part of this team of researchers. Access to the material was gained through personal contacts made to the CMI staff members while I was working on a similar project in South Sudan in 2010 as well as through negotiations with the CMI office in Helsinki. However, I was not involved in planning the initiative, nor working for it neither prior nor after the collection of the data. The rights to use the interview data and the original transcripts as the primary data of this Master's thesis was granted to the author by Ms. Pia Weurlander, (CMI Project Manager in charge of the South Sudan -project). Simultaneously, certain limitations and restrictions to the use of that data were agreed between Ms. Weurlander and the author (Johanna Turunen). This agreement was made in December 2012. In accordance with this agreement, a strict anonymity policy protecting the identity of the interviewees has been followed.

Total number of interviewees per state:	
Western Bahr El Ghazal	12
Lakes State	11
Warrap State	10
Eastern Equatoria	10
Central Equatoria	10
Western Equatoria	15
Jonglei State	12
Northern Bahr el Ghazal	15
Upper Nile State	13
Total:	108

As a part of a pre-assessment for future state building projects, CMI interviewed 108 active youth leaders from nine of the ten states of South Sudan. The goal was to conduct interviews in all ten states, but the security situation in Unity State prevented CMI from conducting interviews among the youth there. As agreed with CMI, no information that could help identify the interviewees will be made public. All references and citations to the interviews will be based on a randomized number code (for example informant 12). Gender, place of residence, affiliation, age or any other personal details will not be included. Short citations from the interview notes will, however, be

used as illustration of the types of comments made by the respondents.

The *Youth Dialogue in Confidence and State-Building* -report edited by Philippe Taflinski (2012), field coordinator of CMI, represented the main findings from the interviews. In addition to description of methodology, definitions of key concepts and the background information of the interviewed youth, the report consisted mainly of three areas of analysis:

- conflict trends and their regional variations
- other challenges and their regional variation
- baseline assessment on qualitative data collected as part of the interviews

The baseline assessment discussed especially issues of youth interaction between tribes, youth involvement in violence, general level of violence in the area and the level of trust between the youth and local and national government. Since this regional mapping has already been done and can be found in the CMI report, I will try to add a new level of analysis to the material. Through critical narrative analysis, I will analyze central meta- and sub narratives from the interviews and compare them to the conflict transformation discourse (see more in chapter 1.4.).

For the purpose of this research, there are some limitations in the data. First, as noted also in the CMI report (see Taflinski 2012), the interviews represent a quite well educated urban group of youth that is highly capable of reflection. The views of this somewhat privileged group most likely differ significantly from those of their peers in rural areas. Similarly, they most likely differ from views of people from other age groups. Therefore, it can be asserted that the interviews do not represent the views of all South Sudanese youth and even less of the South Sudanese society at large. For this reason, this research does not attempt to evaluate the relevance of the claims made by the interviewees. Nor will it seek to generalize something descriptive of the situation in South Sudan during the early months of independence. Rather, the goal of this research is to analyse the prevalence of conflict transformation discourse in the interviews of the South Sudanese youth activists and through this analysis discuss some central aspects of the conflict transformation model.

Secondly, the interviews were not recorded in their totality. The material provided to me

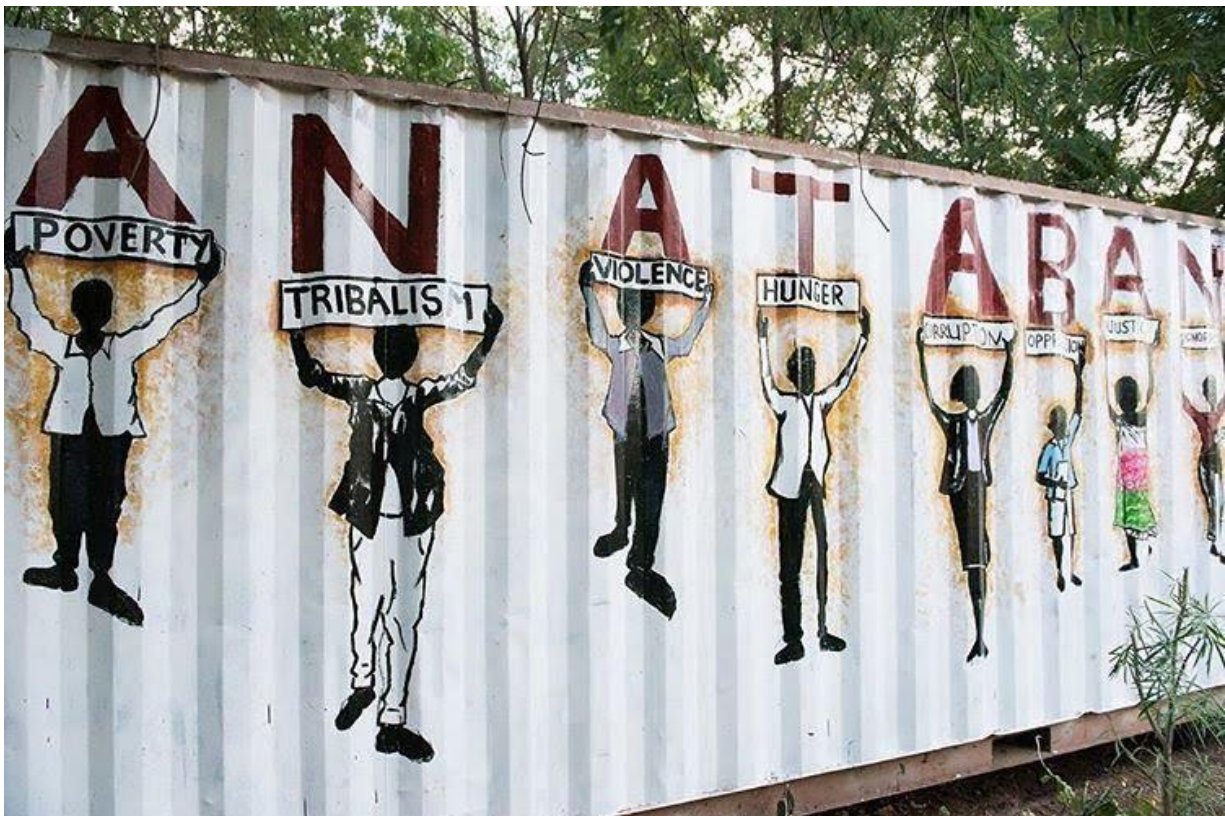
consisted of handwritten transcripts of the interviews. Although quite extensive, these transcripts do not contain the word-to-word comments of the interviewees. There is a risk that some issues have been lost or misrepresented in the notes. Additionally, the views of the interviewer may influence what actually is valued as important and therefore written down. As a way to counter this lack of word-to-word accounts the abstractions involved in narrative analysis proved useful. Through identifying commonalities in the stories told by separate informants, it was possible to move beyond the individual words and search for the broader narrative structures.

Before moving more deeply into the different aspects of critical narrative analysis, a short description of the backgrounds of the interviewees is needed. The interviewees were all active in South Sudanese civil society organizations, youth organizations, student youth unions and Church and Islamic groups. All interviewees were between 16 and 40 years of age, from 27 different tribes (which is reflective of the numerous tribes in South Sudan), and with different historical backgrounds – 55 percent of the interviewees were from the diaspora (moved to East-Africa or the West during the civil war), 19 percent were returnees from Northern Sudan, and the remaining 26 percent had stayed in South Sudan through the civil war. Despite efforts for gender balance, the interviewees were predominantly male. South Sudan is a male dominated society and women are less likely to be socially active in the public and social sphere. However a level of 20 percent of women interviewees was reached. The interviewees all lived in urban areas in the state capitals.

It is also noteworthy that the interviewees were highly educated. A total of 57 percent had finished or were in the process of finishing higher education. Additionally 42 percent of the interviewees had at least secondary education, while only one interviewee had attended only primary education. The national literary statistics show that only 27 percent of the adult population is literate. Although the literacy rate of urban population is significantly higher at 53 percent (NBS, key indicators for South Sudan), it is evident, that in terms of education and human capital the interviewees belong to a very privileged group in South Sudan. The high level of education can partly be credited to the fact that a large majority of the interviewees had escaped to either Khartoum or neighboring countries during the war and had therefore had much better access to quality education than the vast majority of South Sudanese, who were in South Sudan

through the war. During the civil war the education opportunities in South Sudan were very limited, even non-existent in some regions.

Finally, in addition to the interviews material some photographs of street art done by the local Ana Taban art and culture collective are used as illustrations. Ana Taban is great example of a locally initiated conflict transformation process. Ana Taban, meaning “I am tired” in Arabic is a movement that initially started from a rap video done by local musicians and rap artists. Consisting of young, local artists and activist, Ana Taban have painted several murals on the streets of Juba, the capital of South Sudan, and are currently also organizing art workshops and open mic events for youth in Juba. The street art expresses the views and frustrations of urban youth. The pictures used, are collected from the Facebook and Twitter pages of Ana Taban and Ana Taban holds all copyrights of the pictures.



Picture 1. The signs read POVERTY, TRIBALISM, VIOLENCE, HUNGER, CORRUPTION, OPPRESSION, INJUSTICE, and IGNORANCE.

1.4. Critical Narrative Analysis

I approach the interview material collected by CMI as narratives of peace. Through critical narrative analysis (CNA) I will analyse these narratives in relation with the conflict transformation approach. The analysis is twofold: first, the interviews are analyzed through narrative analysis in their local context in South Sudan; secondly, these narratives will be analyzed through critical discourse analysis in the broader context of international peacebuilding. The ultimate goal is to analyze whether conflict transformation discourse works as a colonizing “power discourse” (Souto-Manning 2012) in the context of South Sudanese youth activists.

Narrative inquiry takes many forms (see for example Polkinghorn 1995). Narrative analysis aims to identify what types of stories are told about a specific topic and/or what kind of stories represent a certain phenomenon in culture and society. Moen (2006, 2) has stated that “[f]or most people, storytelling is a natural way of recounting experience, a practical solution to a fundamental problem in life, creating reasonable order out of experience.” In line with Moen, the narratives created out of the interviews can be approached as attempts to make sense of the conflict and peace dynamics of South Sudan. Furthermore, Polkinghorne (1995, 6) states that narrative meaning “works to draw together human actions and the events that affect human beings”. Polkinghorn links narratives as mainly stories that focus around human action and human relations. Therefore, narrative analysis by nature is people centered. I understand these narratives as ways that the youth activists that were interviewed create meaning out of the social reality around them. These meanings are created in dialogue and they are linked to the broader dynamics of peacebuilding that affect the South Sudanese society beyond the personal experience of the interviewed youth. As noted already above, I do not attempt to analyse the validity of these narratives, but rather seek to analyse what do the types of stories told, tell us about the broader discussion around conflict transformation.

Polkinghorne (1995, 6) has divided narrative approaches under analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. In their simplest forms, analysis of narratives comprises the use of narratives as data in research in an attempt to produce certain categorizations from these narratives, whereas narrative analysis seeks to organize and make sense of separate events and knowledge produced

by separate individuals through turning them into narrative form. Within this research, I will analyze the 108 interviews collected by CMI and through narrative analysis identify common issues and threads from these separate interviews. Within the analysis, (see chapter 3) I have collected these common issues under meta-narratives and sub-narratives. As the total number of interviews is high (n=108), it is evident that there are many differing views. In the analysis, the conflicting narratives will be represented, but naturally, the full spectrum of opinions will not be represented in totality. Identifying narratives from a broad qualitative data requires certain abstraction, which inevitably renders some aspects as less visible. Additionally, there are several aspects of the interviews that have already been thoroughly analyzed in the CMI report. I will not attempt to duplicate this work.

I believe that the added benefit of my chosen approach comes especially from the analysis of the influence of and power embedded in what I have termed the conflict transformation discourse. I believe questions of power are crucial when discussing conflict transformation. Initially coined by Paul Lederach (see for example Lederach [1997] 2010, 2005) and influenced by central thinkers such as Johan Galtung (1969), the idea of conflict transformation was quickly incorporated by big international NGOs and networks such as the Berghof Foundation, Beyond Intractability and Transconflict. One central aspect or difference when compared with other approaches to conflicts is the strong emphasis on local ownership of the peace process. By locality, the conflict transformation school especially means the involvement of local non-governmental actors from the middle and grassroots levels. This “local turn” has been heavily criticized (see for example Mac Ginty 2013, 2015, Paffenholtz 2015). A central critique is the inability to go over the international power hierarchy embedded in peacebuilding. This hierarchy posits the “local” in a highly ambivalent position – as on the other hand the leader or instigator of the process but at the same time the beneficiary of the interventions by international NGOs. For this reason, simple narrative analysis is not enough. Combining aspects from narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis provides a framework that allows analysis a large qualitative data through narratives without leaving out the crucial issues of power that are intertwined in the recirculation of these discourses.

In order to gain access to the power dynamics of around the conflict transformation discourse, I

will use critical narrative analysis (CNA) as my methodological framework. As noted by Souto-Manning (2014, 163) “narrative analysis without CDA can remain at an uncritical level”. Combining narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis, Souto-Manning has stated enables “critical analysis of narratives in the lifeworld – the everyday stories people tell – within the context of institutional discourses” (ibid.). Through combining the institutional and personal level, Souto-Manning argues it is possible to analyze the influence of institutional discourses on the ground level. It allows us to look into the colonizing tendencies of dominant institutional discourses or into what Souto-Manning calls “power discourses”. Within this research, this also enables us to go beyond identifying the narratives into analyzing the crucial power hierarchies embedded in peacebuilding.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

Within this chapter, I wish to accomplish three things: describe the historical events that lead to more prominent conflict transformation thinking in terms of conflict and aid; define what precisely is meant by conflict transformation; and finally I will offer a short introduction to the main actor within conflict transformation efforts in South Sudan - the South Sudanese civil society.

2.1. Approaches to Conflict

Traditionally conflict resolution has been seen as a state issue. Conflicts were most commonly resolved in high-level diplomatic meetings between two or more states and the role of additional actors was minimal. In the past decades, the traditional view of conflict resolution has had to give way to a more inclusive ways of resolving conflicts, between multiple, often informal, actors. It was in 1982 that William Davidson and Joseph Montville (154-7) distinguished between the traditional official government diplomacy, which they labeled as “track one” diplomacy and the unofficial, informal non-governmental actions to resolve conflicts within and between states as “track two” diplomacy. They believed that “track two” diplomacy, even though being placed outside the formal political processes, was crucial in achieving the critical mass behind lobbying for peaceful solutions because it is easier for people to respond to. However, they did not think that “track two” alone was sufficient for an alternative for “track one” diplomacy and in fact described it mainly as cultural and scientific exchanges. Therefore, the “track two” diplomacy was seen to strengthen the “track one” from below, but not to replace it.

It was not however until the 1990’s and after the end of the Cold War that the “track two” moved into the mainstream of conflict resolution and more importantly into the mainstream of peacebuilding. Despite the broader understanding of actors involved in the process, the primary actions still revolved around international interventions. Peacebuilding efforts still mainly focused on mediation and implementation of peace agreements. Soon also statebuilding was added to the main peacebuilding activities. These functions came to form the basis for what is today called the liberal peace framework. (Paffenholz 2015, 858; see also Richmond 200).

The end of the Cold War changed the realm of peacebuilding and conflict response in many ways. For one, it changed the form of the conflicts from international conflicts into intra-state conflicts. Lederach notes that most contemporary conflicts take an intrastate nature and majority of these conflicts can be argued to revolve around questions of governance and control of certain areas or resources ([1997] 2010, 8). In the general discussion and in the media these conflicts are often framed as ethnic conflicts, but according to Lederach “there is nothing innately ethnic about them” (ibid.). Rather the fundamental causes for these conflicts can be found from “the failure of governing structures to address fundamental needs, provide space for participation in decisions and ensure an equitable distribution of resources and benefits”. (ibid.) Due to this uneven access to land and resources, the conflicts often takes the form of identity groups. Once conflicts come attached to group identities, the dynamic of the conflicts become more fractured. That meant that it was no longer possible to resolve conflicts through traditional state diplomacy, for there were no two states to sit into the table. Mathijs van Leeuwen (2009, 4) also argues that the change to intra-state conflicts turned the violence more towards civilians and in fact this blurred the distinction between soldiers, rebels and civilians and led to many new actors outside the traditional military and government to want to have a say in the negotiation tables. These types of conflicts emerge most commonly in societies where the state had lost its monopoly on organized violence and with the expansion of non-state hostile groups “track two” diplomacy is gaining ground in conflict resolution efforts.

This change in the nature of conflicts forced the United Nations to also reform their approaches to conflicts beyond mere resolution efforts. The 1992 UN declaration, by the UN Secretary General of the time Boutros Boutros Ghali, named *An Agenda for Peace* acknowledged that the sources of conflict and war are pervasive and deep and resolving them would require enhanced respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of sustainable economic and social development for wider prosperity, alleviation of distress and curtailing of the existence and use of massively destructive weapons (paragraph 5) and addressing the deepest causes of conflict; economic despair, social injustice and political oppression (paragraph 15). In order to achieve this four different types of measures are needed: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and finally post-conflict peacebuilding (paragraph 5). Preventive diplomacy is

designed to prevent disputes into blowing into conflicts by diplomatic means (paragraph 23). Peacemaking in its simplest definition is bringing the hostile parties into agreement by peaceful means (paragraph 34). Peacekeeping is quite self-explanatory, which brings us to post-conflict peacebuilding. Peacemaking and peacekeeping must already include comprehensive efforts to consolidate peace. Post-conflict peacebuilding, however, goes even further into resolving the underlying disputes and inequalities through broad spectrum of activities, ranging from developing agriculture to improving transport and utilizing resources and even to education reform to reduce hostile perceptions of the other side (paragraph 57). In its broadest, peacebuilding means constructing a new environment, but what the main goal of post-conflict peacebuilding is, is simply to prevent the recurrence of an outbreak of violence (paragraph 58).

In addition to increasing numbers of missions, the Agenda for Peace broadened the role of UN peacekeepers and lead also to an expansion of UN missions to non military sectors. The UN missions were relatively successful in achieving their military goals, but have increasingly been forced to deal with issues normally belonging to the civilian administration (Zenkevicius, 2007, 28). In order to achieve long term development through peace-building, the Agenda for Peace called for widening peacebuilding activities by all actors, including governments, IGOs, churches and developmental organizations (paragraph 16). Criticism accusing the UN missions of neo-colonialism in the form of expanding peace missions to civil administrative responsibilities has been one element adding to the growing emphasis on the role of the locals in peacebuilding. Strengthening local civil society was seen as the key to long lasting peace. As van Leeuwen also says, in the name of the Agenda for Peace, local NGOs were to be seen as both targets as well as actors (2009, 76). The end of the Cold War gave the INGOs more freedom to operate, while at the same time democratization in many developing countries allowed for a local civil society to develop (van Leeuwen 2009, 28). The activation of the local level is especially important since many higher-level conflicts manifest locally in forms that need to be resolved locally. And more importantly the local civil society needs to empowered since once peace is attained the INGOs tend to move on to new conflict areas leaving the post-conflict society to survive on its own (van Leeuwen 2009, 76–7).

After the end of the Cold War there have been over 116 armed conflicts in the world and those

conflicts have resulted in more than 30 military interventions launched by the United Nations (UN) Security Council (Zenkevicius 2007, 28). Despite some early successes, the failures of the UN and the wider international community in Somalia, Rwanda and the Balkans started to quickly erode the trust in the new UN agenda. As noted by Leonardsson et.al. (2015, 826) “the UN’s peace intervention toolbox – including diplomacy, peace-making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies – was ill-equipped for managing intrastate conflicts” (see also Paffenholz 2015, 858–859). The lessons learned from the interventions of the 1990s led many governments to reassess their attitudes towards traditional military and diplomatic mechanisms of armed conflict management (Waisová, 2008, 65) and in these new forms of conflict the conventional mechanisms for conflict resolution lost some of its relevance. This led to two developments (Paffenholz 2015, 858-859). First, conflict management started to become more prominent approach as scholars attempted to identify more effective ways to conduct peace- and statebuilding. Secondly, conflict transformation school emerged and started to advocate for a stronger role for the local actors in peacebuilding. As noted by Paffenholz, this “emphasised the necessity of empowering local people as the primary authors of peacebuilding instead of externally designed and driven peace interventions. The main assumption behind this shift was that ultimately only local actors from within the conflict context would be able to build sustainable peace in their own countries.” (Paffenholz 2015, 858–859).

Although the impact of the conflict transformation school was limited at first, the idea of local participation and local ownership started to take a stronger role. In intra-state conflicts where the formal state institutions have lost legitimacy or have completely broken down, civil society organizations were increasingly seen as the main conflict resolution partners (van Leeuwen 2009, 4). In fact, enhancing the capacity of the local civil society and working through implementing partners became a popular strategy in the international organizations. A healthy civil society began to be seen as a necessary tool for sustainable peacebuilding. (van Leeuwen 2009, 30, 34).

This development was also paralleled by a similar shift in development aid sectors. It has become common knowledge in the aid sectors that all projects need to be anchored in local needs and more ideally initiated by local actors to ensure their sustainability (Wilén et.al. 2011, 531). According to Wilén and Chapaux (2011, 535) local ownership means that *local actors are to*

initiate, lead and subsequently take over the ownership of projects. Also the motivation behind CMI's Youth Dialogue -project is to activate, empower and educate local youth to engage the youth more deeply in societal development in their own communities and even at the national level. Secondary motivation was to gather knowledge from the locals to better plan future activities. But as evidenced also by the CMI approach, the concept of local ownership is not easy in reality. As Wilén and Chapaux put it *"when donors call for 'national appropriation' or local participation, they indirectly acknowledge that the projects, whether peace agreements or capacity-building plans, are largely designed and imposed by outsiders"* (Wilén et.al. 2011, 537). Additionally, many argue this shift was not a genuine attempt to shift power to the local actors. Rather, "liberal and neoliberal conceptualisations of peacebuilding and statebuilding are, controversially, only too happy to embrace the language, though rarely the spirit, of the local turn" (Mac Ginty et.al. 2013, 779)

2.2. The Local Turn(s) and Conflict Transformation

The first local turn in peacebuilding characterised by the conflict transformation school was initiated by the work of Paul Lederach in the 1990s. Although Johan Galtung (1969) has often also been identified as an early influencer. The conflict transformation thinking developed in parallel with liberal peace framework and was conceptualised especially around the failures of the UN peacekeeping missions of the mid-1990s. While liberal peace increasingly focused on the role international actors, conflict transformation thinking emphasised the role of local actors. Lederach argued that "the greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture" ([1997] 2010, 94).

Auvinen and Kivimäki (1997, 1–4) argue that conflict transformation, which addresses the most important structural level of conflict, is the most often overlooked level. What makes conflict transformation special is that unlike crisis management, which goal is to control the violence and defend people, or dispute resolution, which strives for the solution of the dispute through compromises and international diplomacy, conflict transformation aims to change the environment and solve the fundamental causes of disputes and aim development towards what is known as positive peace. This switch encompassed moving the focus from war and state to peace

and local actors, through which critical peace studies distanced itself from orthodox approaches to international relations and political science (Mac Ginty 2013, 766). Furthermore, it manifested an attempt to break away from the mainstream liberal peacebuilding school, which dominates the international peacebuilding sector. According to Paffenholz (2015, 857) the liberal peacebuilding framework is mainly focused on external efforts in peace making and statebuilding. As we saw in the previous section, the Agenda for Peace also incorporated transformation thinking into the UN peace missions. However, whereas the UN approach still emphasised the centrality of international interventions, conflict transformation focused on local agency. Conflict transformation challenged this interventionist notion by raising the local actors into the centre and engaging in what could be termed as ‘people building’. Focusing on building relationships, the conflict transformation school was arguing that “it was not conflict that needed to be prevented, but violence” (Francis 2010, 6). This led to acknowledging that conflict is a central and much needed aspect of societies. In fact, it should be regarded as “the right and necessity for people to engage in political struggle against injustice and for inclusion in social and political agreements (Francis 2010, 7, see also Åkerlund 2005, 48). The key is in finding non-violent ways of addressing conflict which instead of breaking communities into conflictual violent groups, seek to unite them.

In line with the discourse of conflict transformation, conflicts started to be seen more as not something that needed to be abolished but as a normal part of society that simply needed to be managed. In fact if managed effectively they could be turned into something positive and creative. (van Leeuwen 2009, 44.) This change in the ways conflicts were seen changed the whole way of conducting peace-building operations. Peacebuilding was seen as part of a wider process of society transformation and development where a lot of emphasis was put on erasing the deeper roots that had initiated the conflict. Move to conflict transformation was accompanied by the human security discourse where the people and human rights were placed before state security. Notion of “human security” replaced the conventional approach of security as a matter of states and the focus was put on the security of the people against persecution, poverty, insecurity and environmental catastrophes. (van Leeuwen 2009, 44.)

The key in conflict transformation is change. The focus on change clashed heavily with the focus

on restoring the status quo, which is embedded in liberal peace framework. Liberal peace framework is “an inherently conservative undertaking, which seeks managerial solutions to fundamental conflicts over resources and power. In this view peacebuilding thus attempts to modernize and re-legitimize a fundamental status quo respectful of a national and international market economy.” (Paffenholz 2015, 861). Conflict transformation does not strive to return to status quo. It is not attempting to build the society to the form it was in before the conflict, but it is attempting to reform the society in a way that the fundamental causes of conflicts have at least lessened if not disappeared. Therefore, the goal of conflict transformation is not peace, but positive peace. Auvinen and Kivimäki use Johan Galtung’s definition of positive peace in saying that *positive peace is not merely the cessation of actual hostilities, but also cooperation towards the end of decreasing structures of inequality, which exploit the poor and which weaken the health and prospects of a long life for the less advantaged* (cited in Kivimäki et.al. 1997, 1–4).

As there is significant overlap between the use of the terms peacebuilding and conflict transformation, I wish to shortly define the central differences between them. Out of the two, peacebuilding is often considered as the broader term encompassing a wide variety of activities and approaches - i.e. all conflict transformation can be considered as peacebuilding, but not all peacebuilding is conflict transformation. Peacebuilding is also the term predominantly used by media, state-led actors and intergovernmental actors such as the UN. Supporters of the conflict transformation also talk repeatedly of peacebuilding. The two are most clearly distinguished by their different means and goals. Whereas peacebuilding focuses on a wide spectrum of activities ranging from economic development to infrastructure building, reconciliation efforts and policy reform, conflict transformation focuses on transforming the social realities that are initiating and fueling the conflict. Moreover, as Francis (2010, 8) states, “when ‘peacebuilding’ is used by governments to describe constructive activities, they are usually referring to the establishment of institutions and economies rather than to the building of relationships, which are the primary focus of conflict transformation”. Also the timeframe of the approaches is different. Peacebuilding, unlike conflict transformation, is seen mainly as something that happens after the hostilities are over (An Agenda for Peace, 1992, pg. 56; Zenkevicius 2007, 30; Bakarat et.al. 2009,1071). Conflict transformation, which Auvinen and Kivimäki define as being part of preventive diplomacy, may take place before, during or after the conflict and it will continue long

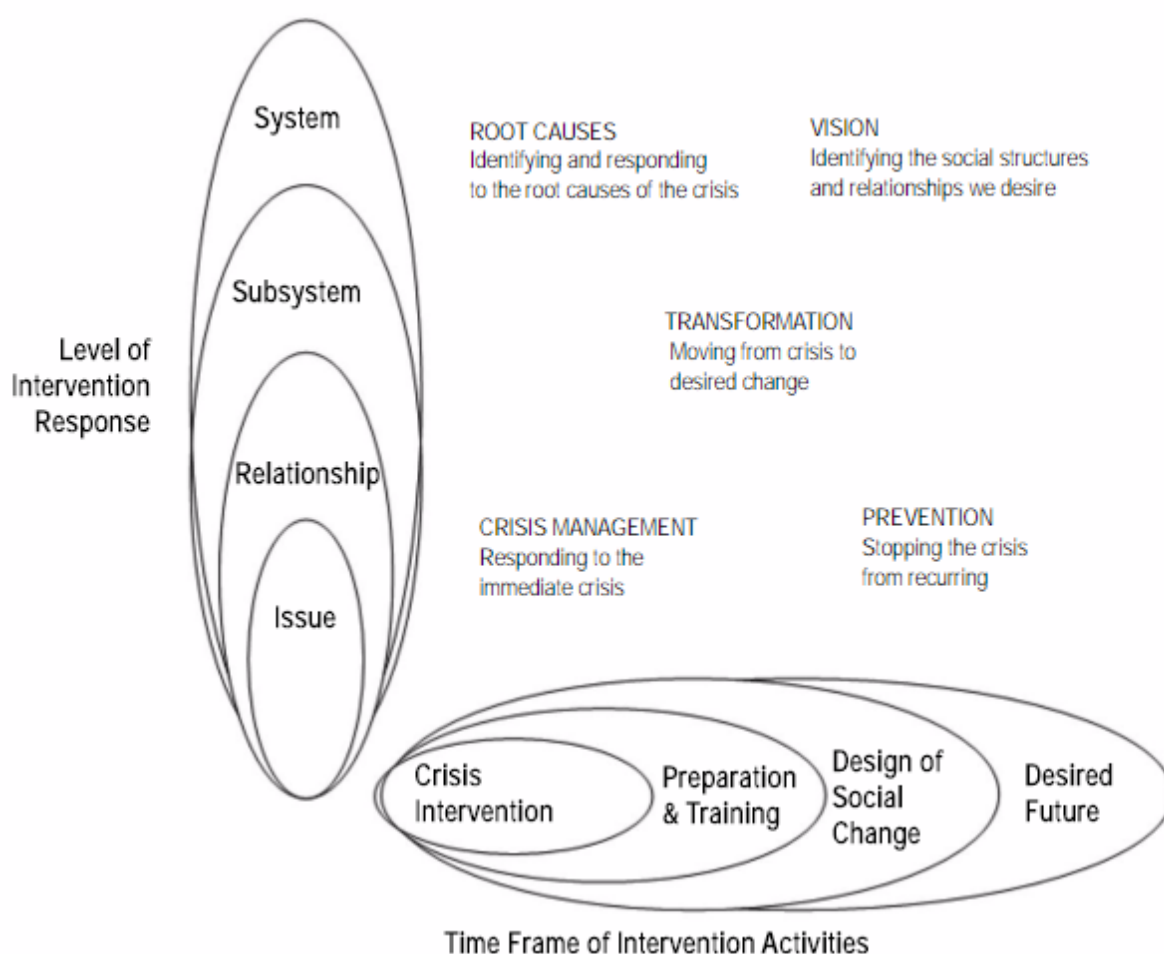
after violent conflict is over.

Finding the local partners may not always be easy, especially when we are discussing African states recovering from conflicts that in the case of South Sudan for example have lasted for decades. The term ‘locals’ is often used to refer to many types of local actors. It is used from governmental actors, to representatives of civil society, as well as, to the population in general. Its main function has seemed to be simply distinguishing between the internationals and locals. Wilén and Chapaux (2011) studied local participation in UN missions in two African post-conflict states – Burundi and Liberia – and they found that defining the locals, when it came to local partners was not as simple as it first may have seemed.

There is the local, rural population, which is typically so far outside the realm of peace-building projects that this population is not even aware of their existence. There is also the local urban population, which often does not have enough education to even be considered for participation. The upper class of the urban population, the people that have minimum of education, are the ones that could be considered for participation in these projects. However, often these people can earn more money by working in administrative positions or as drivers for the larger multinational organizations such as the UN or the World bank, and are therefore not interested in short-term projects. The conditions to participate are often too demanding for the general population, despite the acknowledgement that local actors need to participate in order for the projects to be sustainable. (Wilén et.al 2011, 534)

The early work of the conflict transformation school was taken forward by critical peace studies scholars in the 2010s. What has been termed the second local turn took a more critical and radical approach to local agency which calls also for the decolonization of knowledge on ways to acknowledge and sustain peace. It also formed a significant break with the conflict transformation school that had focused on training of international (Western) trainers to host conflict transformation workshops with local actors. Influenced especially of the increased southern influence and postcolonial framework, the second local turn “understand[s] locally driven peacebuilding as a form of resistance against the dominant discourse and practice of the

international peacebuilding project, and as a search for a post-liberal order founded on emancipatory local agency” (Paffenholz 2015, 859; see also Mac Ginty 2013, 769; Mac Ginty et al. 2013, 763). Achieving these goals requires analyzing structures of power, domination and forms of resistance. The second local turn is also descriptive by its hard critique on international interventions and the international system, the deposits “‘natural’ historical progressiveness that places the North/West at the top of the current international epistemic hierarchy, simultaneously absolved from blame for colonialism and inequality” (Mac Ginty et. al 2013, 772).



Picture 2. An Integrated Framework for Peacebuilding, modified based on Lederarch [1997] 2010, 80.

To sum up, as noted above in the Integrated Framework of Peacebuilding, a comprehensive

approach to peace requires a wide variety of actions. Conflict transformation is identified as a central activity, bridging the different levels together. It can be considered as the mediator between approaches more focused on conflicts and those that seek development in a wider frame. Conflict transformation a holistic approach to peacebuilding with a very **long time span**. It acknowledges **conflict as a central factor in society** and rather than seeking to suppress conflicts, it aims at resolving underlying causes of conflicts and at enabling and constructing **non-violent ways to resolve conflicts**. Through this, it hopes to empower local communities to actively participate in changing their own communities towards well functioning, equal and peaceful societies. It is centered on the **local non-governmental actors** in the middle and grassroots level. It recognizes local people as resources and not recipients in peacebuilding and it is **focused on people: their skills, attitudes, actions and relationships**. Especially the focus on rebuilding and restoring fractured relationships, sets conflict transformation apart from liberal peacebuilding framework. Activities include, workshops, training, popular education, bridging communities, media and arts projects and advocacy projects. Although local actors are identified as the drivers of the process, the role of outside facilitators in enabling the process is acknowledged.

2.3. South-Sudanese Civil Society

Since conflict transformation emphasises the role of the local actors and as all the interviewees are active civil society activists a short glance at the South Sudanese civil society is needed. First, however, we need to also consider what we mean by civil society. David Lewis (2002, 572) notes that majority of the approaches adopted by different development interventions follow de Tocqueville's (1835) understanding of civil society. Although criticized for overtly Western ideals of what civil society should be like, this approach is the hegemonic approach among international NGOs seeking to support local civil society. This approach focuses on volunteer associations and the idea that independent civil society provides a counter balance for the state through ensuring its accountability and effectiveness. However, critical peace studies has attempted to broaden the understanding of civil society to include more Gramscian notions – meaning opening up the actions of civil society to include more conflictual functions. Influenced by postcolonial theory, this has also been the case with civil society research which focused on

different types of resistance and social movements in Africa. Following Gramsci (1971) Lewis states that civil society is “the arena, separate from state and market, in which ideological hegemony is contested, implying that civil society contains a wide range of different organizations and ideologies that both challenge and uphold existing order” (Lewis 2002,572). However, the reality of civil society in Africa is more complex. Although it is not the scope of this research it must be noted, that the idea of civil society is very much debated in Africa (for broader discussion see i.e. Comaroff & Comaroff 1999, Lewis 2002, Maina 1998). These discussion include the ability to adapt Western notions of civil society to Africa (including too heavy focus on rights and advocacy); re-evaluation of the state-society relations in Africa and the effects of colonialism; critique on too strong focus on de Toquevillean understanding of the role of civil society; the lack of theoretical discussion on the specificities of African civil society and the inclusion of different actions, such as ethnic groups. This debate was largely done in late 1990s and early 2000s and could be seen to correlate with the local turn in peace research.

During colonialism and after the Sudanese independence in 1956 the development of the southern parts and the encouragement towards civil society initiatives in the south was non-existent. It was not until late 1990s that local civil society started to slowly form in South Sudan. In 1994, SPLA made a resolution to build administrative structures to define the responsibilities of the army, civil administration, traditional leaders and also civil society. (van Leeuwen 2009, 80.) Especially reforming the responsibilities of the traditional leaders was important for the sake of conflict resolution and peacebuilding because traditional leaders and chiefs had a role and a long history in conflict resolution on a local level. (van Leeuwen 2009, 79).

The long civil war from 1983 until 2005 complicated things a lot when the civil society was taking its first steps. Some local authorities and CSOs were hesitant to work with international NGOs in direct peace work for the fear of their actions been seen as a direct critic or insult for the rebel leadership. In the same manner, many international NGOs were wary of capacity building projects with the local rebel lead authorities because it was seen that supporting the civil authorities that emanated from the rebel movement would risk their image of neutrality. However, there are some notable exceptions. For example, the Norwegian People’s Aid was actively engaging with SPLA almost throughout the second civil war (see Rolandsen 2005).

However, with time some actors, such as USAid and UNICEF got more involved also in rebel held territories. (van Leeuwen 2009, 81.)

The beginning for the forming of civil society was slow. According to van Leeuwen there were only 65 local NGOs in Southern Sudan in 2001 and most of them had been formed by exile Sudanese either in Kampala or Nairobi (van Leeuwen 2009, 79). As mentioned many INGOs were hesitant to work with Sudanese CSOs for their independence from the rebel forces was seen as questionable. Additionally the fact that many Sudanese NGOs held their headquarters in Nairobi raised questions on whether they were genuine. This led to many INGOs taking a more direct approach and to form and support many village level CSOs whose independence they could guarantee. (van Leeuwen 2009, 81.)

Despite the rocky start, the local civil society has become more vibrant in recent years. We are still talking of only hundreds of organizations, but the role they have taken in the peace building is strong. Only a few local South Sudanese NGOs work primary on peace initiatives, but many work on relief with a secondary objective in peacebuilding. The activities have mainly focused on social healing, promotion of dialogue, reconciliation, monitoring of human rights violations, promotion of participatory government and formation of community based organizations especially in the field of women's and youth groups. (van Leeuwen 2009, 79–80.) Finally according to van Leeuwen the role of the churches in South Sudan must be highlighted, for churches are the institutions in South Sudan that are best accessed locally and they have therefore played an important role in most local peace initiatives. (van Leeuwen 2009, 79).

As a negative note the position and security of South Sudanese civil society activists has deteriorated in recent years. There have several report on journalists and NGO activists being interrogated, incarcerated or shot under suspicious circumstances. Additionally the government has attempted to block certain NGOs from continuing their activities. This has lead to some activist being forced to flee South Sudan.

3. NARRATIVES OF PEACE

The interviewees represent a very versatile group – coming from different backgrounds and living in different regions of South Sudan. This versatility is reflected in the interviews and there is significant differentiation in the issues raised by the interviewees. The interviewees active role in the civil society and their relatively high education level comes forth prominently. As noted also in the CMI report, the interviewees are highly capable of reflection and abstraction and the interviews show reference to political theory, central aspects of democracy and peace and conflict theory. Statements like “*Government is chosen from the people and it is supposed to work for the people*” (informant 32) were common. The interviewees also repeatedly used central “buzzwords” and terminology of peacebuilding and the broader development aid sector. Talk of capacity building, good governance, empowerment, peacebuilding and local participation was prominent throughout the interviews.

As noted, the interviews do not produce a single narrative, but rather a group of stories that take the narrative to different, at times contradicting, directions. However, through thematically coding the interviews to identify repeating notions and through attempting to go beyond the word-by-word narratives to identify the deeper narratives at the core of the interviews, clear, coherent and repeating narratives started to form (for a summary see attachment 1). These narratives revolved around three meta-level issues – peace, governance/leadership and (lack of) unity. Within each of these narratives there were sub-narratives that often were contradicting and overlapping. The overlap between different sub-narratives goes to show the interconnected nature of many challenges South Sudan is facing. In the following sections I will discuss each of these meta-narratives and sub-narratives.

3.1. The Importance of Peace

The importance of peace was the dominating narrative among the interviewees. However, even though the end of the conflict provided a sense of hope and peace, there were competing narratives within a broader discourse on peace. These consisted of a highly optimistic and emotional “narrative of peace and hope”; a pessimistic and confronting “narrative of continuation

of violence” and a “narrative of lack of positive peace” that notes the still existing societal challenges that are hindering the forming of equal and just society.

As we have seen, the independence of South Sudan has been a long process that has spanned decades and generations. If we look at the notions embedded in conflict transformation, it is also evident that finding peace will also be a long process that will span far beyond signing a peace agreement. Peace as a process or as a time of many changes and flux is also something that seems to be well understood by the interviewees. Many interviewees emphasized the need for a long process or the passing of time. *“South Sudan has just emerged from war. Peace is a process. [...] With time, trauma will go out and people will be peaceful”* (informant 82).



Picture 2.

It is clearly also understood that achieving lasting peace and development will not come easy. Achieving it will require hard work and the notion of getting to work seems prominent in the views of interviewees from all states. This commitment to work for communal good is a common trend in the interviews. This partly reflects the interviewees position as civil society activist. The acknowledgement of the need of hard work that was expressed by many interviewees, was

however most often accompanied with the sad reality that the general public did not necessarily share this view.

NARRATIVES OF HOPE AND PEACE

All interviewees expressed feelings of relief, hope and happiness over the achievement of peace. Some of this prominence can be attributed to the way the questions were constructed, but I would argue that the feelings of hope, optimism and solidarity were also descriptive of that period. It was noted that “*everybody has the will to see peace*” (informant 52). Overall the interviews were filled with comments describing, how now that peace has been achieved all types of other positive developments are possible. These comments vary in their optimism. Some express naive overly optimistic proclamations on how now “*everything is possible*” (informant 45) or how “*Peace already achieved. Fought for independence and now is free. Now will prosper.*” (informant 72). Others however were more reserved in their optimism, noting that in order to achieve “*the bright future a lot of work needs to be done*” (informant 12) or that “*future peace possible if the leaders will commit*” (informant 18). Overall it was agreed that future peace depends a lot on being able to maintain the unity and solidarity that was prominent around the time of the referendum and the interim period. As noted by informant 62, South Sudan “*can be peaceful but need to maintain the peace of unity, that was during referendum and independence.*” However, as noted by Laudati (2011) the high prevalence of expressions of solidarity around the time of the referendum, could also mask deeper divisions. In the words of Laudati, we need to question “‘whose peace, whose oil, whose land, and whose liberty’ are actually reflected in the making of a new South Sudan, and whose histories, claims, and experiences threaten to be overwritten and silenced under such discourse” (ibid. 16).

What is noteworthy, is that the high hopes were especially prominent among the returnees from Eastern Africa, often referred to as the diaspora. Having grown up in refugee camps in Uganda, Kenya or Ethiopia and having attained a relatively high level of education, these people were highly optimistic of the future. Many of them possess significant human capital as well as social capital among the economic and labor migrants from Eastern Africa who arrived especially to urban areas in search of jobs and business opportunities after the signing of the CPA. The returnees from Eastern Africa significantly benefited from their language skills (especially

English, but also Swahili). The ability to “return home” provided a watershed moment for them and for many it seemed to be quite an emotional and transformative moment. Comparatively, those who had stayed in South Sudan (although at 26% comprising a minority among the interviewees) seemed the most pessimistic. Many of them expressed having been traumatised. Some even confessed to having been child soldiers during the war. The history of conflict and violence seemed to have left these youth feeling less optimistic about their future as well as the future of South Sudan. Also the returnees from the North seemed to feel more disenfranchised. The Southern solidarity was often narrated in opposition to the Arabic North and the returnees from the North, although highly educated, suffered from discrimination that was based on their Arabic language and culture traits.

NARRATIVES ON CONTINUING VIOLENCE

The CMI wanted to especially interview the youth to gain information on the conflict dynamics among the different regions. Therefore, it is not surprising that a strong narrative of continuing and prominent violence was confronting the narrative of hope. The conflict dynamics and regional trends were discussed in detail in the CMI report, therefore I will not focus on them here. This detailed descriptions of conflict dynamics can be found in the report attached at the end of this thesis. However, to understand the extent of the insecurity created by the violent conflicts and phenomena, I will go through them shortly to bring forth the level of insecurity and wider societal and cultural implications.

The violent conflicts in South Sudan vary from state to state, yet common trends exist and typical conflict types can be established. What is notable is that the youth are incremental in most of these conflict types as youth are the main collaborators (although not necessarily the instigators) of violence. The majority of the youth mentioned cattle raiding, girl elopement, child and women abduction, armed conflicts, conflicts over grazing land and water points among the pastoralist, as well as disputes over borders or land. Also it is important to note, that despite “*high military presence in many areas*” (informant 35), only a small fraction of the reported violence is instigated by organized rebel groups or government soldiers. Rather the main instigators of violence are informal street bandits who use roadblocks to stop traffic or cattle raiders, robbers and other civilians. The relatively high level of (armed) violence between civilians is illustrative

of the prevalence of arms among civilians and militarisation of public space (see also Rolandsen 2015, 171) and also serves as evidence for the calls for “*universal disarmament in all states at the same time*” (informant 4). Prevalence of arms combined with a history/culture of war was seen as a central issue causing insecurity. It was repeatedly commented that many have very limited skills beyond violence to confront adversary. Many reported a prominent “*sense of fear*” (informant 21) and one interviewee also proclaimed that “*during the war security was better*” (informant 88).

The high level of insecurity causes significant hindrances to overall development. Insecurity was linked to lack of services (health centers and schools) as well as to food insecurity. Many informants commented that insecurity is linked to people being forced into towns, which makes farming impossible. There were also reports, that people were too scared to go into the forests due to unexploded mines and informal rebels, which meant that fruits crops and some other produce were rotting uneaten in the forests. All these issues contribute the high dependence on foreign imports of food and basic amenities.

Ownership of cattle is an important social marker among many tribes in South Sudan (most notably the Dinka and the Nuer). As informant 92 stated “*People die of hunger even though they have cows. Not used for food, but prestige.*” Cattle raiding was noted as a significant problem, but it is also linked to many other social issues contributing to insecurity. As noted by informant 95 cattle raiding is a “*multifaceted problem. For example, if has only boys then no wealth coming in, only going out in dowries. Must raid to compensate and to gather wealth*”. Cattle conflicts seem to be contributing to general cycles of revenge and animosity between communities. Cattle herding is also one factor behind the prevalent land and border issues - both around national, regional and communal borders. Although affected also by the influx of returnees, the conflicts between cattle herders and farmers were the main force behind border conflicts.

Finally, the inability of the government to control the violence was seen as a central factor contributing to insecurity. This notion is intertwined to the narrative of lack of government capabilities that will be discussed late. Many noted that despite having “*laws in place, they are not implemented*” (informant 67). The lack of rule of law and inability to hold aggressors

accountable were seen as contributing to the prevalence of violence.

NARRATIVES OF THE LACK OF POSITIVE PEACE

As was discussed, peace in conflict transformation cannot simply be understood as a negative peace, or as a freedom from violence. Peace should be understood more broadly and the notion of positive peace, or a just, equal, functioning state and society should be used to understand the more comprehensive nature of peace. An understanding of peace that can be used as a tool for a good and fulfilling life for all members of society. Positive peace is built on an idea of holistic nature of war and peace. As Bøås and Dunn (2007, cited in Laudati 2011, 25) argue, “war is not only an economic drama over the distribution of resources but a social drama over ideas, identities, and social positions as well”. This means that also peace is more than the mere lack of violence. In addition, CMI used a broad definition of conflict as a basis for their interviews. CMI defined conflict as “the prevention of basic human needs from being met” (Taflinski 2012, 8). During the fieldwork, they further divided conflicts into violent conflicts and other challenges. This division reflects the idea of negative and positive peace. Peace as absence of violence and peace as an ideal society where major challenges have been overcome.

This broader definition of conflict was possibly also one of the reasons why many of the interviewees understood peace in a more comprehensive manner. Comments like “*peace is not full*” (informant 57) or “*there are some elements that have not received peace*” (informant 72), were common. Also the idea that there are many issues such as inequality, human rights abuses, gendered violence and lack of education/illiteracy that are leaving people vulnerable for abuse was prominent. There seemed to be consensus that in addition to direct violence, many social issues were contributing to people’s lack of wellbeing and that in order for South Sudan to sustain peace, resolving these issues is required. Some issues will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, such as lack of rule of law, prominent corruption and tribal tensions. However three aspects need to be highlighted already at this stage. These three issues all revolve around human rights and the idea of “transforming minds and attitudes”.

First, is the overwhelming focus on education. It was widely acknowledged the “*education is the key to bring about development*” (informant 24). This reflects the interviewees own relatively

high level of education and an apparent appreciation of knowledge. It must be kept in mind that the interviewees are one of the only few educated in the country. Nearly all interviewees highlighted the need for education – *“for both youth and for adults”* (informant 87). Lack of education and lack of schools was seen as one of the biggest challenges for sustainable peace. Many schools were still closed and there was dire need of skilled teachers. *“Many of the few teachers that have been educated have been educated in Arabic. Now cannot teach in English.”* (informant 45). This was especially a significant concern in the areas bordering Sudan. Due to the lack of teachers, it was suggested that we should *“focus on teacher education. [Currently] students from primary 6-8 teach others.”* (informant 23). The lack of teachers was also an issue of returnee discrimination. Many of the returnees from the North were qualified teachers, but due to their language skills (Arabic instead of English) they were not hired to Southern schools. In addition to getting qualified teachers, it was also acknowledged that the curriculum should be reformed. *“South Sudan ministry of education still following Northern school system. Should develop own system and own certificates and curricula.”* (informant 13).

In addition to reforming basic education the need to initiate vocational training for adults was highlighted. Also aid interventions were welcomed in education. It was noted that international actors should be contracted to give trainings on specific issues and that *“they should not give food, but teach how to farm”* (informant 67). Deeply embedded in all comments was the idea that rather than giving people things, the goal should be to teach people to do things on their own. This idea of self-reliance was strongly intertwined in all talk on education. It was noted that getting people education and skills was key to also boost job market, ease reliance on foreign employees and aid and most importantly to reduce idleness. Many noted, that idleness makes youth especially vulnerable to manipulation by leaders. It was repeatedly stated that idle youth are *“used as tools”* (informant 32) or *“led to conflict by politicians”* (informant 51). Idleness was also linked to unemployment and low expectations for the future. When combined with the tradition of high dowries in marriage, many noted that this led youth to turn to cattle raiding and looting.

Secondly, education was also linked to reduction of violence. *“When education level becomes higher, conflicts and violence will fade away from people’s minds [...] change of attitude”*

(informant 11). Related to education, was also the idea that education and advocacy should be used to change people's attitudes and people's minds. The incentive to fight was largely seen as a state of mind. Comments like *"mind can only read 'killing'"* (informant 22) and *"raiding is what is in their brain"* (informant 16) were stated by several interviewees. The high level of current violence was also contributed to the history of violence, especially among those who had remained in South Sudan during the war. *"The war has affected many as children. Grow up surrounded by violence [...] learn to be violent also. Now coming out."* (informant 88). As a counter action the idea of teaching conflict resolution skills and promoting *"a culture of peace"* (informant 34) was proposed. As noted *"Those who rebel should be encouraged to solve issues. We don't want war anymore."* (informant 16). Some signs of this transformation was already witnessed, but in the future the interviewees believed that the role of the youth was the key to successful peacebuilding.

Although non-violence was definitely the stronger discourse, the importance of forgiveness was also highlighted. Referring to the cycles of revenge killings it was stated that certain groups *"lack the spirit of forgiveness"* (informant 44). It was stated that some groups *"might take revenge over something that happened 50 years ago"* (informant 44). Therefore, there was a definite *"need to cultivate a culture of accepting own mistakes and willingness to redress it"* (informant 98). Overall, in addition to advocacy and empowerment, a wider variety of activities were identified. *"Establish various social activities to transform mentalities of youth. Engage educated youth, provide skills training, disarmament and reintegration."* (informant 88)

The last related phenomenon was a strong focus on freedom of speech and freedom of opinion. Informant 22 for example stated that *"Speaking the truth is always a challenge. You will put your life at risk."* Many noted, that the abilities of international and local actors was very different. Whereas many local actors felt disenfranchised and also reported attempts by the government or other officials to control or limit the activities of the CSOs, it was widely believed that international NGOs had more freedom. To some extent this also raised resentment against international NGOs. This was noted for example by informant 10, *"NGOs are corrupt. Employ foreigners while we have quality staff in South Sudan. Foreign NGOS are free to do whatever without government checking."* In hindsight, these concerns over the freedom and ability of local

actors to do advocacy work were legitimate. As evidence by the arrest and shootings of several activists and reporters in the past few years, the safety and freedom of many civil society actors is a grave concern in contemporary South Sudan. Although lately also the international actors have faced increasing attempts to block or limit their freedom.

3.2. Governance

In terms of governance, there were competing narratives between who has the abilities or the responsibility to initiate change. The overall combining narrative was that now with independence the most important thing is to reform governance and make a clean break from the discriminatory and dominating governance processes that characterized the Northern government. It was a cause that many seemed deeply committed and invested in. As noted by informant 22, there is *“Need for good governance. Otherwise fought for nothing. Doing the same thing as fought against.”* However, already some were starting to be pessimistic stating that *“Lack of democracy, South Sudan is like the north.”* (informant 24). In the following sections I will go through this narrative from the viewpoint of three different agencies - the government, the international community and local and communal actors.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Overall, the relations between youth and government seemed to be quite strained. In addition to the quantitative data collected on the youth’s relationships with the government (see the CMI report for more details), also the qualitative data shows that the youth are very suspicious about the capabilities of the government as well as skeptic in regards their own ability to influence government actions. Many noted that the relationships between the youth and the government were poor. A good example is the comment by informant 31: *“But poor relations between youth and government. Government is blaming youth as lazy, while youth blame government for lack of jobs”*. Also it was noted that there was *“No support for youth activities from the government”* (informant 44). One informant went all the way to claim that *“the governor does not support the youth because claims that the youth did not vote for him during elections.”* Although this line of comments was the norm, there were some who still saw the relationship between the youth and the government as hopeful. For example informant 98 noted that *“Youth and government worked*

together during war. Can now work together to bring total peace."



Picture 3. When the young cry, it's because the old are oppressing them.

Despite clear negative feelings, almost all respondents believed that the government is the actor that should take a leading role. *"Government in charge to bring peace"* (informant 32) and the government is *"in charge to provide security"* (informant 89) were typical comments. As much

as the role of the government was highlighted, it was almost always followed by critique. The high level of critique is interesting considering that at the same time the interviewees expressed concern over freedom of speech and ability to “tell the truth”. The level of party allegiance is also extremely high among the respondent considering the heavy critique. However, the question of party alliance is overall a very complicated issue in South Sudan. The CMI report does note that “some interviewees were indeed active members of SPLM, while others did not take the question as a query concerning real membership with the SPLM but seemed to indicate their mere support to this party by replying in the affirmative, or understanding this question as relating to their voting preferences.” (Taflinski 2012, 14). As the SPLA morphed into the SPLM alongside the confirmation of the peace deal, the issue of party allegiance is often considered as an issue of supporting the Southern cause. SPLM was also the only Southern signatory of the CPA and therefore possessed a dominant position in the post-CPA South Sudan. This was also confirmed in the CMI report. “Youth also confirmed that belonging to SPLM was part of being a southerner, as “the enemy was the NCP, so as southerner I must be SPLM”. In other words “by virtue of this we are all members of SPLM” (ibid.). However, the support for SPLM was quickly diminishing. Citing several reports and evaluations, Copnal notes that “the SPLM is depleting its political capital and losing its grass root support” (Copnal 2014, 59).

There are two interconnected issues that I wish to discuss in more detail. Both contributed to the general narrative of lack of government capabilities. These are lack of skills/vision and limited relationships to the communities, especially in terms of representation and ethnic diversity.

The issue of lack of skills and vision was notable. Many commented how there is a “*problem of lack of creativeness in leaders*” (informant 23) or that they only “*wait for ready things*” (informant 77). It was also noted that there was “*no strategic plan for building a nation and no qualified politicians*” (informant 54) and there were multiple complaints that the “*MPs are not doing their jobs*” (informant 91). Additionally charges of mismanagement and corruption were common. Use of public funds for personal gain was often commented upon. “*Government money used for personal use. Kids of officials go to school in Kampala or Nairobi.*” (informant 5). To some extent, limited political capabilities are understandable as majority of South Sudan’s political leaders are former soldiers who have no political experience (Copnal 2014, 58). Also it

is worth noting that although John Garang, the most prominent leader of the SPLA during the second civil war, was highly educated and considered as having a strong political and transformative vision, many of his colleagues did not share this vision nor his level of education. John Garang is considered as national hero and highly regarded by majority of the population. Following his death just few months after the signing of the CPA, there was a certain vacuum of leadership that is also reflected in the interviews.

In terms of the representation of different ethnic groups, the dinka domination in the government was widely noted by the interviewees, as well as by the academics (for example Johnson 2003; Laudati 2011; Rolandsen 2015). The lack of power sharing was a general concern. Many noted that the “*Dinka dominates GOSS*” (informant 2) or that “*Government all from one tribe*” (informant 27) and that there is “*Unequal representation in MPs*” (informant 32). This lack of representation was compounded by the lack communication. For example, informant 56 stated that there is “*no communication between the government and its citizens.*” The lack of communication also lead to communities being not able to get their concerns heard – “*local voice not heard by MPs*” (informant 5). Even more the lack of connections between the members of parliament and their home constituencies was often commented upon. “*Government and politicians are the reason for the problems, because they are not in good relationship with the communities*” (informant 99). Personally, some interviewees felt clearly frustrated by this situation. It was clear that some of the respondents felt a certain responsibility for their communities. For them, not being able to communicate the concerns of their communities to the local and/or national government was a feeling of failure. Especially informant 17, noted that one “*should speak on behalf of those who are not able to, but government is not listening.*” This lack of response to local needs was also seen as potentially causing violence. “*IF PEOPLE ARE NOT REPRESENTED THEY WILL FIGHT!!*” (informant 20).



Picture 4. Our resources should benefit our nation in [#SouthSudan](#) not just an elite few.

In addition, it was a widely shared notion that you need a tribe member or “*need a relative in high position in order to get a job*” (informant 65). Rolandsen (2015, 165) points out that due to the administrative structure that was laid out during colonialism, administrative borders were still drawn to large extent along ethnic group lines. This lead to a high level of intercorrelation between ethnicity and land and means that “[p]atronage networks [in South Sudan] tend to be correlated with ethnicity and identity politics [...] because of the weak formal state, political power in South Sudan is to a large extent vested in informal patronage networks within the civil administration and the army.” (ibid.). The frustration over not being able to get a job in government was a severe concern for the respondents, as despite being significantly more educated they were often sidelined in hiring processes. Informant 103 summed up the sentiment of many “*people hired on ethnic lines - no job announcement, no interviews*” (informant 88).

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Similarly, with the views on the role of the government, also the role of the international

community was acknowledged as crucial. Many stated that the “*government should involve international community*” (informant 66) and that there is “*need collective effort which includes also international community*” (informant 9). However, where the narrative regarding the government was one of lack of capabilities, the international community was almost unanimously one of help. The international community was approached as the actor one should approach is one is in need of help or needs guidance on how to solve a problem. This narrative of guidance was almost as unanimous as the narrative of help. The international community was in some ways seen as a force to counter some of the failings of the government. Calls like “*government cannot do everything*” (informant 105) were common when talking of the international community. In line with this notion, the international community was even seen as almost the primary actor when in need of help. Illustrative of this is the comment by informant 24; “*when you need help to solve problems, need to call the international community and not MPs*”. However, it was by no means hinted that the international community should intervene or take charge. The main responsibility remained with the government and the role of the international community was that of a “watchdog”, a mediator and a mentor.

However, when talking more of practice and especially the projects run on local level the views of the international community became more critical. Many saw the international NGOs as corrupt and discriminatory against locals. Complaints like they only “*employ foreigners while we have quality staff in South Sudan*” (informant 12) were not dominant, but recurring. Also there was a sense that some of the interviewees felt that in some cases the international community were stepping into their own turf. Several interviewees discussed how international NGOs had taken over projects, that had prior been run by the local actors or that instead of helping or enabling the locals to do something the international actors simply gave things. As stated also earlier, “*they should not give food, but teach how to farm*” (informant 67). Although the position of the youth needs to be once again kept in mind. The youth live in a relatively privileged position and in urban areas. Their views cannot be taken for those living in rural areas, where for example the food shortages and lack of infrastructure is most dire. Also it is worthy to note, that those expressing dissatisfaction over the international actors taking over their projects most likely have their own livelihoods depending on their own position in them.

ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The discussions around the role of the local communities and actors was very interesting. Out of the three groups of actors the local community was seen as the most potential force for change and in the most positive light. This consisted of giving more opportunities not only for participation but also the ability to decide for the whole communities. Additionally, local civil society actors, church organizations and especially the tradition elders and local chiefs were often listed as the most trustworthy actors. This brings forth a notion that the local civil society is larger than the local NGOs and CSOs and reflects the discussion on broadening the understanding of civil society in Africa (see for example Maina 1998). This larger group was also identified as the ones who can achieve the broadest influence in the local communities. The interviews were full of calls to concentrate more power to the local levels and by local, the interviewees meant primarily the civil society actors and traditional leaders. Local (political) government was approached mainly through the same rhetoric as the national one.

As is to be expected, the interviewees (being civil society activists themselves) highlighted the importance of local civil society. It was repeatedly stated, that *“civil society should take the lead in awareness raising and promotion of dialogue”* (informant 72). A second area that was repeatedly identified as a strong area for local civil society was *“a role in repairing relations between people”* (informant 62). Many also suggested that the communities should organize themselves to discuss issues and that the role of the CSO was to *“collect and present to government”* (informant 12).

In addition to the role of the local civil society, the role of the chiefs and elders and the importance of customary law was repeatedly highlighted. Although *“the power of chiefs has been lessened by those who have guns”* (informant 13) (see also Laudati 2011, 20) the role of the chiefs was acknowledged in mediating conflicts. Especially in divided communities the role of the chiefs and elders was highlighted. As stated by informant 14, *“if elders in peace and talking peace [...] young people will not fight”*. The trust towards traditional authorities as the primary actors in resolution was supported by several case studies showing that many governance projects, instead of maintaining or supporting peace, had led to an increase of violence through hindering traditional processes of resolving inter-group conflicts (see for example Pendle 2014, Radon &

Logan 2014). This goes to show the respect that the chiefs and elders still hold in the communities. In fact, as explained by the interviewees, the “*people trust elders more than government*” (informant 91). This was a commonly shared but also slightly ambivalent statement. According to the administrative structure of South Sudan, chiefs are incorporated into the local government. This means that “although in many cases perceived as spokespersons of ‘their people’”, the chiefs are in fact government employees. (Rolandsen 2015, 165) Compared with the low trust towards local government, it must be distinguished that the youth seem to (perhaps unknowingly) distinguish between the chiefs (who are part of the administrative structure of government) and the political leadership on the local level. Additionally, this slight ambivalence of the chiefs seems to contribute to the prominent role given to elders, who are independent of the government structure.

In addition to trusting the traditional leaders, many also expressed more confidence in customary law over the official legal framework. This was reflected also in the discourse that was highlighting the inability of the government to enforce the laws. In opposition, it was believed that the chiefs still held enough power in the communities to be able to enforce customary law. The importance of traditional leaders has also been acknowledged by van Leeuwen (2009, 79). Van Leeuwen notes, how “reforming the responsibilities of the traditional leaders was important for the sake of conflict resolution and peacebuilding because traditional leaders and chiefs had a role and a long history in conflict resolution on a local level” (ibid.).

3.3. National Unity

The issue of tribal diversity has not yet been discussed and therefore before moving into the narratives around (the lack) of national unity, I will shortly share some background information. South Sudan has a very heterogeneous population. The government of South Sudan officially has acknowledged 64 South Sudanese people. However, many of these groups have significant subdivisions and according to the most extreme estimations it is believed that South Sudan consists of 597 ethnic groups that speak over 400 different languages/dialects. While still part of Sudan, Dinka and Arabic were the most prominent languages in Sudan. Whereas in the independent South Sudan Dinka and Nuer are the two most prominent languages (LeRiche and

Arnold 2012, 5). Although English has taken a prominent position as a common language.

Especially when it comes to the history of the conflicts, South Sudan is often discussed through the Dinka-Nuer relationship. However, according to the census data collected in preparation for the referendum the two tribes total to roughly 50 percent of the total population. Therefore reducing the country around these two groups distorts the reality of diversity that exists in South Sudan. Additionally also the Dinka and Nuer are internally divided into numerous sub-clans and do not even internally constitute a homogenous group. As noted by Laudati (2011) these peoples are internally heterogeneous and politically divided.

Although none of the conflicts in South Sudan can be attributed to ethnicity alone, many conflicts have taken a group based form. This is especially the case with the cycles of revenge around cattle raiding. De Simone (2015, 69) has analyzed the relationship between the customary land rights of communities and the enforcement of group identities. In her analysis she found that the system that strongly linked access to land with group membership lead to a tendency to enforce group identity as a way to access land and resources. This problem of all land belonging to communities, was also seen as a factor contributing to land disputes by the interviewees. Furthermore, “the overlap of customary and administrative borders ultimately radicalizes ethnic identity as a tool for competition over land, creating groups that can be easily mobilized for the asserted defense of ‘community’ resources. This results in an extremely fragmented process of state formation, likely to jeopardize any peacebuilding effort.” (ibid.) This was also acknowledged by the interviewees. *“As a new nation, if we do not have nationhood in your heart, you will not be able to develop as a nation”* (informant 47).



Picture 4. Published with the text; “CUTTING OUR ROOTS, DESTROYING OURSELVES”

NARRATING THE LACK OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

The tendency towards divisions based on ethnicity was identified as a central problem also in the interviews. As commented by informant 22; “*conflict between tribes is not benefitting anyone*”. The calls for a unifying national identity, were matched by almost equal reservations over whether it exists. As was already noted earlier, the interim period between the CPA and independence was a time when expressions of Southern solidarity were high. What was however acknowledged by researchers already around that time (see for example Laudati 2011) was that this unity and solidarity seemed to only be a thin layer covering deep divisions and internal animosities. As noted by informant 91 the question of “*what unites us now that our fight for freedom is over?*” was on many people’s minds.

Even though comments such as “*people do not identify themselves with one nation*” (informant 60) and that there is “*disunity among people*” (informant 2) were common, the tendency was to discuss the national especially through tribes and ethnicity. This is evidenced for example by informant 87; “*Ethnicity is a problem. People speak as tribes, not as people of South Sudan.*” The idea that people should learn to “*live above our tribe*” (informant 39) or to put the national before the tribe was seen as the only way to move forward. However, as we will see in the next

section, despite their calls for national unity even the interviewees were actively contributing to the divisions.

The lack of common national identity was further narrated through the descriptions of tribalism and domination by especially the Dinka. The domination of the Dinka in the government was already discussed in the sections focusing on governance, but it needs to be acknowledged that the interviewees posited Dinka domination also in other areas of society. As noted by informant 67, the “*Dinka occupy all areas of South Sudan*”. Although Dinka was the most common target of this type of commentary, also the Nuer and Shilluk were said to “*use other tribes*” (several informants) for their personal needs. What was needed was that they “*need to go back to their own area*” (informant 67) both in terms of living area and in terms of cultural domination.

NARRATING THE OTHER

The idea of going back was also directed towards some groups that were identified as foreign - most notably the Misseriah and the Amboro. Limiting certain groups as not belonging in South Sudan could be seen as an effort to define the national identity. Especially in the case of the Misseriah (a pastoral group living along the border between Southern Sudan and Sudan) the hostility towards the group can also be attributed to the still prevalent hostility towards the Arab North that had served as the main unifying “other” for the South Sudanese throughout the struggle for independence.

The issue of foreignness was not only an issue of certain tribes, but rather an issue of experience. The ethnic divisions were further compounded by the diversity of experiences. As noted also in the CMI report the respondents, as well as the wider society, consisted of people with four types of experiences; those who stayed in Khartoum; those who took refuge in East Africa; those who sought asylum in the west and those who stayed (Taflinski 2012, 17). In the interviews there were tendencies of othering directed at all these groups - although for different reasons.

I will start with the once who stayed. Majority of the interviewees had either been in diaspora (East-Africa or the West) during the war or were returnees from Northern Sudan. Comprising 55% and 19% correspondingly, they formed the overall majority of the interviewees. Irrespective

of their background, interviewees with an exile experience referred to the people who had stayed in quite divisive manner. It was “they” who were traumatized, “they” who were unable to let go their hostilities and “they” who needed to change their ways. The language used was very generalizing and majority of the comments can be viewed as attempts to distance oneself from “them”. For example, informant 51 explained how *“those who were in diaspora have generally positive relations, those who were not have negative”*. Also as noted in the previous section, the high level of current violence was also contributed to the history of violence, especially among those who had remained in South Sudan during the war, especially those in the rural areas and in the cattle camps. *“The war has affected many as children. Grow up surrounded by violence [...] learn to be violent also. Now coming out.”* (informant 88).

Both interviewees who were returnees and members of diaspora on the other hand viewed themselves as positive agents in the situation. Through narrating the violence and hatred as an issue of those who had stayed, they were clearly attempting to position themselves as in a position to help or resolve the problem.

When it comes to the groups who had left during the war, there were a few competing narratives. The returnees comprised of a heterogeneous group of people both from Northern Sudan, the neighboring Eastern African countries and as well as refugees from Western countries. As noted by Le Riche and Arnold (2012, 5) many of these returnees were “setting foot on their home soil for the first time”. Citing the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Belloni (2011, 423) notes that just between October 2010 and March 2011 more than 264 000 returnees arrived from Khartoum alone. These returnees were followed by economic immigrants from East African countries, mainly Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia (ibid.). In addition to the returnees and migrants, the state was also faced with the problem of addressing the internally displaced. All the added population flow caused massive pressure on communities that were already facing severe lack of infrastructures and food shortages.

The sheer volume of returnees put significant pressure on the many communities. Contributing to intensifying land conflicts especially in urban areas. (Belloni 2011, 423). This pressure was prevalent also in the narratives of the interviewed youth. The high number of refugees was seen

as contributing to the wider insecurity in the communities. Returnees from the North were accused of looting and violence. Some expressed clear hostility towards the returnees for they only *“speak Arabic and know the Arab way”* (informant 4). Although for the most part the interviewees acknowledged that much of the problems with the returnees escalated due to discrimination that they faced upon arrival. It was stated how, *“the returnees were abandoned in camps”* (informant 8) or *“unable to get jobs, because spoke only Arabic”* (informant 56) and *“left without even basic services”* (informant 97). This seemed to be exacerbated by the frustration that the returnees themselves felt. *“Returnees have very poor standard of living [...] had jobs in North, had to abandon belongings. Now problems with languages, do not have land or property”* (informant 63). However, based on the interviews it seems that the hostility towards the returnees was higher among the general population.

Although the interviewees clearly attempted to represent themselves in a good light, the wider community of returnees was in some instances identified as a problem. Although few negative comments on the diaspora existed, like *“many youth in diaspora have been influenced by Western culture and have lost traditional norms and ethics”* (informant 30), the majority of the negative commentaries and attempts of othering were directed to the returnees from the North.

4. THE PREVALENCE OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

For the purpose of setting up the research question conflict transformation was defined as follows;

Conflict transformation is a holistic approach to peacebuilding with a very **long time span**. It acknowledges **conflict as a central factor in society** and rather than seeking to suppress conflicts, it aims at resolving underlying causes of conflicts and at enabling and constructing **non-violent ways to resolve conflicts**. Through this, it hopes to empower local communities to actively participate in changing their own communities towards well functioning, equal and peaceful societies. It is centered on the **local non-governmental actors** in the middle and grassroots level. It recognizes local people as resources and not recipients in peacebuilding and it is **focused on people: their skills, attitudes, actions and relationships**. Especially the focus on rebuilding and restoring fractured relationships, sets conflict transformation apart from liberal peacebuilding framework. Activities include, workshops, training, popular education, bridging communities, media and arts projects and advocacy projects. Although local actors are identified as the drivers of the process, the role of outside facilitators in enabling the process is acknowledged.

Within this chapter, I will analyze the prevalence of conflict transformation in the narratives of peace represented in the previous chapter. Within this analysis, I will discuss the narratives through the entry point of the key defining factors of conflict transformation listed above. As stated in the research question I will especially focus on the questions of locality and the local agency of the youth.

4.1. The Prevalence of Conflict Transformation

Although there were practically no direct engagement with the “term” conflict transformation in the interviews, it can be stated that the narratives did engage with the “idea” of conflict transformation quite extensively.

If we approach “transformation” literally, there were mere four mentions of it in the interviews. However, use of other related concepts such as capacity building, reconciliation, empowerment and dialogue was common. Informant 64 noted that there is a “*need to transform ourselves after war. From being at war into a new nation*”. Informant 88 suggested that there is a need to “*Establish various social activities to transform mentalities of youth*”. Whereas informant 98 simply noted there is “*a lot of transformation and recovery needed*”. The last note simply acknowledged the need to transform the “*SPLA into civilians*” (informant 36). All of these comments, although consisting only a small fraction of the discussions bring forth important aspects of conflict transformation - the primary focus on change, the idea of building better relationships in communities and nation at large and a focus on people’s skills, attitudes and actions. In order to map out the prevalence of conflict transformation thinking in the wider narratives (which do not directly discuss transformation), I will approach the narratives thematically.

I will start with the idea that transformation is a comprehensive process that takes not only a lot of work, but also a lot of time. Peace as a process or as a time of many changes and flux is something that seems to be well understood by the interviewees. It was acknowledged that this would require activities in many different areas, but I would argue that the true scale of the work that would be needed was underestimated by many. It is clearly also understood that achieving lasting peace and development will not come easy. Achieving it will require hard work and the notion of getting to work seems prominent in the views of interviewees from all states. The acknowledgement of the need of hard work, which was expressed by many interviewees, was however most often accompanied with the sad reality that the general public did not necessarily share this view. The very prominent commentaries on the need for work, were in constant opposition with acknowledgements that people were not working, that they were doing the wrong things (for example fighting rather than farming) or that if people were working (as the civil society activist were) their work was either hindered or unsuccessful. This was also highlighted by the need to understand and this task of understanding was partly considered as a society wide, but especially as something the “we” (the civil society) must accomplish. In order for the work to be productive, better understanding of the root causes or the underlying issues was needed.

“Identify the root cause of the problem [...] in order to be able to solve the problem.” (informant 84). Finally, it must be forcefully highlighted that much of this discussion was also directed towards the government. The government’s inability to work or achieve change was a central aspect of the narrative of lack of government capabilities and the idea that the government was not working for the best of the whole nation was strong,

However, time was practically never discussed. The work that was needed existed in an empty space, without acknowledgement of how long it would take to achieve or when it should be done. Especially, it seems that the very prominent narrative of hope, that had accompanied the independence process, seemed to have left the interviewees in a very impatient state and that the high level of hope was actually rendering many to have unrealistic expectation on the time it takes to achieve change. Many seemed to think that as independence had been achieved, therefore things should already be different. As if just the mere act of achieving independence should have changed everything. The interviews had been done only 3–4 months after independence, but already many expressed concerns that the process was not going the way it should or that *“South Sudan is like the north”* (informant 24). Granted, reservations on for example the government’s ability to gear development can be considered legitimate. Also the way that CMI had set up the interviews (specifically asked to identify challenges), in my opinion makes pessimistic commentaries more dominant and could therefore also misrepresent the level of pessimism that is perceived through the interviews. The interviewees were specifically asked to identify challenges and as a result, they described mainly the challenges and not any success stories. Still the narratives paint a picture of a society in a state of hope, but that the hope is fleeting fast.

Second key aspect of conflict transformation is the understanding that conflict is a central factor in society, although a factor that needs to be channeled as a force for good through non-violent conflict resolution skills. This is also the main factor that sets conflict transformation apart from approaches that seek to end and suppress conflict. There were many commentaries that were suggesting the need to unlearn violence or promote ways to resolve conflicts without violence. This was highly prevalent especially in the narrative around positive peace and the discussion around education.

However, this was contrasted by complete lack of acknowledging the potentially positive sides on conflict. This is most likely at least partly the result of the still high levels of violence in the society. Talk of conflict as a positive phenomenon or as an enabler of change is a controversial act in a society that is characterized by violence. It also reflects the focus of Western development interventions on promotion civil society as a supportive and productive part of the broader society. An approach which downplays the more conflictual notions of civil society (Lewis 2002, see also Gramsci 1971). From this context, it is striking how non-existent even discourses that would inadvertently acknowledge conflict were. For example, the complaints that the Dinka were controlling the politics and to some extent also other areas of life, was not confronted with acknowledgement that people would have the right to claim their own representation. Gaining access to a representative group of members of parliament was rendered as an act that the government should take. Not as an act the citizens nor members of the disenfranchised groups could claim. Similarly, in terms of border conflicts, the right of communities to claim or reversibly to protect their own land was not acknowledged. Once again, the issue was simply addressed through need to end the violence and that the legislation regarding land ownership should be revised in the new constitution. Although the understanding that legal framework around land ownership was seen as a contributing factor to violence, could also be seen as a way to address root causes of land disputes, the fact that the issue was rendered as an issue of law reform once again removed the agency away from the communities involved in that specific border dispute. Even in terms of the prevalence of domestic abuse, the right for the women to claim their own security was not acknowledged.

What I want to highlight, is that this does not mean that there was no local agency described. On the contrary. As was noted earlier there was a strong narrative of local action. However, this consisted almost solely of calls to act, participate and contribute. Talk of challenging dominant views or claiming rights was not part of this narrative. There for it could be suggested that in the narratives participation comes across as an act on compliance. There was only one statement calling out that “*community leaders should raise their voice*” (informant 80) in an act of resistance. Additionally, also learning was approached almost solely through education. Education of skills was very prominent. Talk of advocacy or teaching people to know their rights, was not. So once again the narrative turns more toward participating and learning to contribute

to society, with the expense of supporting different rights claims.

This leads us to the idea of focusing on people and their skills, attitudes, actions and relationships. As was noted above the idea that much work was needed was very prominent. It was also clear that this work was understood as much as practical as well as mental. Talk of changing attitudes and transforming minds was one of the most prominent narratives within the interviews. Similarly, the role of education in reducing conflict was prominent. In addition, as evidenced by the strong narrative of positive peace, peace was understood as a comprehensive process that involved reconciliation, building of relationships and lessening of discrimination. In this sense, at least the notion that comprehensive transformation is possible only through the people was completely in line with the narratives that surfaced from the interviews.

The overall prevalence of conflict transformation thinking can be acknowledged as quite prominent. There were a few aspects of conflict transformation lacking. However, the lack of fully understanding the scale and longevity of the process can be considered as factors arising from inexperience as well as frustration. In addition, the lack of acknowledging the positive potential of conflict and confrontation is understandable in a society where traditionally conflict has been connected to violence. It could also be argued, that the lack of acknowledging the civil society's potential as challenging political leadership could be influenced by the broader development aid discourse, which posits civil society as an actor engaged in providing services and information for their communities, rather than as one that should politically challenge the state. Both of these aspects are also partly outweighed by the sheer dominance of the focus on "people-building" and the strong focus on local agency.

4.2. The Problem of the Local

It is acknowledged that in order to be sustainable, peace operations should be initiated by the locals or at least implemented in cooperation with the locals (Wilén et.al. 2011, 534). This "local turn" has to some extent been attributed to the influence of conflict transformation. Still according to Nina Wilén and Vincent Chapaux (2011, 531) there are only few successful examples of cooperation between the international community and the locals in peacebuilding

missions. Even though the success stories are few, policy and literature highlight the strengthening of the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as the only way towards sustainable peace. However, as the international community was finding the potential of the local NGOs, the policy implemented by the international community seemed not to relate to the everyday practices of the local actors engaged in peacebuilding (van Leeuwen 2009, 75). Good intentions and the notion of working for the best of the local community did not always have the desired outcomes. In some cases, the locals had different ideas of the priorities and needs of aid or simply saw the internationals as imposing unwanted changes into their lives.

When we talk of cooperation between the international and local actors, the locals can get involved in international missions through two avenues – participation or collaboration. What distinguishes collaboration from participation according to Wilén and Chapaux (2011, 533–534), is that local participation defines the locals as not the initiators but simply as implementers or beneficiaries of the project. In other words, participation implies a hierarchy where the locals are at the bottom and the international community at the top. Collaboration on the other hand imposes a certain level of joint agency between the international community and the locals. Although still not acknowledging any local initiative. Importantly, as Wilén and Chapaux highlight (2011, 534), it is also possible to have collaboration between the local political elite and the international community without local participation. Therefore, it is crucial to define what is meant by locals when we are discussing South Sudanese participation, and what is the role envisioned for the local civil society actors.

Conflict transformation sees the relationship between the local and international actors mainly as collaboration. The main local actors are identified in the middle level of society, meaning for example NGOs, CSOs, community leaders and churches. Lederach sees “local leaders at the middle level of society as having the biggest peacebuilding potential, as they have the chance to influence both the top, national level and the bottom, grassroots level of peacebuilding” (Paffenholz 2015, 861 citing Lederach). The role of the international actors is envisioned as a facilitator or enabler. As stated by Francis (2010, 8), “Conflict transformation is achieved, first and foremost, by local people, with ‘outsiders’ taking a supporting or facilitating role”. As Francis continues to explain later on, the international organizations have especially a role as

impartial actors between the conflict parties. “Sometimes these international organizations were able to use workshops to bring together participants from both or all of the communities affected by a conflict, in a way that local organizations would not be trusted to do” (Francis 2010, 16). After being able to bring the parties together, the international facilitator can then give the local communities the tools to start rebuilding the communal relationships. Therefore, once this initial trust has been able to be built, the agency is shifted more into the hands of the local actors. In addition, to engagement with the local communities, there is an international role also designed for the conflict transformation facilitators. Many of the central writers on conflict transformation are also practitioners. In addition, to being involved on the local level they actively engage in attempting to change the norms of peacebuilding in the international level. Sensitizing peacekeepers to better encompass the local agency is one aspect of this.

As briefly noted above the local agency was very prominent in the interviews. The role of traditional authorities was discussed earlier, but I want to also focus shortly on the agency of the youth themselves. Schwartz (2010, 155) argues, “many youth in post-conflict societies actively seek ways to become constructive members of their communities and help rebuild nations”. As Schwartz continues this means that in addition to being a potential force of violence, the youth are “dynamic agents of change, pushing their societies in both directions: toward violence and toward peace” (ibid. see also Honwana 2012). This double function of youth was deeply understood by the interviewees. The acknowledgement of the youth’s potential for violence was addressed by different types of activities. There was need to reduce idleness, to organize youth dialogues, to introduce measures to reduce hostile group images among the youth and to organize social activities like sports clubs for the youth to be able to socialize with members from different groups in a relaxed manner.

As noted in the CMI’s report the youth have traditionally have prominent roles among some tribes in South Sudan. Some of these roles relate more directly to violence, like that of the Arrow boys, a youth group responsible for the protection of their communities, especially against the attacks by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Another case is the Momyemijin;

“Monyemiji are the ruling youth age groups in their communities and they assume the

right of membership through initiations. Their primary role is to provide security, look into livelihood issues (for instance in times of drought), consult and petition the rain maker, and handle all social issues of their communities. There are normally four groupings of different age groups for both boys and girls but each group must be made up of age mates. In some communities the ruling period of Monyemiji are between 20 to 23 years while other communities have a specific term limit of 12 years before yet another group is initiated. Monyemiji from one village are developing a network with other neighboring villages as a way to bolster the security situation in that locality, while in other tribes youth are responsible of keeping the cattle. (Taflinski 2012, 11-12)

However, the narratives foresee a far greater role for the youth and especially for the youth who are active in civil society. The interviewees paint a picture of a group of youth who are deeply committed to peace and highly motivated in working for peace. They argue for raising the “*capacity of the CSO’s*” (informant 32), increasing the influence of local actors and “*need to empower qualified youth*” (informant 54). The role of the youth is especially highlighted in terms that they can share their own education and “*educate people in their communities*” (informant 60). The youth identify themselves as a central actor in their communities. It is a widely shared belief among the interviewees that “*Youth have direct contact with communities*” (informant 31). However, this direct link to the communities can also be questioned. Many of the interviewees come from diaspora or returnee background and as noted earlier, some of them have never before been in South Sudan prior to arriving during the interim period between the CPA and independence. Therefore, their ability to truly link with the local communities and to be able to identify with the concerns of those who stayed throughout the conflict can be questioned. As was noted alongside the narrative on “othering”, also many youth who were interviewed expressed tendencies towards generalizing or blaming those who had stayed. They viewed the ones who had stayed as more violent and unable to change due to their trauma.

Because of this slight ambivalence of the youth from the diaspora background, their position could also be approached as somewhat similar to the international facilitator. They are highly educated and possess skills that the majority in the local communities do not possess. Their status as “South Sudanese” does give them legitimacy in the communities that many international actors lack. At the same time, as “outsiders” they may be able to achieve a more neutral status, when

compared with the locals. This is also a role that the interviewees seem to partly prescribe to themselves. Their role as educators of local communities or intermediaries between the international and local actors was prominent. In addition, the certain resistance against granting the international actors too much power was noteworthy. There was a clear attempt to limit the international community's role to one of a mentor, rather than an actor that would actively engage in the communities. This role of engagement was predominantly reserved for the youth themselves.



Picture 5. “In the end they are the ones who will have to pick up the pieces and stitch the fabric of South Sudan back together, after this generation finishes tearing it apart.”

5. CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, the narratives of peace that the South Sudanese youth actors produced were clearly influenced by some of the core ideas conflict transformation. However, we have yet to discuss the role of conflict transformation as a potentially colonizing power discourse affecting the everyday experiences of the South Sudanese civil society actors engaged in peacebuilding. Souto-Manning described to goal of critical narrative analysis as “critical analysis of narratives in the lifeworld – the everyday stories people tell – within the context of institutional discourses” (Souto-Manning 2014, 163). In the previous chapter, we already compared the narratives to the broader framework of conflict transformation. What is still needed, is the last step of the analysis – the potentially colonizing aspect of the intervention designed by CMI.

As was noted earlier there were only four direct mentions of “transformation” in the interviews. What is extremely interesting is that all those comments came from the same region. What this could suggest, is that the prevalence of “transformation” only among actors from one single city was due to a recent conflict transformation intervention in that area. This could predict a high likelihood of a colonizing discourse deriving from the project/intervention design, to the participants. This is possible, although we have no means to verify this. However, it does raise the question of the influence that different interventions have.

The CMI approaches the project in South Sudan through the rhetoric of “state-building”. Although when read more closely, the approach has significant similarities with conflict transformation. The project defines state-building as follows:

State-building is an inclusive process which aims at negotiating state-society relationships with the perspective to reach a social contract, which will lay the foundation for establishing state legitimacy by ensuring that governing institutions are shaped by the needs and expectations of the state’s citizens. It is an inherently indigenous process that establishes dialogue between the state and its citizens and thereby creates trust in government, which ultimately addresses the root causes of state fragility. (Taflinski 2012, 7)

Based on this definition, the project seeks to engage in

a concrete dialogue approach [through which] the project aims at contributing to the establishment of attitudes, mechanisms and institutions that are capable of resolving differences without recourse to violence, or the threat of the use of violence. It is a long-term perspective that does not promise quick fixes, but seeks to achieve systemic changes.
(Taflinski 2012, 8)

If we compare this definition, with the definition of conflict transformation, we see an almost identical match. Although the CMI project has a more definitive goal in promoting the relationship between the state and the citizens, instead of just between different societal groups. The main aims revolve around long-term systemic change, which seeks to change attitudes, mechanisms and institutions. As we already saw, these were all prevalent aspects in the narratives of peace.

Additionally, the focus on young civil society actors or young leaders shows focus on the middle level actors, combined with the focus of passing the information upwards. The narratives acknowledge the difficult relationship between the government and citizens and also note that there is need to repair this relationship. However, in the narratives the youth seem more heavily focused on the activities in the local communities. They identify the government as a central actor, but do not envision a strong role for themselves in influencing the actions of the government. This role rather, seems to be handed to the international actors. Therefore, on the outset it would seem that the youth are not strongly influenced by the rhetorical choices made by CMI (state building over conflict transformation). The youth also are not actively engaging with the main goal of focusing on state-society relationships. In fact, the stronger focus on the agency of the youth in their local communities in achieving more peaceful relations between groups, suggest that the influence of conflict transformation outweighs the influence of the CMI approach.

However, the agency envisioned by the interviewees still follows de Toquevillean understanding

of the role of civil society, which Lewis (2002) identified as the dominant civil society discourse in the development sector. The Gramscian notions of civil society as potentially a challenging and resisting actors are not prevalent in the narratives. This is an interesting phenomenon. Although highly critical of the government the interviewees did not want to challenge the state, but rather seemed to either simply focus on naming issues that need attention or positing either the chiefs and elders or the international community as the actor that should challenge the state. The role for the youth activist themselves was one that would bring the communities together. As was noted earlier, this could be an effect of the still prevalent violence in the society and the role of certain youth groups in this violence. This could have led the interviewees to focus more on suppressing all violence and active resistance. This could also suggest that the Gramscian model does not have much explanatory power in post-conflict setting, especially within a strong one-party system with high levels of insecurity. At least in the context of these narratives, due to the long history of war, which has often been narrated as resistance against the oppressive North, all types of resistance and dissent seem to be equated with violence and fighting. As such calling for any type of resistance is perceived as calling for war. Although not acknowledged by the interviewees, overcoming the equation of resistance with violence and war, is a central aim of both the conflict transformation approach as well as the approach chosen by the CMI.

The narratives also position the youth in opposition to the international actors. The youth seem to claim broader agency for themselves. Although the South Sudanese civil society at large is heavily dependent on donors, at least in this context, the youth claim their own position as civil society actors. The discussion around international involvement, positions international actors in a position of mentors and enablers. Although this is in line with the conflict transformation approach, there was also clear attempts to partly shift this role of facilitator to the youth themselves. This could be interpreted as an attempt to resist the even stronger colonizing power discourse of peacebuilding – the liberal peace framework. Although the diaspora background of many of the interviewed youth also blurs the status of the youth between local and foreign in their communities. As such, some of the interviewees also seem to position themselves simultaneously as part of that community and in a position of a semi-international expert.

Finally, the strong local agency could also be explained through the youth's desire to position

themselves as capable and skillful actors, who the international actors should take into account. It was stated in the CMI report that it is quite unlikely that any civil society actor, when asked to participate in a project lead by international actors, would say no (Taflinski 2012, 10). Similar findings have been made also by Francis (2010, 17). In addition, the narratives show that many youth expressed concerns over their own future in terms of employment. Engagement in international projects is a central avenue for the youth to seek employment. Savin-Baden and van Niekerk note that narratives “can be used as a verifying mechanism, as a means of confirming or defending truths” (2007, 463). Especially, they see that in a professional setting stories can be used to lay claim to certain professional status. This seems likely in the case of the interviews. Many proclaimed their skills in engaging with the local communities and even beyond their own activities repeatedly highlighted the role of the local actors. The repetitive narrative almost functions as a form of communal storytelling on the importance of the work that is done by the youth.

All these aspect show that the youth envision a rather powerful local agency. This agency seems to be more in line with the second local turn and its more radical understanding of locally led and initiated peace efforts, although it is still lacking some of the more critical notions. The conflict transformation approach has been criticized (see for example Mac Ginty 2013, 2015, Paffenholtz 2015) for its inability to go over the international power hierarchy embedded in peacebuilding. As noted earlier, this hierarchy posits the “local” in a highly ambivalent position – as on the other hand the leader or instigator of the process but at the same time the beneficiary of the interventions by international NGOs. The youth do not seem to problematise this relationship. Rather they approach it quite practically. They acknowledge the role that the locals should have in the process, but still identify the international actors as the ones that enable this process. Thereby, getting involved in projects initiated by international actors is seen as a way to potentially ensure individual employment. Simultaneously, the youth seem to attempt to narrate themselves up in this hierarchy. Although, it is far beyond the scope of this research to even speculate whether they are successful in this.

What is important, however, is how these narratives show desire and agency on the local level. Although clearly influenced by the conflict transformation school, as well as the second local

turn, the narratives do not seem to fully in line with either of the approaches. Conflict transformation is a strong influence, but not a definitive one. It seems to provide the youth a basis on which they can narrate their own agency in a way that would seek to allow them to participate in building their own communities. However, at the time of the interviews, the narrative created still leaves a civil society vacuum in the national space, which is dominated by the government. Although the contemporary South Sudanese civil society does possess many national actors that seek to some extent challenge the government (evidenced also by the governments attempts to repress these actors), the interviews that were done with the youth civil society actors across South Sudanese state capitals do no bring forth a national agency.

As such, this type of national counter balance could be one tool to counter the dominance of the government, but overcoming the patronage networks that strongly influence the current political sphere would most likely require rethinking the idea of civil society in the South Sudanese context. Independent civil society as such, even if it would entail more conflictual notions on the role of the civil society, would not necessarily be able to overcome the traditional social structures and as such is not a successful policy tool. Rather the conclusion of Lewis, that “the potential usefulness of the concept of civil society can therefore be analysed across two main dimensions – it can be ‘useful to think with’ and it may be ‘useful to act with’” (Lewis 2002, 582) seems to hold true. What Lewis is implying, is that in many African contexts civil society may not be a useful policy tool due to the incompatibilities between the Western models of civil society and the structures of many African societies and political structures. Despite being the main approach of the development interventions, the idea that civil society consist of voluntary associations that can hold the government accountable does not, according to Lewis, hold clear prescriptive power in the African context. However, theories of civil society can provide tools to understand and analyse the bottom up dynamics of different social movement or the local structures of community action. Similarly, ideas of civil society can be used to mobilise local and possibly national agency.

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Meta-Narratives	Sub-narratives	Rhetorical means
<p>The importance of peace</p> <p>“Peace is a process”</p>	<p>Hope and peace</p> <p>“Peace already achieved. Fought for independence and now is free. Now will prosper”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - proclamations of freedom - descriptions of “a bright future” - talk of culture of peace - description of past injustices - high saturation of “everybody”, “we” and other terms describing unity in reference with peace and future
	<p>Continuation of violence</p> <p>“Conflict all over, old and new”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - description of tribal hostility and group conflict, especially border conflicts between pastoralist and farmers (see also under unity) - listing incidences of cattle conflicts/raids and related phenomenon - descriptions of general insecurity (revenge, roadblocks, high crime rate), fear (violence, witch craft, mines) and trauma - highlighting the need for disarmament - lack of police and lack of government reaction to community conflicts
	<p>Lack of positive peace</p> <p>“Peace exists in South Sudan. But there are some elements that have not received peace.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - descriptions of tribal tensions - reports on human rights violations - complaints of no rule of law - descriptions of corruption and tribalism/nepotism - reporting inequality, especially gender inequality - talk of transforming minds and attitudes - a notion of lack of development because of conflict (food insecurity, illiteracy, lack of education, high reliance on foreign imports and high prices, unemployment/idleness)

Governance “Need for good governance. Otherwise fought for nothing. Doing the same thing as fought against.”	Insufficient government capabilities “Lack of democracy, South Sudan is like the North”	- acknowledgement that government should take a leading role, BUT MANY COMPLAINTS; - government not delivering on promises - lack of government reaction to community conflicts - corruption - tribalism / dinka domination - government not able to uphold rule of law - poor relationships between government and communities - reports on attempts to control or suppress civil society
	International involvement	- need for international help and guidance - calls for international involvement, also to hold government in check. - also extensive critique on international NGOs
	Local/traditional leaders	- highlighting the role of elders and chiefs - calls to uphold customary law as a tool to reconcile conflicts - calls to organize actions on community level - identifying local civil society as central actors
National Unity “As a new nation, if we do not have nationhood in your heart, you will not be able to develop as a nation”	Lack of national identity “People speak as tribes, not as people of South Sudan.”	- claims that there is no national identity - complaint over tribalism and domination by the big tribes (mainly Dinka and Nuer, but some regional variation) - distrust between groups, especially among those who stayed in South Sudan during the war
	Othering	Creating narratives that divide people into separate categories (often against the interviewees and others),

Attachment 1. Table of Narratives of Peace

	<p>“Many youth in diaspora have been influenced by Western culture and have lost traditional norms and ethics”</p>	<p>though;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- describing the returnees as foreigners or as “not-belonging”- describing some tribes as foreign- describing rural youth as violent- critique of international staff
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University of Juba
Centre for Peace and Development Studies

Pre-assessment questionnaire

Please attach one questionnaire sheet to each of the interview notes

Team: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 2011

Town: _____ / State: _____

Short introduction about the project partners:

- The Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) is a Finnish NGO that works to resolve conflict and build sustainable peace
- It was founded in 2000 by its chairman, Peace Nobel Laureate Martti Ahtisaari and is based in Finland
- CMI works in many places, for instance in West Africa, with the African Union, and the Middle East
- The Centre for Peace and Development Studies at University of Juba promotes philosophies that aim at integrating humanitarian, conflict and peace studies with other relevant academic programmes
- It acts as an academic research entity that offers post-graduate level degrees
- The Centre also offers capacity building for public services

Project description:

- CPDS and CMI work together on a project on "youth dialogue on confidence and state building"
- This project aims at facilitating youth dialogue in all 10 States of South Sudan and at regional level
- These dialogues will be conducted with a view to creating confidence among youth
- This means that they will elaborate proposals to addressing conflicts in South Sudan
- These proposals will be linked to ongoing political processes at state and national level
- In this way, the project will contribute to the stability of the new country and reduce violence

1. Background information about the interviewee:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: M / F Ethnic group: _____

Phone number(s): _____ Email address: _____

Member of a political party: ☐ no ☐ SPLM ☐ other (specify): _____

Member of the Diaspora: ☐ Yes ☐ No Returnee from the North: ☐ Yes ☐ No IDP: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Languages spoken: ☐ English ☐ Arabic ☐ other (specify): _____

Level of education: ☐ Primary school ☐ Secondary school ☐ Higher education

Youth group and position: _____ Current job: _____

2. Assessment of the current situation in South Sudan

- A. How do you assess the current situation in South Sudan?
- B. What are the main challenges confronting South Sudan and its people, at local and national levels?
- C. What can be done to address these challenges?
- D. What can you or your community do to address these?

3. Focus on conflict dynamics:

- A. What sorts of incidents of violence, or threats of violence, are the most recurrent in your area?
- B. How does the violence, or threat of violence, affect the ability of citizens to fulfill their aspirations?
- C. What can be done about these incidents of violence and threats?
- D. Do you think South Sudan will be a peaceful and prosperous country in the future??

4. The interviewee's role and attitudes:

- A. Are you active with youth and if so, how?
- B. Do you see a use for youth to discuss issues confronting South Sudan in broader venues, e.g. at state/regional/national levels?
- C. Is it useful for youth to share views with decision-makers and politicians?
- D. Would you be interested to engage in a long term dialogue aimed at finding a peaceful future for South Sudan?
- E. Do you know other youth who would be interested in such a process?
- F. Would you be interested in facilitating, promoting and communicating about such a dialogue, e.g. through videotaping or talking to the government and the international community?

5. Monitoring and Evaluation questions:

- A. What is the level of interaction among the youth from different tribes (means: *how much* interaction is there)?

0 – Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 – Sufficient	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – Good	<input type="checkbox"/>

- B. How do you characterize typical interaction among the youth from different tribes (means: *how is the* interaction)?

1 – Mostly negative	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 – Both negative and positive	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – Mostly positive	<input type="checkbox"/>

- C. What is your perception on the confidence and trust a) among youth; b) between youth and local government; c) between youth and national government in Juba?

Confidence and trust	a) amongst youth	b) between youth and local government	c) between youth and national government
0 – Non-existent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 – Sufficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- D. How violent are the youth in your state?

0 – Not at all violent	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – Violent at some degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 – Quite violent	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – Very violent	<input type="checkbox"/>

- E. How actively do the youth contribute to political processes?

0 – No contribution at all	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – Limited contribution	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 – Quite active	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – Very active	<input type="checkbox"/>