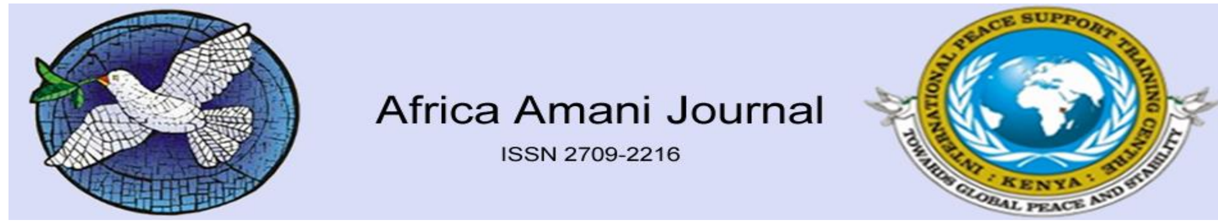

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Power imbalances and peace building: a participatory approach between local and international actors

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Abstract

Local and international civil society organizations (CSOs) often work together towards peace and development in constrained settings. This "togetherness" is defined differently for every interaction with different actors. Looking at peacebuilding work between different actors, there is a need to reflect upon the power imbalances and promote a localization of civil society. This paper focuses on the German Civil Peace Service (CPS), which works to involve and collaborate with local actors in peace processes in (post-)conflict countries. Using ethnographic research methods and writing, this paper introduces a story that illustrates power imbalances at various levels in peacebuilding. Then, it introduces the concepts of power, discourse, and paternalism to add to theories like hybrid peace and the local turn that already try to identify the types of partnerships that empower local actors. Looking into the CPS, the paper gives insight into 1) the self-understanding of CSOs working with local approaches, 2) the dynamics of CSOs in societies affected by conflict, 3) on practical challenges regarding power and benefits occurring due to local-global interactions. The paper uses background information from CSOs in Germany and Kenya, it provides examples of how imbalances can be addressed and used in a positive way.

Key words*: Kenya, Africa, Peacebuilding, local, civil society*

1. Introduction[1]

Analyses of peace processes show that they are only successful if local actors are taken seriously. "A core value, and strategy, of peace programming is enabling and supporting people in building their own peace. Real solutions only grow from and are firmly anchored in the

communities affected" (Anderson and Olson 2003:33). The scientific debate on involving local actors in peacebuilding[2] and civil conflict transformation increasingly calls for a comprehensive approach to cooperate with local actors, and for concepts that do not impose Western ideas on local actors but consider them as an active part of the whole process (Reich 2005:475). Answers to these calls, especially in the area of peacebuilding that deals with international and internationally supported activities, are given by the practice of civil conflict transformation, defined as the management of conflicts without the use of direct violence to find a settlement or solution that considers the interests of all parties to the conflict (Schweitzer 2004:512f.). The number of civil society organizations (CSO)[3] that use this widely accepted method in the context of conflict prevention, peace-making and post-conflict work has increased recently (Fischer 2011:288).

Civilian conflict transformation by German CSOs is mainly implemented by the Civil Peace Service (CPS). The CPS focuses on cooperation with local[4] partners and promotes a "local people's peace" (BMZ 2011:11). The CPS is particularly suitable as a research subject, because it has contributed to an enormous professionalization of civil conflict transformation with a clear focus on interactions with local partners, most recently with a comprehensive reform process between 2011 and 2013 (Gemeinschaftswerk ZFD 2014:2). This paper analyzes the extent to which the German CPS takes the principles of local, participatory peacebuilding seriously and implements them in its work, and what tensions and problems arise in this process. The paper especially looks at the concept of power within the CPS.

The discussion adopts a critical approach and has a special focus on the cooperative work of local and international peace workers. "More research is necessary to obtain more reliable and convincing results on the interaction of different actors and levels" (Fischer 2011:306f.). Analyzing the micro-sociological level with an anthropological perspective and empirical examples from Germany and Kenya, the paper takes a closer look at these relationships, power (im)balances and different types of connections between these actors. Looking into these connections and power relationships, the paper speaks critically about the relationship and interactions between CSOs.

The paper begins with a short introduction into a critical, conceptual debate around local approaches to peacebuilding and conflict transformation before it introduces the CPS. It provides an overview of the basic ideas and structure of the CPS and identifies challenges for international peace workers. Readers are then introduced to an ethnographic story from Kenya, which helps to identify the importance of power on various levels. Simultaneously, the concept's weaknesses are identified, and the empirical study confirms that the relationship between different actors is crucial. The conclusion discusses further research topics and gives recommendations for the CPS' work and power in peacebuilding in general.

2. Local approaches to peacebuilding and conflict transformation

In recent years there have been many theoretical discussions on how to better integrate the local into peacebuilding and conflict transformation. It is important to note that the discussion that emerged in academia is built around the critique of liberal peace. One of the main criticisms is

that the liberal peace assumes that people in post-conflict countries accept Western, liberal values and, if necessary, merge them with local values and norms. In this regard, local actors are assumed to not perceive external actors' actions as problematic. Thus, external actors assume they have the knowledge to create peace and restore a state under the rules of good governance.[5] The critical debate investigates the inclusion of local actors into the processes. The *local turn* can be described as a more reflective approach to peacebuilding, which assumes that local peace requires more than security and the absence of war. It assumes a continuous process that changes relationships, behaviors, attitudes, and structures from negative to positive peace. The role of external actors is initially seen as supporting local actors in their actions (Paffenholz 2015:858). With the consideration of post-structuralism and post-colonial theories, the *local turn* assumes that local actors should be the starting point for any peacebuilding measure (Mac Ginty 2013:772). Therefore, in practice it is important to involve local actors directly from the start of an intervention or a program. Their ideas and viewpoints should be reflected in peacebuilding and they should be granted local ownership. Still, it is important to consider the relationships among the involved actors. The concept of *hybrid peace* does this by seeking to highlight the scope of local actors' action and presenting the resulting benefits to the whole process of peacebuilding. Still, hybridity does not mean that two groups of actor's merges into a third *hybrid* entity, but that they continue to exist in a *hybrid* form by themselves. This usually happens slowly in everyday negotiation processes (Mac Ginty 2011:72), which are never completed but in constant change (Mac Ginty 2011:8f.). In practice it is important to focus on the actions and evaluate them according to questions like: Who was involved? Whose idea was it? Who is responsible for what? Where can we work together? What parts of a project are implemented individually? Looking at the concrete interactions, the concept of *friction* can help to reflect upon these questions. The focus of the concept lies less on the outcome of peacebuilding measures than on the process itself. *Frictions* are understood as "the unexpected and unstable aspects of global interaction" (Tsing 2005:xi) and therefore as a process that arises through the interaction between global and local. So, the process should not be inevitably negative as the concept adds complexity, uncertainty, and indeterminacy to peacebuilding analyses. Therefore, *friction* should be considered as an analytical tool to interpret the results of interactions in complex post-conflict societies (Björkdahl et al. 2016:1f.). To summarize, it is important that the concept of peacebuilding needs to be redefined and should encompass "an interactive process between different actors" (Bernhard 2013:10) based on their relations and negotiations.

2.3. Civil Peace Service

In general, the term civil conflict transformation refers to a social change that aims at structural changes, but also examines attitudes and perspectives (Reich 2005:485). Its discussion is divided into a theoretical peace debate, one about security policy and another one about development policy (Weller and Kirschner 2005:13). Civil conflict transformation in Germany is characterized not only by the involvement of state actors, but also by CSO, faith-based organizations and institutions (Auer-Frege 2010:15). A special feature of civil conflict transformation since the 1990s is the CPS[6], which the Federal Ministry for Economic

Cooperation and Development (BMZ) institutionalized in 1999, thereby creating an instrument for civil conflict transformation.

Today the CPS is a joint project of the state and non-governmental institutions that act within the framework of a joint effort as a staff secondment program, which it claims makes an effective contribution to civil conflict transformation and contributes to peace worldwide (Gemeinschaftswerk ZFD 2014:2). Their work goes along with the government's mission statement on conflict transformation that includes topics like Germany's responsibility for peace, freedom, development, the rule of law, and safety and emphasizes partnership work and inclusive peace processes (Die Bundesregierung 2017:44f.). Above all, the program's content is the support of local partner organizations in crisis regions by CPS seconded personnel tasked with laying the foundation for sustainable peace. In general, the CPS has several goals, including: First, the cooperation and dialogue platforms to create secure meeting places for the conflict parties; second, strengthening information and communication structures to support particularly vulnerable groups and to promote social integration of particularly affected people; third, promoting methods and concepts of civil conflict transformation and advising and training peace pedagogy; and fourth, strengthening legal security and promoting human rights (BMZ n.d.) To ensure professionalism, this work is undertaken on behalf of the BMZ by nine organizations.

The CPS' goals are to prevent the outbreak of violence ahead of time (crisis prevention), to decrease violence in conflicts and to build structures and institutions after the end of violence to secure peace in the long term (Conflict Resolution and Peace Consolidation) (Konsortium Ziviler Friedensdienst 2010:9). The CPS works with the concept of constructive conflict transformation promoted by Adam Curle (1994), Johan Galtung (1996) and Jean Paul Lederach (1997). Constructive conflict transformation refers to an ongoing process of changing relationships, behavior, attitudes, and structures from negative to positive. Cooperation with local partners is seen as a vital part of the projects and the peace process to achieve this. The CPS' work is based on the BMZ's principles of action for shaping cooperation for peace and security. According to the principles, it is important that, first, engagement is contextual and tailored to local needs, second, conflicts about goals are known and dealt with openly, third, reliable goals are formulated for the cooperation to be able to acknowledge small successes, fourth, risks are known and handling them is steadily improved, fifth, the concept of do-no-harm is applied, sixth, the strategies are tailored to local structures, and seventh, rapid project success with long-term perspectives are possible (BMZ 2013:16). These principles are used in different ways depending on the organizations and projects. Thus, there is the possibility of working in conflict (minimum requirement of the CPS), working on conflict, the resolution of conflicts and/or the consolidation of peace processes (long-term CPS goal (BMZ 2011:10), or working around conflict (CPS seconded personnel can provide impulses).

An evaluation of the CPS shows that implemented projects, especially at the local level, can lead to many positive changes. Projects are more successful if they succeed in reaching more beneficiaries, extend their reach beyond the local context, focus on key actors for change, and implement everyday non-violent approaches (BMZ 2011:5). Quack (2009) concludes that the impact of the CPS is clearly positive and enables key actors as well as people from different parts of society to work on different levels (but with different impacts). Generally speaking,

involving local, civil society actors in peacebuilding, directly and indirectly, enhances the legitimacy of consolidation and can provide an open platform for exchange and interaction (Zanker 2018:207).

However, this is only sustainable if the local partners' needs are considered effectively and linked to the capabilities and expertise of the CPS. This sustainable engagement requires embedding activities in an overall concept of constructive conflict transformation in which local partners are recognized as trend-setting agents of social change (Reich 2005:473). Therefore, different actors share the responsibility for implementing CPS programs; this network character can link different actors across hierarchical levels of society (vertically) and across perceived conflict lines (horizontally) (Reich 2005:477). Forming these networks is often very difficult, which is why a third party is assumed very helpful for initiation and support (Scotto 2002:228). CSOs' work can be seen more critically. CSOs are not automatically, and always completely independent, as seconded personnel have their personal viewpoints, especially if they live in a country for a while. In general, it is questionable if productive neutrality or strangeness even exists. Furthermore, the requirements of donor markets do not always have positive influence on the CSO's work; in many countries, international CSOs with Western backgrounds are dominant and tend to export and impose their concepts (Fischer 2011). This donor-problem is also important for the CPS. Even if the CPS defines itself as a partner rather than a donor, some local partners identify them as a donor. This dependency plays an important role when it comes to work relations but also relations between the different actors involved in the CPS. Local organizations that are part of that donor business are often quite experienced and know what international organizations want to hear and which current topics are relevant for successful funding applications. As local staff from a Kenyan NGO pointed out during an informal talk, they know how to dance the dance the international staff want to see.[7] This raises the question of how independent and locally driven the whole process of local projects and applications really is. Moreover, there is a high dependency within the CPS, as local organizations depend on its structures and the seconded personnel depend on their work contracts and its structures. The following chapter takes a closer look at the role of CSOs and local partners in the CPS.

2.4 A reflexive research approach

The reflexive and ethnographic research focuses on the CPS, using an example from Kenya as a case study. First, to understand the background, structures and approaches of individual organizations implementing CPS projects, the author conducted seven expert interviews with the German ministry and the program managers of six organizations carrying out CPS projects. Qualitative interviews with open guiding questions were conducted to give the interviewees as much free space as possible for their answers. To better understand the work in the CPS projects, it is important to understand the perspectives of the seconded personnel[8] working in the projects on the ground. In a second phase, the author visited five seminars for training newly seconded CPS personnel. The author participated in some parts of trainings offered by various CPS organizations.

The third and last phase of field work was shaped by a research-stay in CPS projects in Kenya to understand the CPS' work in practice and to have direct exchanges with the different actors involved. Field research in Kenya took place from September to the beginning of December 2019 and was conducted using the qualitative method of participatory observation. Participant observation is a planned perception of the behavior of people in their natural environment, an observation of the *everyday* by an observer, who participates in the interactions and whom the other persons consider as part of their field. Research was supplemented by open interviews to better understand that *every day*. In addition to the observations, 50 interviews were conducted during the field research in Kenya. The interviews were done with the coordinators in the countries, seconded personnel, and various staff members of the local organizations. There was no formal interview with the people participating in the CPS activities, but rather informal conversations during the observations and interactions. This study does not aim to speak for various actors, but rather to summarize the observations and interviews and combine them with scientific and theoretical debates.

In participant observation, it is important to examine power relations. This topic is particularly central in the context of north-south research, as there is need for a reflection of general socially constructed power differentials and ethical and practical challenges. In general, two power relationships can be found in the field: one between the researcher and the actors in the field and the other between the actors in the field itself. The former power relationship varies considerably. In the expert interviews in Germany, the author would describe the people that have been interviewed as more powerful, because they enable content and access. Still an asymmetry remains, because, as a researcher, the author has the authority to interpret and make scientific decisions. The author is also very aware of the asymmetrical distribution of power in the seminars and during the research. The author identified and defined the field, determined the methodological approaches, and evaluated the data. In addition to reflecting on power, it is also important to reflect on positionality, as it shapes the nature of the relationships with the actors in the field and the way the author analyzes the data (Kacen and Chaitin Julia 2006). As the author is aware of this fact, the author sees her responsibility as a scientist to consider and reflect on ethical approaches in research and to use the power structures in the field as analytical instruments for empirical research. However, the author does not see herself in the role of breaking through power structures, showing strategies for action, strengthening cooperation between them, and waging a fight for certain actors. Rather, the research points out certain issues and problems and initiates dialogue between the actors. This can also be transferred to the power relationship between the actors in the field, which in the case of the CPS is also asymmetrical and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

3. Self-understanding of the CPS

To understand the work of the CPS in practice this paper first looks at the interviews conducted in Germany. The results of these interviews fall into the categories the organizations' self-understanding, the goals of CPS, and the perception of the cooperation with local partners and general challenges that occur in the work.

Self-understanding and the goals of CPS as well as the *perception of the cooperation* with local partners is critical for every organization. Self-understanding basically goes along with the

official understanding of CPS. CPS defines itself as a partner, not a donor, that takes local approaches and local partners seriously and supports local initiatives. Here, close cooperation with local partners, the motivation to work with civil methods of conflict transformation, the ability to work on conflict, and the role of the seconded personal as an external, neutral, non-partisan actor is all central importance. CPS organizations and their employees critically discuss the last point. Some define themselves as neutral, non-partisan with an inherent productive strangeness, while others say that they can never be entirely neutral or non-partisan, as they have opinions and take positions on the contexts in which they work as well as decide about funding. As part of CPS, the organizations have the freedom to tailor the projects according to the needs of their partners as well as their own organization's standards and topics. Hence, the cooperation always looks different. In general, every CPS organization is free to choose local partner organizations. Some organizations are long-standing partners with cooperation experience from previous projects, while others are new actors, who become acquainted with CPS through personal interactions or network meetings. The interviewees identified a general problem when working with local partners: Project partners on site need a certain structure, for example a religious institution or NGO status, and must bring along a certain infrastructure. Thus, local authorities that lack such a structure are not suitable as project partners. The person that the author interviewed at *Action Committee Service for Peace* (AGDF) mentioned that groups of people might overlap in this regard, however. For example, people who work for an NGO may also be a local authority in their community. So, they could be caught in a conflict of interests between a CSO, their personal interests and the other actors, like the local government of companies with which they deal. Once a local partner is identified there is a registration process with the German CPS partner that varies a bit for every organization. After the registration is complete, the local organizations are part of the CPS network and can take part in activities and workshops. Further, they can be part of a project proposal and can receive seconded personnel. The project proposal is written by the local organizations in cooperation with the CPS offices (the process itself depends on the organizational structure).

The idea behind CPS is that as soon as the project begins, local partners do the work in cooperation with the seconded personnel. This brings ownership to the local partners and ideally helps to reduce external impact (chapter 4 shows that this depends highly on the people involved). In the interview with *Bread for the World*, it became clear why that ownership is so important.

> "It has always been clear to us that we ourselves have no ownership of the development or peace work on site – that is, about the work in the projects. Our work serves to strengthen or support partner organizations who are responsible for the development and peace work" (Interview with Bread for the World in Germany)[9].

Interestingly, about half of the interviewees mentioned the Lederach pyramid in their own explanations of local partners (Lederach 2001). In this pyramid, actors can be divided into different levels: the top leadership, the middle-range leadership, and the grassroots leadership. Most conflicts that arise are not vertical, but horizontal within the individual levels of the

pyramid (Lederach 2001). This is because most leaders have contacts at different levels and are connected to "their people". There are also connections that are usually identity-forming characteristics, such as religion or ethnicity, in which people from all levels find themselves. It became clear that every organization's stated goal is to strengthen and support the base of the pyramid – the grassroots level – but also to include the other levels. The strategies to achieve the CPS' goals are very different. Some organizations work at every level and others only at ones.

> "I would classify the primary target groups of pbi work in the Lederach pyramid at the bottom. But that is a basic idea of pbi, we try to build a bridge between grassroots activists, whose voice is often overruled by international NGOs, to the national authorities, meaning the track two level" (Interview with pbi in Germany).

However, there are special projects that work at the top of the pyramid (top leadership). For example, projects by the GIZ, which cooperates with government representatives. According to CPS standards, it is important that local partners are non-profit, civic actors, faith-based organizations or public institutions, and the exact criteria are specific and defined by each individual organization (Gemeinschaftswerk ZFD 2014:4). One critique of Lederach's pyramid is that it is too static. In addition, many CPS projects have shown that a connection between the various levels is critical for achieving the intended inputs and outcomes. Therefore, it is important to consider that due to everyday interactions the local actors create identity categories in a fluid way. They are transversal, flexible, and movable and the actors can change between categories and can resituate themselves (Kappler 2015:876).

> "If I have only one focus, then I lose the other. Therefore, I must work with the different multipliers and levels and align the work accordingly. Thus, the local turn is not really a new insight that is not already applied in practice. However, being limited as an actor, I am not constantly active at all levels" (Interview with AGDF in Germany).

Every interview showed that the CPS leadership in Germany appreciates and values the partners. They recognize how important local partners are for the CPS, which would not be possible without them. Some interviewees reflected on different roles and practices.

> "Solutions can only come from the local context. Whether the demand for these solutions comes directly from the local context, or whether one stimulates them by making offers, that is another question. […] At some point, however, the ideas need to be genuine, and sometimes that will only happen at a later point, sometimes such attempts can be misleading. You must acknowledge that and cancel it. If an impulse comes from the outside, which initially leads to the fact that local demand arises and is articulated, I do not

> find that problematic. I find it problematic if one acts as if there is genuine local interest, but still does his own thing in practice" (Interview with GIZ in Germany).

These different approaches make it clear that challenges differ as well. Challenges that organizations face in partner countries can depend on the issue that the organization focuses on or on the role and status of the seconded personnel. Still, some topics were mentioned often. In areas where local partners live under difficult conditions, the CPS work may not be local partners' main priority – they may be involved in other donor-driven projects or have another job to make a living. In addition, logistical and bureaucratic challenges were mentioned, but the interviewees conclude that people working in country and local partners can handle these questions more effectively. Another challenge for the CPS work in Germany is project monitoring and evaluation (PM&E). Many interviewees mentioned that PM&E under the new CPS guidelines is new to some actors, and it can be difficult to implement in a natural, bottom-up way. It is also a challenge to include the PM&E results in further work processes. In addition, the interviewees stated that the coordination of the CPS work in country works well, but the coordination of the CSOs in Germany could be improved. In general, the consortium CPS is supposed to be the ideal platform to discuss and coordinate activities, but a lack of capacity and high workloads means it cannot be implemented to the extent that most of the organizations wish. A serious dilemma is the generally high workload bureaucracies and the development of new project ideas that need to be implemented with remaining human capacities in the organizations in Germany.

Seconded personnel are selected according to individual organization's standards but in line with the *German Development Assistance Act*. The local partners write the job offer together with the CPS office, so it can be designed according to their needs. Not all CPS organizations involve the local actors in the same way in the direct application phase and there are even differences within the organizations. Some read CVs, while others are just informed about the candidate.

After the CPS seconded personnel is selected, they receive training. Each organization pursues its own education and training strategy, but they follow certain common understandings. The training covers a variety of topics and every organization offers adapted courses according to the respective context preparations for the seconded personnel. They take place partly in-house, but sometimes also externally. The duration depends on the organization as well as the seconded personnel's prior knowledge and experience and it can last up to six months. For people being trained, it is critical to have good intercultural preparation and an understanding of the mechanisms of domination in the context of their work and the country they go to (Reich 2005:482). That will help them to understand the broader social or economic context in which they will work (Fischer 2011:297). It is more about a process of knowledge development (Reich 2005:484), reflection and ambiguity tolerance than about teaching skills.
The trainings the author joined had a special focus on cooperation with local partners, mediation, and conflict. In general, the observation by Karl Ernst Nipkow (Nipkow 2013:54) about training seminars is important for the CPS. He concludes that both practical skills, such

as conflict analysis, project monitoring or methods of mediation (instrumental knowledge), as well as reflecting on the values and meaning, which the work is based (orientation knowledge) on, are important. The following topics relevant to this research were identified through participatory observation and informal discussions with trainers and participants: Different understandings of local partners and the preparation to work with local partners.

First, different understandings of local partners played a very important and central role in every training. Participants discussed the self-understanding of the CPS and its organizations in relation to partners. The discussions showed that the perceptions about local partners are very cooperative and solidary. However, this is context-dependent, especially regarding the integration of the seconded personnel. The difference between these two categories is that integrated personnel work directly in the local organization. Accordingly, the responsibility for the personnel no longer lies with the German organization, but with local partners. Non-integrated personnel in contrast are assigned to the local offices of the German organization and work together with the local organizations as partners.

> "There are very good reasons for both approaches. On the one hand the position is that the partner must clearly have the lead. On the other hand, the position is that, if I am not part of an organization, that has a certain position, I can bring in my role as an outsider differently" (Interview with AGDF in Germany).

Second, this distinction is clear in the preparation to work with local partners. In two seminars, for instance, the seconded personnel mapped the most important actors in Germany and the project country as well as the most important actors for the project overall. In addition, their personal contacts and possible new contacts were added. The contacts were not necessarily directly related to the project (according to the application), but nevertheless can play an important role. Further possible conflict lines were added. This clarified the multiplicity of actors and especially the different tasks and distributions of the work with and around local partners. This mapping is not only important to redefine individual actors and their own role, but also serves as preparation for the work itself. How civil conflict transformation is defined and applied depends on the existing (social) structures, the subject of the conflict, the existing levels of escalation and the conflict parties (Weller and Kirschner 2005:14).

Summarizing the interviews with BMZ and members of the CSOs as well as observations during the workshops, the local is taken seriously and plays an important role in the CPS. Clearly, the CPS is familiar with and implements theoretical concepts like Lederach's actors' pyramid. Still, interviewees know there are misunderstandings and challenges to their work as well as room for improvement. Interestingly, the workshops addressed the *local turn* debate on both a theoretical level and in discussions with ownership. Even more, the *local turn* was implicitly present in many discussions, without referring directly to the term itself. For example, it came up in order to understand local partners' roles and concepts, preparation, and the very own positioning. Thus, it can be concluded that concepts and ideas of the *local turn* are used, but not the theoretical concept itself.

4 Setting the scene – CPS and civil society in Kenya.

The Kenyan CSOs scene is considered one of the most vocal, assertive and creative on the African continent and has long been a role model (Allison 2016). Nevertheless, it faces some challenges. Kenya is experiencing a shrinking space (Amnesty International 2016:217; Baldus et al. 2019:10; Njogu 2018:15; Smidt 2018:6). Access for CSOs is being restricted. These are in the area of unjustified or insufficiently justified refusal of registration, which is accompanied by undefined deadlines for the mandatory verification of registration (USAID 2019:104). There are also obstacles to CSOs' activities: for example, they must consult with the NGO Coordination Board on their activities and agree on key issues before they can start work. The Registrar has a wide margin of discretion with regard to the investigation, arrest and search of a CSO and its staff (International Center for Human Rights 2020). These problems were and are accompanied by restrictions in the areas of freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of the press (Amnesty International 2016:217; Reporters Without Borders 2020). CSOs in Kenya have faced various obstacles in recent years, including repeated attempts by the government to stop approving hundreds of organizations due to alleged financial violations (Freedom House 2020); 88 percent of the funds available to NGOs come from sources outside of Kenya (NGO Board Kenya 2019:15), which creates dependence on external donors* and threatens the sustainability of the work (NGO Board Kenya 2019:16). The majority of project expenditures were made in the areas of health, HIV/AIDS, education and emergency aid/disaster management (NGO Board Kenya 2019:15). CSOs' commitment to peace work is strong, especially before and during important elections, but has so far failed to facilitate sustainable engagement by local CSOs in peacebuilding, as they are usually left to their own devices between these periods (Ernstorfer 2018:4). The work of so-called "peace-preneurs" often leads to greater fragmentation of civil society (Njogu 2018:15). At the sub-national level, CSOs focused on social issues such as education and health care and worked with local governments to improve service delivery through raising awareness and building capacity (Orvis 2003:247). This clearly shows that this work is easier in districts where government officials* appreciate the role of CSOs (USAID 2019:107). Many CSOs also work with communities to develop social accountability mechanisms and support disadvantaged areas (USAID 2019:108). Most organizations implemented projects in areas with good infrastructure, such as Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru and other urban centers (NGO Board Kenya 2019:15).

German engagement in conflict-affected countries has a special focus on the African continent. The BMZ's strategy paper on its new Africa policy (2014) and the so-called *Marshall Plan with Africa* created key points for future work (BMZ 2014; BMZ 2017), encompassing the relevance of the economy, peace and security, democracy and human rights as well as sustainability, education, poverty reduction, infrastructure development and the overall idea of a new partnership. These priorities are also evident in the CPS. Thus, most CPS seconded personnel, namely around 120 out of 350, are working in African countries (ZFD 2019). Each project involves different partners and sub-projects. The local partners are CSOs as well as partly state or faith-based institutions. The work takes place in the context of the cross-agency CPS Country Strategy Papers. These were recommended in the evaluation of the CPS (BMZ 2011:7) and have already been prepared for some countries. The CPS organizations work with on-site coordinators, which can include either local people or seconded personnel. They have

management and strategic functions (BMZ 2011:8), such as the further development of the program, on-site operational control, lobbying or offering training programs (Gemeinschaftswerk ZFD 2014:4).

5. Once upon a time... – An excerpt of the research

A car is driving through Kenya, with the author as a passenger. Music by German rock bands is blaring from the speakers. The author is sitting in the car of a German CSO, which implements the CPS in Kenya, driving across Kenya with the CSO's driver. As soon as the car stops, the music can be heard outside through the open windows and some people look at the car. When the author asks the driver if he likes to listen to this music, he answers that the CD was already in the car when he took it over from one of the former German peace workers and that he simply got used to it. Now he listens to it and likes to think back to the journeys with his former colleague, who previously owned the car and who only listened to this music on their journeys.

The driving continues until the arrival at the destination in the late afternoon. Here, the author is taken to the hotel to wait for the colleagues from the Kenyan partner organization. The driver stays in another hotel and the colleague from the office of the German organization (also a Kenyan) stays in another hotel. At this point the author did not quite understand why this was the case, but according to the respective persons, it simply had to do with personal preferences. They preferred a hotel with a kitchen where they can cook, for example. The other people did not travel in the same car. Even though they also came from Nairobi, they flew. While waiting, the author looks around the hotel. According to online reviews, it is "one of the best places in town" and even though the author has only visited a few other hotels in the city, it can be agreed with this statement. There are several restaurants, a large bar, and a pool. At the bar, people talk about, that government officials often stay here when they are in the region on promotional tours or visiting communities and, as the waiter tells me, some of them prefer to spend their time at the bar and in the pool. The author was to experience this after a few days in the hotel, when officers and other military personnel checked in. In the evening, the author briefly got to know the colleagues from the partner organization.

After a breakfast the next day, the journey begins. Over the next several days, the groups will visit different villages in the area (one to two hours' drive) and take part in various programs. This includes, for example, the presence during activities that are organized by the local communities, but also discussions with the local population, local police, and politicians. The group (the author/ researcher, CSO and CPS workers) drives on unpaved roads to the first village. As soon as the group leave town and encounter children, who spot the author in the car, the author is greeted with "Mzungu" (white person). One person jokingly says that they as CPS workers have been here many times before and that they are noticed because of the car, but that the people here have probably grown accustomed to it and that the author now is making them an attraction again. When the group arrives on site, they are standing there as a group of people who live in Nairobi and the author, as a researcher. Some are wearing high heels and costumes, other shirts. And the people on site? They are mostly people who live from agriculture. Some come directly from the fields in their work clothes, others also wear shirts (sometimes with rubber boots, because of the very muddy ground). After everyone has greeted each other and

the author has been introduced and explained the role, everybody is sitting in a building, where a banner with the logos of the topic of the day and the logos of the organizations hangs. The program is already underway, the group arrived a little late because the road was so muddy due to the rain.
In the past few months, the local CSO from Kenya had offered workshops to train people, who want to volunteer in the program they undertake in the villages within the framework of the CPS. Some program points had already taken place and we came to see how the program was going. After the arrival of the CSO team, the chairpersons on side were taken aside and again talked about the procedure of such programs, what role language has in the process and that they must act neutrally in their role. The advice was not discussed further but affirmed. The CSO staff stayed in the background during the program and gave feedback and advice, for example, during the breaks. In general, they were very happy with how it went and saw their presence as an opportunity to review the people and the work on the ground and see if the previous trainings could now be successfully put into practice. A buffet was set up during the lunch break. The CSO team had stopped at a restaurant in the morning before we left town and packed lots of food and drinks. Also, during the lunch break, some money was distributed to everyone present as compensation for attending the meeting (which is a very common practice) and participant lists were filled out, which posed challenges for some people as not everyone could read and write up to a certain level. Many CPS projects mandate such lists for the proof of funds, and this was pragmatically adapted here. By doing so, people could leave a fingerprint on the list instead of a signature. Especially in the informal talks during the meals, the CSO staff could talk more with the chairpersons on side and get more detailed information. The conversations in the car on the way back made it clear that the different CSO people have different perspectives on the work they saw. For example, some assessed it as very good, whereas others saw a need for more training and action, and still others believed that it was good that it had been adapted somewhat locally. According to the CSO staff, this adaptation happened, for example, when they took in other program points than those originally planned because they were prioritized differently on site, or when preliminary discussions took place to a longer extent than previously planned.

This is how the days went and the program continued with some small adaptions, always depending on who was present. These adaptions were always done in consultation between the local responsible persons, the staff of the local CPS partner organization from Nairobi and the CPS specialist. During other activities, such as a meeting between the police and the most important representatives from various surrounding villages, all participants took part in a lively exchange. Even though the author could not always follow the language, the translation was summarized, and the exchange was considered very important by the local people involved in the field. One situation stuck with the author. The group was sitting in front of the house of the region's Chief of Police and waiting for some people – they have been already two hours late, but that was not considered a problem. Everybody carried plastic water bottles with them, and a child approached the driver. He gave the bottle to the child, whereupon it was directly used as a toy. Since there have been several empty bottles in the car, they were distributed among the children. At least this way the group would be remembered positively by the children, said one of the people from the CSO. Afterwards, group photos were taken, and some people wanted to take extra pictures with the author. The CPS specialist jokingly remarked that they should

probably take the author or other white colleagues with them more often so that more promotional work is done for the program. Afterwards, the group went directly to the city to meet an important politician. Here they had to wait a very long time in his antechamber, as the person was still in another meeting. All of them had growling stomachs, as they had only eaten breakfast. The CSO staff talked about how they find it exhausting to wait in such a situation, but that they see it as part of their job. They stressed that this has nothing to do with rudeness towards them, but that such an important person is busy and that they have a lot of understanding. At the meeting, T-shirts were handed over to promote the program with the request that they be distributed to specific people. However, the box with the T-shirts was just put in a room with other boxes.

After that, the group finally went out for something to eat. According to the CPS worker they went to a restaurant that serves the best chicken in the region. The people the author was travelling with agreed unanimously that the chicken in the countryside simply tastes better than the chicken you can buy in Nairobi. This was not the only meal that was shared. The group also ate together in the hotel and met at the bar after work to talk, or occasionally people went out partying in the city. They also made extensive use of the pool after work or in the morning before going to the villages. Admittedly, it was a welcome refreshment (even though it can be relatively chilly), but above all a nice distraction.

These experiences took place around the middle of the research stay of the author. Even though the author had already dealt with questions of power in relation to the role as a researcher, between actors and in a more global context, situations like these always made the author reevaluate things. The many individual examples that have made the topic of power clear in this story also show how important it is to understand what is meant by power.

6. Theories of power and discourses regarding the CPS

This story is one of many situations the author experienced during the research. The story has not been chosen to judge anybody in it in a negative way, but rather as it addresses a lot of different topics that can be inherent to the CPS and peace work in general.

It also exemplifies the tense relationship in which researcher can find themself. A tension between leisure and work, between different topics and roles, but also between being a stranger and a feeling of belonging. These tensions are due to the inherent and unbalanced power relationship between researchers and actors in the field (Cronin-Furman and Lake 2018:610). This asymmetrical imbalance (Knott 2019:144) is due to the fact that the researcher has power over the field; for example, by identifying a research question, defining the field, choosing methodological and theoretical approaches, and analyzing the data (Engwicht, Hennings and Prause 2019:2; Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay 2016:1013; Menzel 2015:60). These tensions are normal in research, but it is important to reflect on them in the research process, as they can have an impact on the research and the results. Another component of power plays an important role within the research, as the author, a white researcher from the Global North, conduct research in a country of the Global South. In this case, North-South research especially needs to reflect on certain socially constructed power imbalances as well as ethical and practical challenges. A first step in becoming aware of one's own role, influence on the field and the power of that role is to reflect on it. Just the possibility that a person from another country, can

do research and move around freely shows the power that the role has. But also, the scenes from the research story, in which the stay in an expensive hotel with a pool is described, starkly contrast to how the local people that have been visited live and shows the privileged position very clearly. Examples where people want to take photos with the author, or where peace workers describe the author as an attraction that may also be useful to their work, are likewise situations where structural power comes to light. Here, it is the task of the author to place him- or herself as a researcher in the existing power imbalance and to reflect on roles in relation to postcolonial references and power structures. In addition, it is important to look at epistemic violence, i.e. the knowledge the author produce as a researcher (Brunner 2020).

But the story also shows the work of CPS professionals (whether they come from Germany or are one of the few local professionals) and the local partners and the tensions in which they work. A tension between rich and poor, urban, and rural, personal, and professional opinion, between different opinions and views, between local and donor organizations. Power also plays a special role in these tensions.

A postcolonial view of the situation is particularly suitable for this, as it views the reproductions of colonial dynamics and hierarchies in peace work (Fernández and Guerra 2020:1) and can more closely examine statements or actions that initially seem self-evident (Engels 2014:132). Power plays a decisive role in this, as it is diverse and manifests itself in different areas. Aram Ziai summarizes the theoretical discussion about power with postcolonial references very well. Ziai describes certain processes of exclusion, power imbalances or relations of violence that arise from continuing Western-colonial narratives. He subdivides them as follows: "1) Naturalization, 2) Othering, 3) Legitimization, 4) Hierarchization, 5) Depolitization, 6) Appropriation" (Ziai 2015:8).

To create a basis for discussion, however, it is important to define the concept of power. Foucault's concept of power is particularly suitable as a basis for examining power in CSOs, since power is controlled through different channels than in international organizations or military operations, for example, and often functions much more indirectly. Nevertheless, even in locally anchored peace processes that are accompanied or supported externally, there are challenges and problems that raise the issue of power, because CSOs strive to control others' behavior and use symbolic and normative techniques for this purpose as well (Barnett and Weiss 2008:40). "Although humanitarianism is frequently presented as devoid of power, this claim represents both a comfortable myth that aid workers tell themselves and simultaneously helps manufacture their power, which rests on their authority" (Barnett and Weiss 2008:38). Donor institutions and civil society organizations often require different mechanisms of observation, as they are structured and function differently. To approach the issues of power in CSOs and the organizations and actors involved, it is important to pay attention to the actions and social impacts. To understand and evaluate them, a theoretical tool is needed that is based on the realities of CSOs as institutions and examines the different relationships from the local to the global level (Schuller 2012:181). Conceptualizing and looking at power with Foucault's concept does exactly that.

In Foucault's sense, it is important to distinguish three types of power: sovereign, disciplinary and state (governmental) power (Foucault 1980). While sovereign power works through

repression and laws, disciplinary power works through repeated practices and conditioning, and governmental power refers to behavior and thus emphasizes the free will of the individual as the object of power relations. As indicated by Foucault, power is for the most part practiced through the creation of information and through the organizing of potential fields of activity (Foucault 1983). In this view, power does not necessarily mean the ability to force someone to do something, because power is also present where individual decisions are made voluntarily in a field of action that is structured in a certain way, or where a discourse only offers certain possibilities for constructing social reality (Foucault 1983). Foucault's understanding of power does not distinguish between rulers and ruled, nor is power concentrated in the (Weberian) state apparatus; instead, it shapes and constitutes all social relations (Foucault and Ewald 1978:39). Thus, with Foucault, power is defined outside the classical Weberian "power over the decisions of another" (Weber 1921) as a question of power over or within the structures that constitute social existence. According to this definition, power is omnipresent (Foucault 1983) and, thus, defined here as the structuring or rebuilding of fields of action in the political, economic, social or ecological spheres. It aims to change individuals' practices and can be exercised through sovereign, disciplinary or state mechanisms (Ziai 2009:185). In this context, power does not only exclude certain actions or information, but can also be understood productively by creating certain modes of behavior or knowledge. In its negative or repressive form, power is understood as a force that limits, controls, prohibits, masks, withdraws, punishes, excludes and suppresses (DuBois 1991). According to Foucault's argumentation, however, power is assumed to be primarily positive, productive and not restrictive, exercised, it is omnipresent and not localized (DuBois 1991:5). What is special about Foucault's conceptualization of power is the assertion that power is a positive or productive force (DuBois 1991:5) and can be transferred to peacebuilding with the concepts of positive tensions or frictions in cooperation, as described earlier in the paper.

The aspect of power has been increasingly discussed in development research. Long debates about decolonizing development cooperation (Leach 2018:6) must now also consider peace work. In this context, countries of the Global South have long been described as the "Third World", which must develop to keep up with the "First World". The countries are described as underdeveloped in the sense that they embody everything that the "Global North" does not represent: powerless, passive, poor, ignorant, dark, uneducated (Escobar 2012 [1995]:8), which is why development with the help of the "Global North" is necessary. Especially in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, adapting the ideas of the "Global North" in the sense of a liberal peace also plays an important role in peace work. These concepts and statements have brought forth certain discourses that describe parts of the world in distinction to "the others". This is repeatedly shown by their portrayal as disempowered or needy actors, and postcolonial researchers rightly ask whether they are being listened to or heard at all (Spivak 2008). This leads to "othering" (Said 1978; Ziai 2015:9), to a construction of a "good", Western "us" and a "needy" other. At the same time, "othering" is the basis of legitimation (Ziai 2015:10). The necessity of bringing peace or developing the "others" through external influences legitimates action. At the same time, it is assumed that the available knowledge is insufficient for achieving peace or development, and that the imported knowledge is "correct" to act for the benefit of the local people, often irrespective of the situation on the ground (hierarchization and depolitization (Ziai 2015:12)). Especially with regard to knowledge, epistemic violence becomes important

(Brunner 2020; Foucault 2015). This term generally refers to forms of violence, and thus to power and domination, that have to do with knowledge. The term looks at the self-evidence with which knowledge is used and reproduced, how norms and actions are created through knowledge and allows different forms of violence to be connected. Epistemic violence is not simply one of many forms of violence that coexist. It still supports the imperial world order in which violence occurs even today (Brunner 2020:17). This can mean both the knowledge that the author gains as a researcher in the research process and how it is passed on (Brunner 2020:9), but also knowledge that is applied in the CPS.

To approach the issue of power in peacebuilding, it is first of all important that the process of conflict transformation is conducted more as a discourse, as this allows us to better grasp the meanings and power imbalances that present themselves in the research field. A discourse is a group of statements that provide a way of speaking about something, e.g., a mode of representation or a particular kind of knowledge about an object (Hall 1994:150). Importantly, there is no conventional distinction between thought and action, language and practice (Hall 1994:150), but it is produced through a discursive practice that can be found in all social actions. Thus, a discourse is more than just language and merges into actions, practices and thinking. Thus, in Escobar's case, which is tailored to development but also applicable to peacebuilding, a discourse is defined as it "sets the rules that must be followed for this or that problem, theory or object to be named, analyzed and eventually transformed into a policy or a plan" (Escobar 2012 [1995]:41). Similar definitions see discourse as an "ensemble[s] of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena" (Des Gasper and Apthorpe 1996:2) or a "more or less coherent sets of references that frame the way we understand and act upon the world around us" (Hilhorst 2003:8). Discourse is thus a collective practice of ordering and framing in the minds of the actors, trying to organize complex issues and make sense of their experiences. But it is precisely through this simplification of complexity that important parts of reality can be lost or attention diverted away from them. Simplification always implies a degree of exclusion and tends to push the actual underlying complexity into the background (Mol and Law 2006). Importantly, however, discourse is not just a systematized body of knowledge or a way of talking about our world – it has an impact on the world (van Leeuwen 2009:9). Thus, discourse becomes a social practice produced by everyday conditions and activities and is constantly subject to change (Gardner 1997). Furthermore, there is a duality of discourse: Even when discourses are imposed or strategically deployed, they acquire local meaning (Hilhorst 2003:100). The example given at the beginning already shows this quite vividly when one looks at the actions of CPS professionals and local and international organizations. People in the CPS act according to certain maxims of action, which were developed in Germany, in part together with the partners, and made official by the federal ministry that is funding the project as well as the CPS consortium, the organizations and country strategies – at least that is the ideal. In practice, there are exceptions, deviations, and adjustments. These definitions were initially based on certain discourses – for example, on the understanding of peace or the local anchoring of peace work. However, they are not hermetic in their implementation and leave room for dissent and negotiation. These abstract rules are imposed through their implementation in the CPS projects by the fact that the projects must adhere to certain guidelines and specifications and thereby acquire local meaning. This meaning often emerges in actions and is produced in the process, as the example of the list of participants showed (in Ziai appropriation (Ziai

2015:15)). As a result, discourse can legitimize a particular political order, maintain existing power relations and perpetuate inequalities (Fairclough 2010:107).

In doing so, a discourse always constitutes power by focusing on certain ways of understanding the world (Grillo 1997:12; van Leeuwen 2009:9). In general, constitutive effects highlight the social construction of reality, show how discourses and fields of action facilitate and constrain activity; determine how the possible and impossible are defined; establish what is considered normal and natural, i.e. 'naturalization' (Ziai 2015:8); define what categories of action are considered desirable; influence to achieve certain goals; and judge what is a problem that needs to be solved and who can best solve it (Hayward 2000:30). Because these discourses enable people to think and act in one way or another, and because they privilege some actors and disempower others, they have different and highly unbalanced effects. In this view, the humanitarianism in which many CSOs in the field of (civil) peacebuilding operate is constituted both by the underlying discourse and by constitutive effects that create, define and map social reality (Barnett and Weiss 2008:41; Hayward 2000:30). Much of discourse theory is concerned with how certain representations of the world become hegemonic and dominant in shaping the way reality is imagined and enacted, while overshadowing or even disqualifying other ways of thinking. However, various authors have relativized this notion of dominant discourses, arguing that there are always multiple discourses whose relative importance changes and is constantly renegotiated (Chiapello and Fairclough 2002; Gardner 1997; Grillo 1997; Hilhorst 2003). Although this criticism was voiced in the 1990s, it is evident that certain discourses remain in practice, especially in development and peace work, and dominate portions of current North/South relations. There is, for example, the idea that people from the Global North can support actors in countries of the Global South with their knowledge and their actions (even if this is supposed to happen in partnership). This is a kind of violence also present in the CPS through discourses. This also happened because the basic architecture of discourse remains untouched as long as donors from the Global North continue to feel entitled to implement their ideas in the Global South, which is because discourses can be reproduced through the unintended, unreflective consequences of everyday routine practices (Fairclough 2010). For epistemological and political reasons, this universalization of particular Eurocentric perspectives tends to reproduce (post)colonial hierarchies and confirm violence-ridden formalities of power and knowledge (Brunner 2020:30). Embedded in historical and social processes that have materially benefited the few at the expense of the many, they have a reality that goes beyond "discourses and practices" (Escobar 1991:659) and has political, economic and social consequences for individuals. If both academics and practitioners do not analyze these discourses more deeply and take responsibility for the fact that their own work is also based on a position of power and privilege that shapes their outcomes and perceptions (Escobar 1991:662), then the idea of "working in partnership at eye level" will remain a mere construct.

Power is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere (Schuller 2012:182), which makes it so difficult to grasp and analyze. This is especially true where peace processes involve cooperation between local and international actors. As the example from Kenya shows, various partnerships are possible in peace processes – between the CPS and local organizations, between the different professionals, between local organizations and the people they work with, between the CPS and the people they work with, between the CPS and the local organizations and

external factors, such as politicians. There are so many levels of power here that make it difficult to map clearly, as they depend on general discourses as well as personal actions that are shaped by the discourses. CSOs' actions are extremely ambivalent. On the one hand, they push for change and transformation in the regions and topics they work on, including in the direction of global change, yet their own actions often result in the opposite, namely stabilizing the dominance of the Global North (Gebauer 2007:205). Thus, the aim of the measure described in this paper is to effect change on the ground, with the programs in the villages. At the same time, however, the system is designed such that international CSOs must first conduct training and education in the regions. Many initiatives to support the peacebuilding work of local organizations are based on an idealistic perception of civil society, which is often portrayed as a non-partisan, apolitical force trying to reconcile the parties to the conflict. This overlooks the fact that peacebuilding practices are not only a result of politics, but also develop from the organizing practices of people within an organization (van Leeuwen 2009:5). Foucault's writings call for attention to precisely those processes and activities that are presented as neutral and independent in order to uncover how such practices obscure or disregard power (Foucault 1980).

The power dynamics between local and international actors remain unequal. From restrictions on the use of funds for decisions on training to the timing and strategy of exit, local actors have had little to no voice in decision-making processes (Leach 2018:4). In the example from Kenya, it was also the CPS as an overall organization that broached the topics of the programs in the villages (as they have been working on similar issues for a long time in Kenya) and thus the actions now must fit into this overall strategy. Although this is possible, as the local CSO also specializes in the topic, there are other examples where it is less harmonious. The fact that the staff of the local CSOs and the CPS are full-time employees further reinforces this power imbalance because the local people on the ground are volunteers – a topic that was strongly discussed and questioned at a local meeting, less so by the volunteers themselves but by other people present. Thus, the dualistic basic structure of the colonial discourse remains contained despite the omission of the overtly racist element (Ziai 2013:17), the division into "civilized/ uncivilized" is replaced by "developed/ underdeveloped" or even "peaceful/ unpeaceful". This also becomes clear when considering Frantz Fanon's work "The Wretched of the Earth" (Fanon 1981), written from a pan-African, anti-colonial perspective, that addresses colonial violence, colonial actions and the relationship between colonizers and the colonized, expressed in violent oppression. "The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: It is the racist who creates his inferior" (Fanon 1974:69). Elements of this oppression and self-alienation can also be found in contemporary international cooperation and peacebuilding, which is driven by a colonial rationality where the imperative to govern precedes and influences practice on the ground. Using hybrid and agency approaches in peacebuilding allows for a differentiation; on the one hand, the colonial rationality that prioritizes the governing potentials of external interventions, and on the other hand, a postcolonial rationality that derives its discourse from the postcolonial international and thus prioritizes the politics of self-determination (Jabri 2013:3). The hegemony of peacebuilding manifests itself institutionally and as a norm, as a scholarly research program and, moreover, in its ability to talk about distinctions. When we further explore the

term's definition, we find the disappearance of distinctions between theory and practice, science and advocacy responding to "real life" problems (Jabri 2013:5).

During the discussion about power, discourses, and actors in peace work, it is also important to discuss the concept of paternalism, which is understood here as part of a postcolonial discussion. Paternalism is "the interference with a person's liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced" (Dworkin 1972:xx). Bear in mind Seana Shiffrin's definition, which does not emphasize interference in the interests of another actor, but rather in the other actor's actual sphere of autonomy and judgment (Shiffrin 2000). In observing and researching paternalism, it is necessary that the motivation is wholly or partly supported by compassion, care, and benevolence. Second, there is the underlying assumption that the object of paternalism is incapable of making an informed decision. Third, the judgment of an actor or agent is inferred to be better than that of the subject. Fourth, the paternalist often, but not always, feels that he or she has an existing duty or responsibility (Barnett 2015:221). Those who profess solidarity for others are often accused of slipping into paternalism, because they fail to listen properly to the views of those they wish to help and unilaterally substitute their own judgment for that of others, if they know the interests of those, they wish to help without ever asking. "The paternalistic aspect consists in the claim that it is legitimate for private and public institutions to attempt to influence people's choices and preferences, even when third-party effects are absent. […]. In our understanding, a policy therefore counts as 'paternalistic' if it attempts to influence the choices of affected parties in a way that will make choosers better off" (Sunstein and Thaler:1162). In the Kenyan example, the fact that conflicts are now resolved with conflict resolution mechanisms mediated by international and local CSOs means that there is interference in the local structures' autonomy, in which the elders often provide the body of jurisdiction or police structures are in place. Paternalism becomes even more evident when success is not only measured by a successfully resolved conflict, but also by the standards set by the program activities and implemented and partly internalized by the actors on the ground with the help of local and international CSOs. As one of the participants in the "Transitional Justice System" reflected on the process: It is impressive how professional the CSOs from Nairobi are in this process and what materials and resources they bring to us.

7. ... and they lived happily ever after – applying the theories of power to an example of the research.

Aspects of the research stay in Kenya will now be summarized (in addition to the inserts in the previous chapter), in which power becomes visible. It should be noted that this will only happen based on a first consolidation and not a deeper interpretation, as that will require more than one case study.

There are situations in which the CPS staff members, people from the city, who work for or with an international CSO, appear and bring with them a role that exudes a certain authoritarian and disciplinary power. These situations include travelling by plane, wearing certain clothes (high heels and costume), staying in a very good hotel, or handing out plastic bottles to the children. These actions put the CPS specialist and the local partners in a more powerful position than the local people with whom they work. By repeating these actions, this image manifests

itself. The relationship's asymmetry is further underlined by the fact that the local people work on a voluntary basis, or receive lunch and an allowance for it, while the people from Nairobi are paid for it. The bottle situation, for example, shows that this asymmetrical power imbalance is also used consciously – the bottles are distributed to remain in good memory or indications that they receive more attention due to the presence as a white person and that this was considered a good thing. Certainly, these statements were made in a specific situation, half-jokingly. Nevertheless, these situations show how discourses turn into actions. And even if power is not consciously used as an instrument here, it happens at least subconsciously in actions or statements that are internalized through working and living in a certain system. Actions that arise from this system are, for example, the situations and statements that the chairperson of the program on side is given advice on site, even though the negotiations have already begun and he or she has done preparatory work on their own, and the CPS employees are generally on site to check the actions. This shows a paternalism of the people on the ground and an interference in local autonomy. This is not the fault of the people working for the CPS, or rather they cannot be blamed for it; it is the system of the CPS or of development aid or peace work in general that functions in this way. As such, the continuation of the coloniality of power, knowledge and being becomes very clear (Brunner 2020:42). As already described, the whole program in the villages clearly shows that certain ideas and concepts that were brought in from the outside merged with local concepts and are now implemented locally to produce change in a certain direction. In the process, reviews take place. This also has something to do with disciplinary power. Money is spent to enable something on the ground, this is monitored and made comprehensible by the donors and pushes the people who implement it locally into the role of the non-powerful over the process. However, the fact that power is also used in a more conscious and disciplinary way (as it is a condition of funding) can be seen, for example, in the obligatory signing of participant lists and display of an appropriate banner at the event, which is clearly visible in photos. As already described, the role as a researcher is also related to power. The author also stayed in a good hotel, interacted in the field, and thus had influence, was perceived as an important person without having to contribute anything (the author was given a table and chair while other people sat on a bench) and was able to participate without always understanding the language, and some people even did translations. These situations clearly show that the author is in a more powerful role as a researcher from the Global North.

There are other moments in which power is evident – the peace worker, who only listens to German music, being late for a negotiation, yet simultaneously waiting a long time for a politician, the statement that chicken tastes better in the countryside, etc. These situations alone show how complex the issue of power in peace work is, how it is sometimes very visible, but also where it is hidden. It also became clear that power exists on different levels and that actors in peace work are sometimes only a small part of a large system in which they play their role. All these individual moments require a more precise and profound interpretation, for example, in relation to postcolonial references, the localization of the local or agenda setting.

8. Conclusion

The paper analyzes the extent to which the German CPS takes the principles of local, participatory peacebuilding seriously, implements them in its work, the tensions and problems that arise and where power plays an important role in this process. That leads to further conclusions and recommendations.

The empirical results show that there is a strong turn towards the local and local approaches are taken seriously in the CPS' work. Extant power structures and imbalances play a crucial role in the implementation of the CPS, as local partners and seconded personnel frequently discuss these topics. As one local partner in Liberia pointed out, the CPS remains a rather paternalistic system. Often these are underlying and inherent problems and only the tip of the iceberg is visible. These power asymmetries are projected by the design of the CPS itself and the fact that personal relationships and cooperation play a crucial role in the implementation of the CPS.
Since these partnerships are a collaboration between local organizations and organizations from Germany, the North-South divide is especially relevant. Even if the CPS claims to break up this power gap to a certain extent and this has happened in some cases, e.g., in the integrated work, it is still woven into a larger power structure. Even if they try to work together, they are still apart in some areas. The financial power of the CPS lies with the German organizations and at the same time a discursive power. This lies not only in setting priorities and directions in the work, but also in influencing organizations in certain directions; in debates and potential disagreements, the donors' votes carry more weight. Most local organizations are at least partially financially dependent on the German organizations. Both the local and international staff is made up of well-educated people and/or people who receive great respect in their respective fields of work due to their many years of work experience.
On an empirical level most of the challenges, including power relations in the CPS, refer to role definitions, cooperation in everyday work, finance, and the projects' impact. These are issues that appear when *friction* occurs. A simple example for *friction* that occurs in CPS projects is when local and international peace workers facilitate workshops and use different approaches, and critically discuss them before implementing them together. It is not a matter of normal differences of opinion, which can generally exist in cooperation, but of ambivalent relationships between global and local actors (with inherent power asymmetries) that lead to unintended results of peacebuilding interventions. The importance of the concept is that the actors reflect upon these differences, where they come from and how they can be used in a productive way – not only for one case where they occur but also for their work in general. Consequently, the way that different actors deal with *friction* remains a unique case. "The quality of the relations and interactions between the different actors and stakeholders is central to the effectiveness and sustainability of the peacebuilding process" (Bernard 2013:10). Therefore, report and feedback mechanisms are critical, and consequences must be drawn from the experiences, feedback, and experts' conclusions. These consequences need to be cross-checked with the feedback from local partners, as they need to be taken seriously in the whole process. The CPS is trying to be different than classical donor agencies and take local actors more into account.

Of course, there are many good examples for strong connections and cooperation in the CPS. Still more needs to change to challenge the existing power structures. These changes can only happen step by step, on a small scale and would require a change of the entire architecture of peacebuilding and development cooperation (Mannitz 2014). Despite the positive assessment of local inclusion, the growing international acceptance and promotion of locally anchored peace processes must also be viewed critically. It is important that the local actors are considered reflexively, both internally and externally. At the same time, the ambivalent character of local approaches must be reflected upon, because not all locally initiated projects have to be "good" and "sustainable". Local approaches to peacebuilding can also lead to power imbalances, exclusion, discrimination, or unfairness among local actors. A perception of the local as only "good" and as a cure-all method for peace processes is a wrong romanticization of the local in itself (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013:770). Even in local peace processes, it is not completely possible to dissolve power structures and hierarchies; they persist at the local level as well. For example, top-level individuals often have more power than other local actors and represent their own interests and beliefs rather than those of the entire population. "Any universal peace system is therefore open to being hijacked by hegemonic actors" (Richmond 2006a:390).

Abbreviations

AGDF: Action Committee Service for Peace

AGEH: Association for Development Cooperation

AGIAMONDO: Association for Development Cooperation

BMZ: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

CSO: Civil Society Organizations

CPS: Civil Peace Service

GIZ: German Society for International Cooperation/ Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit

IR: International Relations

pbi: Peace Brigade International

PM&E: Project Monitoring and Evaluation

ZFD: Ziviler Friedensdienst

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[1] Parts of chapter one, two and six have been published in a similar way in Ruppel (2020)

[2][2] This paper uses a broad definition of peacebuilding: "We adopt a broad definition of peacebuilding as the range of efforts – engaging with a variety of actors – aimed at political, institutional, social and economic transformations in post-war societies for the purpose of a sustainable and positive peace" (Björkdahl et al. 2016:3). With this broad definition, the report focuses on peacebuilding activities in civil conflict transformation and international and internationally supported activities.

[3] This paper defines CSOs as non-governmental or non-profit organizations that can work on different topics (Keane 2003:3). Civil society can be defined as a heterogeneous group of actors, CSOs or people, acting along different lines of shared interests, determinations and values, and enjoying autonomy from the state (Adloff 2005:66).

[4] For this paper "the local" is not a specific geographical location, but is defined as the sum of everyday actions and practices of a plurality of actors ((Reich 2006:21) and can entail emancipatory processes. The local is "the realm in which everyday activities emerge and unfold" ((Richmond and Mitchell 2012:11), and a heterogeneity of actors and forms of influence that can constitutively co-operate in a peace process, "some of which are aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace, perhaps with or without international help, and framed in a way in which legitimacy in local and international terms converges" ((Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013:769).

[5] For more about the debate, see: (Curle 1994; Mac Ginty 2011; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Paris 2010; Richmond 2006b).

[6] (Köhler 2005) provides examples for civil conflict transformation before the establishment of CPS.

[7] Interview and informal talks in Kenya were not recorded. Only indirect quotes are used in the following sections.

[8] Some CPS organizations call the CPS peace workers from Germany seconded personnel, a term which this paper adopts.

[9] Interviews with the organizations in Germany were conducted in German. The author translated all quotes into English for this report.

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